



CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC

PARENT HANDBOOK



UPDATED JUNE 2019

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC welcomes all cultures and recognizes all religious and cultural holidays. We bear no bias to ethnicity, race, sex or age

Our Mission

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC recognizes that each child is unique. We are an integrative learning facility that offers a safe and nurturing environment for all types of children. Children ranging from 6 weeks to 10 years of age will benefit from our structured and supportive programming that encourages and fosters social, educational and developmental growth. We are a STAR 3 accredited center with Keystone Stars.

Philosophy of Learning and Development

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC recognizes and utilizes all Pennsylvania Standards for early intervention, early childhood and pre-school. We use Teaching Strategies Gold curriculum. Teaching Strategies, the national leader in high-quality resources and solutions for early learning educators, announced that its early childhood education platform, MyTeachingStrategies™, was named a 2017 SIIA Codie Award finalist in the Best Pre-K and Early Childhood Learning Solution category. For over 30 years, Teaching Strategies has developed resources that enable educators to build meaningful teacher-child relationships that open the door to lifelong learning.

Duty to Warn

All Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC staff are mandated reporters. This requires all staff to report any reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.

Family Involvement

Family involvement is very important, and we encourage our parents to stay involved. Strong communication lines between parents, directors and teachers will be developed and maintained in order to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Another great way for parents to be involved is to volunteer for field trips and other center activities that may require a few helping hands. State and Federal clearances are required for all volunteers. We ask that you approve extended stays in your child's classroom with the office and your child's classroom teacher as this can be confusing for a child and make the daily transition more difficult. Office staff need to be aware of all persons in the facility for emergency purposes if evacuation were to be necessary. To avoid activity and curriculum disruptions daily visits are limited to five to ten minutes unless there is a special event such as mother's or father's day being held.

We believe that the center and the families it services are a team. Daily Progress Notes of your child's day will be sent home to keep you informed of your child's daily activities. A monthly calendar of events will also be clearly posted in each classroom. We encourage parents to communicate with their classroom teachers and center directors, as we will also stay in close communication with you! Some of the best ways to communicate with your classroom teachers is through the Remind APP. Your child's teacher(s) can give you their classroom Remind app sign up code. Please note, supervision of the children in our care is our number one priority. If you message your child's teacher, they may be busy with the children and unable to answer you straight away. If it is an emergency, please call the center.

Program Hours

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC Hours of Operation are Monday – Friday Open 6:00 a.m. Close 6:30 p.m.

Inclusion Program

Our inclusion program includes fully integrative classrooms at a 1 to 10 ratio that utilize specialized instruction to modify curriculum to meet any individualized needs. CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC recognizes and supports the need for outside occupational, physical, developmental, therapeutic support, or speech therapists as well as any consultants collaborating with the families. IEP must be kept on record for child receiving services while enrolled and appropriate services must be provided during child's scheduled time in the classroom.

Cuties Care Diaper Service

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC supplies your children with new Cuties brand Premium Baby Diapering Products that take care of all their needs with high performance baby diapers, pre-moistened wipes & training pants. This new convenient service allows our parents to have one less thing to worry about remembering to bring and provides our staff with a consistent level of premium quality products, allowing them to provide the best diapering care for all our children. Cuties Care School Supply Program is included with your child's tuition for ages 6 weeks through 3 years of age.

Vacation, Sick Days, Holidays

Monthly tuition is based upon the days your child is enrolled. Tuition rates are based on 52 weeks of program service per year for each child enrolled. You do not receive credit for holidays in which the center is closed, your child is ill or on vacation. If a holiday falls on a weekend, then CMLC will modify the holiday closing. If your child is going to be absent due to sickness or vacation, please inform CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC so that we may adequately plan for staffing.

