



Family Handbook

Welcome and thank you for choosing Creative Minds Early Learning Center.

It is our goal to maintain a safe, loving and educational environment for your child. Please be sure to read over the policies and procedures guide carefully. It gives important information regarding your childcare contract. Please read and then sign and date the signature page and return to the Director or Assistant Director. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Director or Assistant Director.

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Our mission...is to lay the foundation for a better tomorrow and to provide children with the life-long skills they need to achieve their highest potential. We give children the building blocks necessary to develop confidence, respect, and responsibility, which are essential in developing a positive self-image. Through interaction with other children and dedicated teachers, children are learning how to cooperate, problem solve, and make friends. In life, we all need these skills for school, career, friendships, partnerships, and to develop great character. The skills our children develop in these important, formative years, pave the way for them to be strong, successful, individuals and an integral part of the future.

Philosophy Statement

We believe that it is essential that all children have a secure, loving, high quality environment. They learn a tremendous amount in the first five years of life and they deserve to be in an environment that will encourage developmentally appropriate learning and independence, foster positive attachment and one that is intentionally designed to promote optimal development. We strongly believe that children of all ages learn best through play, both indoors and out, and should be provided with ample time and a variety of exploratory materials to develop. Play allows children to create their own knowledge by exploring the world around them. Play encourages critical thinking, problem solving, social skills and practical skills that will help them succeed throughout life. We also believe in working side by side with parents/guardians to promote positive attachment and strong, healthy relationships. When children feel safe and secure in their world, when their needs are responded to appropriately they have the confidence to explore, experiment, learn and to try new things. Providing children with nurturing relationships, enhancing their environment, providing a variety of opportunities, and expanding on their desire to play and grow is our responsibility as their child care provider.

Enrollment

We are licensed for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. On a year round basis we provide an excellent special needs children that we can accommodate. During the school year (including breaks and days that the children are released early or school is not open, *other than the noted Holidays and closure days*) we provide Before and After School Care for our children up to the age of 12. Transportation is provided in our school van for children attending Elk Creek Elementary on a full time basis as well as children attending West Jefferson Elementary for their full day program, half day Kindergarten and Preschool Programs as space allows.

Admission and Enrollment

You must complete and submit the Enrollment Packet, Immunization Records (SIGNED AND DATED BY THE DOCTOR), CARE PLAN (if applicable – SIGNED AND DATED BY THE DOCTOR) and Enrollment Fee at least 24 hours prior to the child's first day of attendance. You have 30 days after the start date, to turn in Health Form (SIGNED AND DATED BY THE DOCTOR).

Enrollment Forms Included That Must Be Filled Out and Turned in:

- * Enrollment Form
- * Emergency Contact Form
- * Consent Agreement Form
- * Allergy and Dietary Form
- * Ongoing Communication Documentation Form
- * Sunscreen Permission/Diaper Rash Cream Permission
- * Photography and Videotaping Consent Form/Movie Permission

- * Getting to Know Your Child Form
- * Transportation Authorization Form
- * Family Handbook Acknowledgement
- * Child's Health Form (Signed and dated by Doctor)
- * Immunization Record (Signed and dated by Doctor)
- * Emergency Medication Action Plan (If Applicable – Signed and dated by Doctor)
- * \$85 Annual Registration Fee (\$50 for additional children in the family)

(Registration Fee, Enrollment Paperwork, and Immunization Records MUST be Completed IN FULL and Turned in PRIOR to Enrollment. You have 30 days to get a Health Form completed and SIGNED by a Doctor)

Withdrawal of Enrollment

A written notice of withdrawal must be given to the Director at least two weeks prior to the withdrawal date.

Billing and Billing Information

Unless your schedule for billing needs to be devised on a monthly basis your billing will automatically come out and be available on the front computer on the First of Each Month. Payments are due by the 5th of the Month for the month ahead (ie payment is made on the 5th for the entire month). Should you need a monthly printed statement for your employer please let us know and we will get that out to you monthly. Payments that are late will charged a fee of \$35.

Yearly Refurbish and Enhancement Cost

Once a year in August prior to the school year beginning we will bill each child's account for a Refurbish and Enhance Cost, \$50 per child, for second and additional children \$40. If your child is strictly on a drop in basis throughout the year we will not include this cost. This help with the cost of updating curriculum and refurbishing special materials for the year ahead.

Sibling Discount

We offer a 10% discount for fulltime children from the same family. The 10% will be applied to the tuition for the oldest child.

