



*Creative Minds
Child Development Center*

*Infant * Toddler * Preschool*

PARENT HANDBOOK

1 (408) 445-0101
www.creativemindscdc.org
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*Creative Minds CDC does not discriminate on the basis
of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, or disability.*

Table of Contents

Welcome & Positive Guidance Statement	2
Arrival and Attendance	4
Birthdays	4
Bottles	4
California Immunization Registry (CAIR2)	5
California Licensing Requirements	5
Communication	6
Custody and Visitation	6
Drop-Off and Pick-Up from School	7
Emergency Preparedness	8
Family Involvement Volunteer Hours	8
Field Trips	9
Gate Codes	9
Good Fit	9
Illness, Injury, or Medical Emergency at School	10
Immunizations	11
Incidental Medical Services	12
Late Pick-Up Fees	12
Lost and Found	12
Lunches and Snacks	13
Medication	13
Nap Time	14
Outdoor Activities	14
Parent Partnership	14
Parents' Rights	15
Parent Visitations	15
Personal Employment of Teachers	15
Personal Hygiene	16
Personal Rights of Children	16
Personal Toys	16
Primary Caregiving	17
ProCare	17
Recycling	18
Safe Sleep Policy for Infants	18
Scheduling	19
School Closure	19
Special Needs	20
Student Teachers and Observers	20
Supplies and Clothing	21
Vacations and Absences	21
Waiting List	21
Checklists	23

Welcome!

Welcome to Creative Minds CDC! The first few years of a child's life are very important. These first years will shape your children, and we are thrilled to be a part of this process. Families are always children's first teachers; we feel honored to be their second. We serve children from six weeks to six years of age with a wide range of programs.

As a Reggio Emilia-inspired program, every aspect of what we do with the children is focused on respect. The teachers at Creative Minds CDC believe that a child's sense of self-esteem is the centerpiece of how they view the world. When children are treated with respect, they in turn will treat others with respect. If children are taught to be caring and respectful toward our environment, our planet will prosper and give back ten-fold. If children are taught to care about and be sensitive to their peers, school will always be a welcoming and exciting place to spend the day.

At Creative Minds CDC, our philosophy is to provide a developmentally appropriate environment for children. We strongly believe in encouraging children to develop their self-help, language and social-emotional skills in addition to creative arts and academics. Our facility is conducive to incorporating the outdoors into our daily curriculum. Physical development and brain development at this age have a close relationship and we place a huge emphasis on this connection.

The African adage that it takes a whole village to raise a child is very true, and Creative Minds is the start of that community for our children and families. We believe every child is naturally creative, curious, and loves to learn. It's our job as parents and teachers to present opportunities where children can be stimulated and challenged in a positive, non-threatening environment, where each can explore and use their imagination and discover their own innate style of learning.

Positive Guidance Statement

As part of Creative Minds CDC's philosophy, the children are taught self-discipline through positive guidance. Teachers use redirection and natural consequences to help children achieve this goal. Children are encouraged to be aware of their own actions and to help others to remember how to use classroom materials and be respectful of one another.

Children are taught to solve their own problems through modeled behavior. Whenever possible, while solving a conflict, children are encouraged to seek a solution through their own discussion and interaction. Teachers will facilitate if needed, but generally refrain from solving it *for* the children. A positive learning experience from a conflict could end with the teacher complimenting, "I am so glad that you and Josh were able to work things out."

We recognize positive behavior with such statements as, "Jessica, you showed a lot of patience." Children who are learning to control themselves need to receive reinforcement through frequent recognition. The emphasis is on children's inner qualities and habits/skills within their control, rather than on surface-level compliments such as "good job" or "you're so cute."

When a child behaves inappropriately, they are stopped and then guided to positive alternatives. Children are also given choices to either participate in group activities or find a quiet activity alone until they are ready to join the group again. Attention-seeking behavior is ignored whenever possible, and positive behavior is reinforced.

We want our children to experience natural consequences to their behavior. For example, if Tanya pours out the whole tub of bubble solution, there will be no more bubble play that morning. Learning the natural consequence in this scenario is an important socializing skill.

Absolutely no corporal punishment is allowed at Creative Minds. There will be no violation of personal rights.

Creative Minds CDC Policies

Arrival and Attendance

We prefer for all children to arrive no later than 9:00 AM (9:15 at the latest, especially for preschool). Please try to schedule other needed appointments for your child around their school day. The ritual of coming to school on time and leaving on time is very important for children. It is less disruptive for your child, the teacher and the class and it ensures that they get to participate in all of the morning activities. Your child will have a much more successful day if they start the day with the rest of the class.