Creative Minds will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Black Friday
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day

Application and Enrollment

Enrollment is determined on a first come, first serve basis. Upon submitting your application and application fee, a center director will contact you on your enrollment status. The application fee is \$50.00 per child. After acceptance into the CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC program, a meeting will be held with parents to discuss the family contract, individualized child planning, curriculum, family communication, and classroom placement. This meeting will facilitate the transition of your child into our program. All families will be required to sign and follow a tuition agreement. Two weeks' notice is required for any schedule changes or unenrollment. Upon full capacity, CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC will develop a waiting list for those who have completed the application process and notification of availability will be provided as vacancies arise in specified classrooms as appropriate to child-staff ratios determined by Pennsylvania State codes. Upon availability, new clients enrolling in the center with more than 2 weeks' notice are subject to a hold fee of \$50.00. This fee will be applied to their first invoice. This hold fee will hold a slot for your child for 30 days. If you choose not to enroll after paying the hold fee, the hold fee is non-refundable. If after 30 days the child has not started a permanent schedule, another deposit of \$50.00 will hold their slot for subsequent 30 days timeframes. All subsequent deposits are non-refundable and will not be credited to the family's account.

Termination Policy

Occasionally, a child will experience some difficulty in adapting to the daycare's environment or abiding by the daycare rules of behavior. A conference will be scheduled if your child should experience some difficulty. We will work closely with you to see if the problem can be resolved. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive to the group, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child from daycare.

You must give a two weeks' notice when voluntarily withdrawing your child from Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC. You will be responsible for all final payments through the end of the notice period, whether in attendance or not.

If the rules and policies set forth are not followed, we reserve the right to terminate the daycare contract agreement at any time. In such an event, we will be paid in full through the end of the week in which such termination occurs.

The childcare arrangements will be terminated immediately for any of the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to comply with the policies set forth in the parent handbook.
- Failure to comply with the contract.
- Destructive or hurtful behavior of a child that persists even with parent cooperation in stopping the behavior (including biting, or behavior that poses threat to children in care or caregivers).
- Non-payment of childcare or late fees and/or recurring late payment of fees.

- Repeated failure to pick up the child at scheduled times.
- Failure to show up for 5 consecutive days without any communication.
- Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- Blatant disrespect towards the provider or provider's family.
- If a parent knowingly brings their child ill.
- Consistent child-rearing style differences between the parent and provider.
- False information given by a parent either verbally or in writing.

If for any reason legal services are needed, Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC, or Emilie Stock will not be responsible for any legal or court costs incurred.

Tuition Policies and Procedures

Your child's tuition is a flat rate based upon your child's age. This rate is calculated on a 52-week calendar year. This means that tuition will remain constant throughout the year, despite missed days your child may incur. Tuition will be due in advance. Tuition will be due on either a bi-weekly or monthly payment schedule. Families will receive an invoice denoting attendance and payment schedule. Once payment schedules are confirmed with a center director, this schedule cannot be altered until the beginning of the next calendar year.

Tuition will be payable to CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER LLC. Families may pay by cash, check, credit or debit card. All checks should be addressed to Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC. A fee of \$25.00 will be issued to any checks that do not clear. A late fee of five dollars per day will be assessed for late payments.

Credit Card Recurring Payments

Schedule your payments to be automatically charged to your credit card. Just complete and sign the credit card recurring payment authorization form to get started. Feel free to stop in the office at any time to receive a form.

- It's convenient (saving you time and postage)
- Your payment is always on time (even if you're out of town), eliminating late charges

Credit card recurring payments are highly recommended. An authorization form can be obtained from the office

Schedule Options

Creative Minds offers several schedule options: a five-day option, three day option, or a two day option. Families will complete a schedule for their child upon enrollment. This schedule allows CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC to adequately staff the center, and we ask that you maintain a consistent schedule throughout the year. Family requests for schedule changes during the calendar year will be considered and implemented as quickly as possible in order to allow classroom or schedule vacancies to be filled. * One or four day options are available, but limited, and need to be discussed with a center director*

Late Pick Up Fee's

Children must be picked up at their scheduled time so that we may always comply with state licensure ratios of children to adults . This is a strict policy that will always be adhered to.