Teachers With Summer Off

If you are a Teacher with Summers off and will be taking the entire summer out with your child we will offer a 50% discount to you for the summer months (up to 10 weeks) and hold your child's spot. Please let us know in advance if you would like to use this program and put on file a confirmation of your teaching status. We are unable to hold a spot through the full summer without payment.

Immunizations

We must have current, up-to-date Immunization Records prior to your child's start date. If you choose to not get certain immunizations or none at all, we will need you to fill out an Immunization Exemption Form. We will keep it confidential; however, we will need to notify other families that there is a child who is not fully immunized.

Hours of Operation

*We are open Monday – Friday, year round from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00p.m.

Please note our schedule of Holidays and Staff training days.

School Closure Days

* Creative Minds will be closed for the following holidays:

*Labor Day

*Veterans Day for Staff Training (should it fall on a weekend we will be closed on the prior Friday)

*Thanksgiving Day and the following day

*Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the following day (should these holidays fall on the weekend we will be closed the prior Friday, then Monday, then Tuesday depending on how the days fall)

*New Years Day

*Martin Luther King Day for staff training

*President's Day for staff training

*Memorial Day

*4th of July

** Tuition is still paid for holidays, school closure days and/or or snow days that we are closed. Our teachers are paid for holidays, school closure days and snow days. **

*We do not offer vacation time off without payment..

Unscheduled School Closures

If Jefferson County Public Schools or Jefferson County Mountain Schools are closed due to inclement weather, our center will be closed. Please check the news stations for closures. - In case of fire, flood or infestation, we will be closed until the premises have been inspected and judged safe by the Health Department. If it becomes necessary to either open late or close early, due to an unanticipated event, our center will contact families as soon as possible. ** You will still be responsible for paying tuition in the case of any unscheduled school closures unless otherwise stated by the Owner or Director. **

Sick Days

You are responsible for paying for the days your child is sick and unable to attend. Children with the following conditions will not be allowed to attend:

-Diarrhea

-Vomiting

-Temperature of 101 degrees F or above

-Children with contagious illness, until they have been on antibiotics for a full 24 hours

-Childhood illnesses such as chickenpox, measles, mumps, etc.

-Undiagnosed Rash If you are in doubt, please call and talk with us and we will make a joint decision.

We appreciate your honesty and concern so that we can limit illnesses being spread to other children, teachers and families. No tuition reimbursement will occur. Please be thoughtful of the fact that Motrin and Tylenol will alleviate the fever symptoms temporarily, but your child is still not feeling well and can spread the illness. We understand that you have responsibilities at work and it might be difficult for you to take a day off, however, we need to work as a team to prevent the spread of germs. We will do our part to sanitize and hand wash throughout the day, we so appreciate your support in stopping the spread of sickness.

Mid-day Illness

If a child should become ill during the day, you will be notified and asked to pick them up as soon as possible. If necessary your child will be isolated from the other children either in the classroom or in the office and you will be expected to pick up your child as soon as possible. Please notify us at once if your child has a contagious illness, so that we may post that information for other families. If your child is sent home due to illness, they may not return to school until they are symptom free for a full 24 hours. They must be symptom free for 24 hours without any Tylenol or Motrin. If your child is on an antibiotic, they must be on the antibiotic for a full 24 hours before returning to school. No tuition reimbursement will occur unless it's approved by the Director and/or Owner.

Medications

A Doctor's note, with specific instructions, is required for all medications. The instructions and dosage on the Doctor's note must match the instructions and dosage on the label. Medications must be in the original container with the label on it. Please give any medications to the Director or Assistant Director. We are required to keep them in specific-designated areas, out of reach of children.

Attendance

Both full and part time fees will be based on the schedule you set up with us. If you miss school due to illness, weather, or changes in your personal schedule you are still responsible to pay for those days. Please set up the schedule that encompasses your needs. If you need to add an additional day(s) you will need to call and check with us first and we will do our best to accommodate. Our staffing and budget is set up around planned classroom size and we have licensing limits for each room. If your child will absent for the day please let us know, if they are ill we would appreciate knowing what they have contracted so we can monitor the other children closely. You can call us at 303-838-2627 or contact us by email, at Info@creativemindsconifer.com. If you have to leave a message, be sure and let us know your child's name, classroom and the reason for their absence.

*Please see the Tuition Cost Sheet included in this packet

* We accept Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP). You must be fully set up prior to your start date. For more information on CCAP please call 303-914-6271.