If your child is going to be absent or arrive or go home at a different time than usual, please notify their teacher. You can also always call the school at 1-408-445-0101 or send a message through ProCare or email richa@creativemindscdc.org to let us know.

We offer different program options: Infant/toddler (under 24 months), Toddler/2s (2–3 years), Preschool (3–5 years), full-day, part-day, extended care, and summer program options (if space is available). We offer different programs to meet the varied needs of children and parents in a cost-effective manner.

Birthdays

Birthdays are one of the most personal and individual events in our lives. Different families have different ways of recognizing these milestones. If parents choose to celebrate birthdays at school, we can help integrate the celebration into our class schedule, so please do discuss this in advance with your classroom teacher.

Children are welcome to bring a special treat for the whole class to have at snack time. Some ideas for small healthy treats include trail mix, cut fruit, dried fruit, yogurt, popcorn, etc. Non-food treats are also welcome, such as pencils, play dough, etc. This is a great time to be creative and remember the nutritional contents of treats. (Please also be aware of food allergies in the class. Your child's teacher can tell you which ingredients to avoid if possible. For homemade treats, please always bring a list of ingredients or copy of the recipe.)

Bottles (Infant Room)

We follow safe bottle-handling practices based on current research and recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the US Department of Health and Human Services. This means that formula bottles can be kept at room temperature for **up to 1 hour** after heating, and breastmilk bottles for **up to 4 hours**, but must be discarded after that.

We recognize that formula is expensive and breastmilk is precious, so we do not wish to waste either. If your child does not always finish their bottle, you are encouraged to send more bottles with less milk in each one. We can offer two small bottles in one feeding if your child is still hungry.

Bottles are always heated in warm water, not in a microwave. As with everything else at school, please be sure to label every bottle and lid that you send to school every day.

California Immunization Registry (CAIR2)

All students' immunization records are stored at the California Immunization Registry (CAIR2). It is a secure, confidential and statewide computerized immunization information system for California residents. Under California law, we use CAIR only to see which shots/TB tests children have received or need. This information will be shared in CAIR:

- your child's name, sex, birth date, and birthplace,
- parents'/guardians' names,
- details about your child's shots, TB tests, and dates given, and
- limited non-medical information to correctly identify your child.

Your child's information is safe. What's entered in CAIR is treated like private medical information. Under California law, only your doctor's office, health plan, or public health department may see your address and phone number.

California Licensing Requirements

Parents will be provided with the following forms that they need to fill out and submit prior to enrollment:

- ✓ Copy of admission contract
- ✓ Notification of Parents' Rights form (Lic. 995 + Lic. 995E)
- ✓ Personal Rights form (Lic. 613A)
- ✓ Identification and Emergency Information (Lic. 700)
- ✓ Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment form (Lic. 627)
- ✓ Child's Preadmission Health History — Parents' Report (Lic. 702)
- ✓ Physician's Report (Lic. 701)
Medical assessment required, including TB skin testing if indicated by the child's physician.
- ✓ Immunization requirements met (recorded on Physician's Report or records attached)
- ✓ Needs and Services Plan (for infants, or for older children with special needs)
- ✓ Parent Consent for Administration of Medications and Medication Chart (Lic. 9921) for any medication to be given at school, plus additional documentation for certain medications
- ✓ Other forms as required

Communication

We value open, direct and constructive communication between our parents and school community. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please call us or email us. We

encourage parents to ask questions about matters before they become stressful issues. Classroom concerns should be addressed through the teacher. If you have broader school issues, please discuss them with the director.

In addition to in-person conversations, we use the ProCare app for many types of messaging. (See the “ProCare” section later in this handbook.) We also may use Zoom or other platforms to communicate with families or connect families with each other.

We send out periodic emails and post documentation panels in the classrooms on a regular basis. Please add the following email addresses to your safe list so we don’t end up in your spam folder:

- richa@creativemindsdc.org
- greenroom@creativemindsdc.org
- roseroom@creativemindsdc.org
- blueroom@creativemindsdc.org
- purpleroom@creativemindsdc.org

We send a monthly newsletter and calendar through ProCare to highlight special events or projects. If your child is running low on diapers, spare clothes, etc., you will receive a ProCare message. We also use ProCare for “ouch reports” in case of minor accidents or injuries during the day and “illness reports” if your child becomes sick at school.

Custody & Visitation

We recognize that family structures come in many forms. For families with divorced, separated, or single parents who share custody, we will honor whatever court-ordered visitation agreement is legally in place. A written agreement signed by both parents is acceptable if no court-ordered agreement exists. If necessary, we reserve the right to require a copy of this written agreement, as well as a calendar of when each parent is supposed to pick up the child. In that case, we will only release the child to the parent on the calendar unless that parent provides written consent for an exception.