If half day children are picked up late, parents will be charged a late fee according to the following:

1-10 minutes late: \$25.00
11-15 minutes late: \$30.00
15-20 minutes late: \$35.00
20 minutes or more: \$45.00

After 20 minutes, an emergency contact person will be called. If we are unable to reach a parent or emergency contact person, the police will be notified.

If full day children are picked up late, parents will be charged a late fee according to the following:

1-10 minutes late: \$25.00
11-15 minutes late: \$30.00
15-20 minutes late: \$35.00
20 minutes or more: \$45.00.

After 20 minutes, an emergency contact person will be called. If we are unable to reach a parent or emergency contact person, the police will be notified.

Drop-In Days Option

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC will meet the needs of drop-in requests for enrolled children whenever possible. Drop in days are only available if your classroom is under room maximum.

The following procedures have been established to ensure quality of our drop-in day's program:

- Parent/Guardian must give call at least 2 hours prior to drop off time to check for availability
- Drop-in day must be coordinated with a program director, they cannot be scheduled with your classroom teacher
- Drop-in days are considered additional time to your child's tuition and will be charged at an hourly rate of \$9.50/ hour.
- If you schedule a drop-in day, and do not bring your child in for the scheduled drop-in day, you will be charged a full drop-in day rate of 8 hours.
- On a Drop-in day, you are to sign your child in and out of the classroom as you would any other day.
- Drop-in days are only available to children currently enrolled in CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC
- Drop-in days are available when your classroom is under room maximum
- Drop-in days are on a first come, first serve basis.

Guidance and Discipline

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC provides transitional meetings for children and parents who are experiencing a transition to a new classroom. Families have the option to participate in a formal meeting with directors to discuss the transition or to engage in an informal transition meeting with the classroom teacher. If parents/guardians choose to not participate in a transitional meeting, please see a director to sign a waiver to such a meeting. Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC believes in least intrusive forms of guidance and discipline. ALL staff members are required to utilize these methods. We promise that we will treat you and your child with respect; we will speak to them at eye-level, and facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation and problem-solving skills. Creative Minds staff will promote an environment that is arranged so that a minimum number of “no’s” are necessary and problem-solving skills are developed and strengthened. We will not use corporal punishment, seclusion or yelling as forms of discipline. At times however, it may be necessary to utilize calming strategies, cool-down periods and sensory integration to assist a child having difficulties with following center rules or over-stimulation. These strategies can be further explained by your classroom teacher and are based upon each child individually.

Parking/Dropping Off/Picking Up

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC will have designated drop off parking spots in our parking lot. If these spots are all occupied at the time of your arrival, we ask that you use another parking spot within the parking lot and that you do not leave your car in the way of traffic or on a sidewalk area.

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC has a strict sign-in and sign-out policy for all clients and this is always enforced for your child’s safety.

The policy for signing your child in and out is as follows:

- 1.) Only persons listed in the child’s file will have the ability to sign children in and out of the center.
- 2.) Persons on this list must come to the designated front window at the child’s scheduled time and
 - * identify themselves – provide your photo ID at the front desk prior to walking your child to their designated room.
 - * sign in the child with their name, time of arrival or departure at the classroom destination
- 3.) If you are signing in you may walk your child to their room. For transitional purposes, we ask that you do not stay for a period longer than 5 minutes unless otherwise arranged with the classroom teacher. Children are likely to cry when they are dropped off, but their classroom teacher will know how to calm them and get them excited for their day. This is a much easier task when parents are out of sight. If you have concerns in reference to this strategy, feel free to discuss it with a center director. We know that all children are not the same!

Emergency Procedures

In the case of an emergency, the Parent/Guardian will be contacted first. If we are unable to reach the parent or guardian, the emergency contacts listed in the child’s file will be contacted. If we are unable to reach any person listed on the child’s emergency contact list, the police will be contacted and if medically necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital.