Child Drop-Off and Pick-up Procedures

Please sign your child in and out every day on the computer located at the front entrance, if you have not been set up on the computer, or have forgotten your individual code please stop by the office. It is essential that you walk your child into their classroom and that you let the teacher know your child has arrived. When you arrive to pick up your child from the center please touch base with the teacher before leaving. We want to ensure the safety of all of our children and pick up and drop off times can get very busy. If another person will be picking up your child from school, please let us know with as much notice as possible and inform them that they will need to present a current photo I.D. If they are not currently listed on your enrollment

information as an authorized pick up person we will need to have received a confirmed phone call, e-mail or fax from you giving your permission.

Late or After Hours Pick-up

In the event that you will be picking your child up after our school hours, a fee of \$20 for the first 15 minutes and then \$1 per minute thereafter will be charged. Two staff members will need to stay until you arrive and the fee will go directly to them as it is an after hour situation. After 15 minutes, we will make phone calls. If a parent or legal guardian can't be reached an alternate authorized pick-up and/or emergency contact will be called. If all attempts to contact a guardian, authorized pick-up or emergency contact are unsuccessful and the child remains at the school more than two hours, social services will be contacted.

Unauthorized Pick-Up

If an unauthorized individual arrives without prior communication from you (parent/guardian), we will contact you immediately. If we reach you and this is approved then you can give permission over the phone for them to take your child. If we cannot get ahold of you or if you do not give consent, we will not release your child.

Court Orders

Please give us any court documentation regarding individuals who are not allowed to pick up your child, be on the premises etc. Without proper documentation we cannot prevent non-custodial parents/guardians from picking up a child. We know that these are challenging events, we appreciate the information you give us and will keep it confidential.

Transitions at Drop Off & Pick Up Times

As your child starts at school there may be some tears initially. Children, of all ages, adjust to transitions differently and need a little time to settle in. Typically, any sadness or crying stops within minutes (or seconds) of your departure. It often helps drop off time by talking with them about what is going to happen, prior to your arrival at school. Please make your goodbye brief, let your child know when you will be back and then make sure to say goodbye. Please feel free at any time to come by and peek in so you can see for yourself how they are adjusting, or call to touch base with teachers.

Safety in the Parking Lot

Please use caution in the parking lot while entering and exiting. Often times it is a very busy place and our children are hard to see due to their height. In the winter time, despite our best efforts, it often becomes icy in the area by the front entrance when it melts and refreezes, please use extra caution.

Meals

We offer a well-balanced morning and afternoon snack. Lunch is not provided by Creative Minds. You are responsible for bringing your child a nutritious lunch every day. Until your child turns three there are foods that are choking hazards and we cannot serve. Please pay close attention to the information that is given to you by your classroom teacher. If items are sent to school that pose a choking hazard, we will send them back home to you with a reminder. We know that children have a broader menu at home but we must follow the guidelines set out for the safety of all of the children at our facility.

Infants/Toddler Feeding

We will feed infants and young toddler's formula or breast milk, whatever you prefer. We need you to bring in pre-mixed bottles. Please do not bring in any extra, as we are not able to keep bottles overnight. All food and bottles must be dumped or sent home at the end of the day. You may bring in a can of formula in its original container in case your child goes through what you have prepared. Bottles will be made according to the directions on the label. We must throw away any formula or breastmilk that has not been consumed, an hour after it was heated up. We can store frozen breastmilk in our freezer for up to 3 weeks, but we cannot re-freeze unused breast milk. We do feed the babies on demand although we try to keep to a schedule as much as possible. Having good communication between parents and caregivers is essential in working to meet the needs of each child, please relay any preferences you have to us. We feel this is where the communication between families and the caregivers is very important to best fit the needs of each individual baby. Keep in mind, this may differ day to day depending on when your baby last ate prior to drop-off. Breast feeding mothers are always welcome to drop in and feed their child during the day.

Bottles/Sippy Cups

For Infants and Young Toddlers We can give infants formula or breast milk in bottles. If it is something other than breastmilk or formula, such as milk or juice it must be in a sippy cup. The bottles and sippy cups must be pre-made when they are brought in. Licensing mandates that bottles are be labeled with the child's first and last name and the contents of the bottle and/or sippy cup. We highly encourage families to transition to a sippy cup prior to moving into the One's Classroom. We understand there is a transition period from breastmilk/formula to milk as well as from a bottle to a sippy cup. It is important that the teachers and families are doing the same thing at home and at school, this will help with consistency and transitioning.

Solid Food

All baby food must be in its original UNOPENED baby food jar and all home-made purees or finger foods must either be in the original container or labeled with first and last name and the contents.

Doctor's Note

We need a doctor's note for the following: -Cereal mixed in a bottle - Medication of any kind - To be propped up while sleeping due to indigestion or other related conditions - Sleeping positions, other than what is suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics including swaddling

WE ARE A NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT

We cannot have anything containing any kind of nuts, please read labels carefully and check – it is surprising how many things have nuts! We also cannot have whole eggs (items with eggs blended in – muffins, etc are ok) We have children who have life threatening allergies to both.

Birthdays and Special Occasion Treats

You are welcome to bring in treats for holidays or birthdays, however, they must be store bought and not contain any nuts.

Daily Sheets

Infants, One's, and Two's have Daily Information Sheets. Teachers will keep track of diapers, eating and sleeping throughout the day and will make them available for you to take home at the end of each day. If your child is in the Infant Room Toddler One's room there is an area on the top of the sheet for you to fill out as you

drop off your child in the morning. This information lets us know how their night was, their last feeding, their last diaper change, as well as any special instructions that will be helpful for your child's teachers to know.

Nap/Quiet Time

It is required by licensing that all children under the age of 5, have a rest time during the day. Nap times are a little different for each classroom, please see your child's classroom schedule. We want to create a calm cozy environment for the children to rest/sleep. Please try not to pick-up or drop-off during rest times.

Infant Sleeping

Infants nap on their own schedule. We follow Safe Sleep guidelines. Infants need to sleep in their crib and must be placed on their back. There cannot be any blankets or stuffed animals in the crib with them. They are allowed to have a pacifier if they use one and you can bring in a sleep sack if you would like that used during naps. Licensing prohibits us from allowing infants to sleep in car seats, swings, bouncers, or even on the floor. If an infant falls asleep anywhere but a crib, we are required to move them to a crib. While we respect whatever sleeping arrangements you may have at home, keep in mind that we can only allow infants to sleep in a crib. If they are used to co-sleeping or sleeping in a swing, they may have difficulties sleeping here at school, in a crib.

Diaper/Toilet Training

Diaper changes are scheduled every two hours, or as needed around their schedules. We include diapering information on your daily sheet. You are responsible for providing diapers, wipes and diaper cream. Once your child is in the two-year-old room, we will work with parents to help encourage and support potty training. As your child progresses we will maintain good contact regarding the use of underwear or pullups, the need for extra clothing (clothing they can get on and off themselves helps a lot in fostering independence) etc. We want it to be a positive and successful experience for everyone.

Classroom Policies and Procedures Supervision of Children

It is a requirement that teachers know how many children are in their classroom at all times. A daily count sheet is maintained throughout the day and counts are taken every hour as well as updating as children arrive and depart. These are kept with teachers at all times during the day. Please make sure to communicate with your child's teachers upon arrival and departure.

Guidance and Discipline

We believe in positive guidance first. It is our responsibility to create an environment which is interesting and engaging for the child and set up in such a way as to avoid mistaken behavior. Beyond that, when mistaken behavior does occur, we prefer to use conflict as a learning tool. Children are still trying to figure out what is appropriate and what is not and implementing punishment is not effective or appropriate for young children. It is our job to give children the tools to be successful in meeting their needs and to encourage positive conflict resolution with other children. Teaching and modeling pro-social behavior is an integral piece of education, and we want each child to develop the social and emotional competency to thrive. In some situations, children may be asked to sit or stand next to a teacher to "take a break." If there is an altercation or challenge between children we work to enable them or help them +come up with a solution. That solution could be talking, a hug, an expression of sorry or empathy or simply walking away from the situation appropriately. We want them to come up with a solution that works for everyone involved if possible. Other methods of guidance include logical and natural consequences, redirection, substitution, and role modeling. We encourage taking care of our friends and establishing a caring respectful community. Learning to take turns is