Health Precautions

All precautions will be taken to ensure the health and safety of children within the center. CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC utilizes universal health precautions in sterilizing, hand washing, diapering/toileting and preparing meals. In accordance with national childcare standards, all infant classrooms maintain a “shoe free zone” policy in their classrooms. Medications that can be administered at home, should be. However, some medications may need to be given at the time your child is at the center. Parents/Guardians may request to have the center administer the medication by completing a medication release form. All medication must be in its original container, labeled with the child’s name, name of the drug, directions for administration, and name of PCP/Psychiatrist. Medications will be stored in areas that are not accessible to children and according to pharmacy instructions. Each child’s medicine will be bagged individually with his/her name on the bag and instructions for administration on the bag. When medications are no longer needed, they will be returned to the parents/guardians. They cannot be disposed of at the center.

Parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children when they show symptoms of any deviation from normal health. If a child becomes ill at CMLC the director or teacher will immediately notify the parents. Children will not be permitted at our school with any of the following conditions:

1. Fever of 100.5 degrees under arm (auxiliary) or higher, and if they also have one or more of the following: diarrhea, earache, shows signs of irritability or confusion, sore throat, rash.
2. Vomiting on two or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
3. Diarrhea – three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period.
4. Draining rash or undiagnosed rash lasting over a 24-hour period.
5. Eye discharge or pink eye. Children can be readmitted after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection, or 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
6. Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
7. Open oozing sores and scabs, unless properly covered and 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
8. Head lice – until treatment is effective. Parents shall be advised to make alternate plans for care in the event that the child becomes ill and is not able to attend CMLC.

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.**

Diapering and Toilet Training

Staff will be trained in proper diapering techniques. Universal Precautions that guard against disease require a change of disposable gloves, washing of children and caregivers' hands and sanitation between the changing of each child. Children will not be left unattended at a changing table. We are happy to assist families in toilet training when applicable. When you are toilet training your child, please let your teacher know the procedures you are using and what works best for your family. We will try to use the same techniques you are using so that we can maintain consistent teaching strategies.

Weather Policies

In the case of inclement weather please check KDKA-TV, KDKA website and WPXI, as well as Creative Minds website and on the Remind app. School closings and delays will continue to be announced following the top and bottom of the hour newscasts in the mornings from the time they are received, through 7:00 am. After the full list is read at 7:00 am, any and all updated information only will be included in the verbal list beginning after the 7:30 am newscast.

If we schedule a delay, this means that the center will open at the time listed. For example, if your child's schedule is 8:30 am to 4 pm, and we are delayed opening until 10:00 a.m., your child's schedule for that day would be 10 am to 4pm. If we are scheduled to close, we will not hold any childcare or preschool services for the entire day.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide discounts or credits toward days that are affected by weather conditions. However, it will be a rare and unusual incident that we hold a delay or closure.

Meals and Snacks/ Allergies

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC will provide breakfast, a healthy morning and afternoon snack, with milk, water, or juice as beverages. We ask that you provide the center with your child's lunch and/or dinner. We can heat up and cook food and would be happy to do so for you. **CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC is a nut free center that also recognizes GFCF diets as well as other specialized dietary considerations.**

Mealtimes are listed on your child's daily class schedule which is posted in your child's classroom. Please note that any child arriving past a scheduled mealtime should be fed prior to arrival.

Nut Free Policy

Due to the increasing nut allergy that affects so many children, CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC is a nut free center. When you are bringing in treats for your child or your child's classroom, please be sure that these treats are nut free. If your child has a severe nut allergy, you may wish to bring in "back up treats" for them to eat on birthday party or holiday party events.

Video Viewing Policies

As a rule, we do not believe in using videos as teaching tools. However, there may be times when children will watch a movie as a special class activity or as a precursor to a special activity.

Birthday and Holiday Policies

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC will recognize all major holidays including Christmas, Hanukah, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Easter, Valentines day, and Independence day through art activities, stories, associated lesson plans, etc. Other holidays can also be recognized upon parental request and directors' approval and activities can be coordinated as appropriate with classroom teachers. Birthdays will be celebrated and parents may bring a special snack in observance of the child's birthday; however, all allergies must be accounted for and the structured routine of the classroom should not be disturbed. CMLC will incorporate any birthday observances into classroom curriculum via special helpers, etc.