emphasized as are the positive benefits of sharing although it is not required. At times we act as an 'announcer' to help them verbally process the interaction. If need be, a conference may be required to discuss ongoing problems. As changes in a child's life may affect his or her behavior, we ask that you inform us of any major changes, i.e. divorce, death, unemployment etc. We consider every parent a crucial part of a 'Team' with the same goal of helping their child become the best they can be and we truly value your input. No child will ever be hit, spanked, belittled, or otherwise intimidated. No corporal punishment will be used. Children will be treated with courtesy, respect, and patience. Guidance will be according to the child's age and understanding level. If a child's behavior is dangerous or disruptive there will be a verbal and or written incident report. If your child receives three or more incident reports a meeting may be set up with you, the teacher(s), and administration to discuss the situation further. In some cases, your child may not be allowed to attend Creative Minds. No child will be subject to departure without a formal meeting.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year; once in the fall and once in the spring. Conferences are a great opportunity to have some quiet one-on-one time with your child's teacher (s) to learn more about your child's behavior, developmental progress, and social emotional and physical needs. This also provides you the chance to discuss concerns or questions you may have about your child. Information is sent home at least two weeks prior to conferences allowing you time to schedule. If you cannot make the designated conference time, you may talk with your child's teacher to schedule another time.

Personal Belongings/Toys

Personal belongings, such as toys, are not allowed unless otherwise stated by your child's teacher. Please remember that each age group/classroom has specific guidelines and some items pose choking hazards to the younger children. Most toys also contain age warnings that must be followed. We cannot be responsible for any lost or damaged items brought from home.

Emergency Procedures

Fire Emergency

In the event of a fire emergency, the building will be evacuated. Teachers will have attendance records before leaving the building. They will also have First Aid kits and emergency contact information for each child. We practice emergency fire drills once every quarter, to ensure proper emergency evacuations.

Tornado

In the case of a tornado, children will be immediately grouped into a central room, hallway or bathroom. We practice emergency tornado drills once every quarter, to ensure proper emergency evacuations.

Inclement or excessively hot weather

Children will not be taken outside if the temperature is below 10 degrees, or higher than 95 degrees. If the temperature is between 10 and 20 degrees, with teacher digression, the children may go outside for a small amount of time. If the weather is too cold or too hot to go outside, the children will be provided with an alternative gross motor activity indoors.

Lost child

In the case of a lost child, immediate building and grounds search will be conducted. Teachers will check to make sure the child was not signed out by an authorized adult. If the child is not located or accounted for, you and 911 will be called.

Children Who Are Not at Pick-up Site for Afterschool Care

If a child is listed as needing after school care but they are not at the school to be transported to Creative Minds, the driver will call the school to see if they attended school that day and we will also try and get a hold of you. If we cannot locate the child, 911 will be called. Please contact Creative Minds before 3PM if you do not need us to pick your child up from school.

First Aid, CPR and Universal Precautions

At least one teacher, per classroom, is required to have updated training in First Aid, CPR and Universal Precautions.

Security Door

Only current staff and currently enrolled families have access to the security code that opens our front door. Any visitor who comes to Creative Minds must present a valid ID. All visitors must always sign in at the front office and will be escorted to their destination. We do not offer public restrooms or telephone use.

Field Trips and Van Procedures

We provide transportation for children ages 3 and older for field trips. We must have a Transportation Authorization Form signed by you in order for your child to go on any Field Trip with Creative Minds, in the Creative Minds van. Child to teacher ratios are kept lower for field trips. We are always happy to have parents and/or grandparent volunteers join us. A list of children and teachers attending the field trip will be left at the Center. Teachers will bring emergency contact information as well as medications on the field trip. Teachers will have their cell phones in case of an emergency. If a child arrives after the van has left for a field trip the child may be placed in another classroom for the day unless it is possible for you to drop your child off at the location of the field trip. If you drop your child off at a field trip location it will be mandatory to sign your child in with the teacher accompanying the excursion. In the event of an emergency, children will be kept in a safe environment until help arrives. If necessary, you and/or 911 will be called.

Before and After School Transportation

We provide transportation to West Jefferson Elementary and Elk Creek Elementary. We must have a Transportation Authorization Form signed by you in order for us to pick-up or drop-off your child at either school. The van driver will keep continuous records of both drop off and pick up of all children. We reserved the right to take children to school late, or pick them early, or keep them at Creative Minds all day if the road conditions are unsafe for travel. You will be notified if one of these decisions is made. Please let the Director know if you do not need before or after school care on your regularly scheduled day so that we are always up to date with the number of children we are picking up and dropping off each day and can notify the Elementary School with any changes.

Child Abuse Reporting

It is our responsibility to make sure the children in our care are safe at all times. If we suspect or witness abuse or neglect, we are mandated by law to record and report all incidences.

Complaint Procedures

Please discuss any concerns you have with the Director or Assistant Director so that we can attempt to resolve any issues or conflicts. If necessary, a formal complaint can be made to: Colorado Department of Human Services 1575 Sherman St. Denver, Co 80203 Phone: 303-866-5958