Rest/Quiet Time Policies

A quiet rest or nap time will be provided every day for all children. Each infant, toddler, and preschooler will have their own bedding. Teaching teams will encourage resting utilizing calming and quieting techniques. Each child has their own special routine for going to sleep and a favorite blanket or toy may be sent from home to assist them in resting and relaxing. Children who no longer require a nap or do not fall asleep will still need a period of quiet restfulness. Classroom teachers will provide these children with quiet toys/activities during nap time.

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC Staff

All Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC staff are required to have CPR/First Aid training, Act 33 and 34 Clearances, FBI clearances, and up- to- date trainings as required by the directors to maintain quality performance.

Children's Belongings

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC will provide age-appropriate learning materials, toys, and play equipment for all children enrolled at the center. Please do not send special toys or other favorite items from home to the center, except for a blanket or stuffed animal for nap time or for designated show and tell per child.

Referral Bonus

CREATIVE MINDS LEARNING CENTER, LLC is now offering an enrollment bonus. Any family, who refers another client to CMLC, will receive a \$25.00 credit per new client enrolled.

Enrollment Fee

All enrollment applications are subject to a \$50.00 fee per child. This includes summer enrollment, yearly enrollment, temporary enrollment and drop in only care.

Summer/Extended Leave Hold

For families who take more than one-week vacation or keep their children home for the summer, a hold fee will be necessary to hold your child's spot when they return.

The holding fee is to compensate the center for giving up the right to fill the opening. The center loses a lot of income during this holding period. Families are required to pay the holding fee upfront, or pay a set amount each week. This holding fee is "non-refundable" if the parent does not return on the day that is agreed.

Hold fee's will be 50% of the family's regular tuition rate. This is a one-time, nonrefundable fee. This fee hold's your spot for a maximum of 12 weeks. This fee does not apply to any future invoices.

School Age Summer Program

Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC offers a 12-week Summer Program for school age children from Kindergarten to 10 years of age. The program runs for 12-weeks from June to the last week in August. A \$100.00 hold fee is required in March.

School Age Summer Program

Children who are on summer vacation from elementary school are invited to enroll in our School Age Summer Program. This program is for all elementary aged children up to the age of 10. During the summer program, children will participate in field trips, walks to the park, picnic lunches, summer learning and outdoor lessons. In addition, the center will provide entertainment for all aged children from companies such as The Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh Puppet Works, The Wild World of Animals, Elf Entertainment, Mad Science, the local fire department, the local police station and so much more! Due to the high demand of our school age summer program, the summer hold fee will be a non-refundable \$100.00. Space is limited and enrollment will be on a first come-first serve basis. In addition, an inventory of field trips and events for the school age summer program will be sent home in May. Parents will sign their children up for each event they would like to attend and pre-pay for the program. Because the center has to pre-pay for the group, there will be no reimbursement if the child does not attend the field trip.

Field Trips

Field trips and nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program and will be taken periodically. The center will provide the same adequate responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided children while in attendance at the center. Your permission for your child to participate in walking excursions is part of this agreement. You will be notified of all field trips. We will occasionally take classroom field trips to museums, parks, apple orchards, and other community places. Families will be notified prior to any trips involving transportation. A permission slip must be signed and returned--including emergency phone numbers for that day. Parent volunteers are welcome to assist with field trips (and other special events) if child abuse and state clearances are obtained. A child may be excluded from participation in a field trip for safety, health, or disciplinary reasons.

More information on this program can be received by contacting the office.

Parent Agreement Form (to be signed and returned) I have read and understand that our family will follow the practices and policies set forth in the parent handbook for Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC. I know that if I have any questions, I am to contact the directors of the center, Sammi Whittaker, and Emilie Stock, for answers to my questions. I understand that it is my right to file a complaint with Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare if Creative Minds Learning Center, LLC does not follow state and federal regulations and all formal attempts at discussing the issues with the above listed directors have been fruitless.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date_____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date_____

Director Signature_____ Date_____

Director Signature _____ Date_____