Regardless of the situation, our first priority is your child’s security and well-being. To this end, we require that parents communicate directly with each other and refrain from passing messages through the teacher or through the child. We also require that parents work out their agreement off school grounds, and then provide us with the results. We cannot facilitate custody or visitation negotiations at school. This is intended to keep school as a safe, peaceful place for the children, especially in the midst of changes at home. Thank you for your cooperation.

Drop-off and Pick-up from School

Drop Off at School

All children need to be checked in/out *daily* through the ProCare app. This can be done on your own smart device or the tablet in the classroom. If you activate “location services” on your own device, ProCare will automatically help remind you to sign in/out when you’re on school

grounds. The combination of GPS location and a QR code enables parents to do contactless check-in/check-out.

When dropping your child off at school, please bring them to their classroom teacher, and when you say good-bye, be positive. If your child feels they are coming to school because you want them to get a good education and have fun, they will look forward to each day with enthusiasm and anticipation.

Even if you need to do a quick drop-off to get to work on time, please bring your child into the appropriate classroom and make sure you at least make eye contact with the teacher before you leave. Under no circumstances are children to be dropped off alone in the parking lot or in an empty classroom, even if they are capable of walking themselves in. This direct parent-to-teacher handoff is required by law.

Pick-Up from School

Only people you have pre-authorized in writing may pick up your child from school. Even with a written authorization, if we are not familiar with a person, we will ask for photo identification. If you need someone to pick up your child who is not on the pre-authorized list, you must provide written permission in advance or by email or ProCare message. *The person must be at least 18 years old.*

When you arrive in the afternoon, please gather your child's belongings first, sign them out, then come greet your child. When you're ready to go home, please again at least make eye contact with your child's teacher as you leave so we know they're with you and no longer part of our group for the day.

If you have multiple children at our school, please drop off the older child first in the morning and pick up the younger child first in the afternoon. This is because older children are not allowed in the infant room due to licensing regulations and safety concerns.

Please ensure that you arrive by your scheduled pick-up time daily. If you would like to take time to read or play with your child in the classroom or in the yard before going home, you are very welcome to do so. We understand that many of you are driving long distances and enjoy that special time together at the end of the day. However, please do this *prior* to your scheduled pick-up time. (For example, if you are scheduled to pick up at 4:30 and want time to relax together here before going home, please come at 4:00 or 4:15 so you can still leave on time.) This is because state licensing law still counts your child in our classroom ratio as long as they are with us, even if you are here with them as well. (Yes, we know that's silly, but it's the law.) Therefore, staying past your scheduled pick-up time significantly affects our staffing schedule and would be considered a late pick-up, so the late pick-up fee would be applicable. Thank you for your understanding.

Doors & Gates

Pick-up and drop-off times can be very busy and, on occasion, curious children may try to follow you into a different classroom or yard. Of course the teachers are always watching for this, but we also need your help and awareness. Whenever you come or go from our campus, please be certain that the classroom door closes securely behind you, that the gate latches completely

behind you, and that only your child is with you. Thank you for helping to keep all our children safe and secure!

Emergency Preparedness

We have monthly fire drills and quarterly earthquake “duck-and-cover” drills. We have teacher trainings and written plans in place for shelter-in-place and lockdown drills as well, just in case. To prepare for a real natural disaster or other emergency, we stock enough non-perishable food, infant formula, and water for each child in the program.

For children with food allergies or dietary restrictions only, we ask families to provide a gallon-sized Ziploc bag filled with non-perishable emergency food that is safe for their child to eat. This can include granola bars, trail mix, peanut butter crackers, beef jerky, fruit snacks, raisins, dry cereal, etc. Infants’ bags should include their allergy-safe powdered formula. Please be sure the contents of the bag will stay good for at least one year if possible.

If your child needs any prescription medications during the day, please check with Richa to talk about whether we should keep some at school in case of emergencies. (This is a case-by-case decision.)

At least once a year, we will also ask *all* families to verify that the emergency contact information on file is still correct. At any point during the year, if you have a change in your phone number, address, work location, email address, friends/relatives who are authorized to pick your child up, your child’s allergies or medical conditions, or any other emergency information, please let us know right away.

Family Involvement Volunteer Hours

Building a high-quality experience for our children truly does “take a village,” and our village is only as strong as our families. As part of our school community, each family is required to contribute 8 hours of volunteer time per year. (To keep it fair since we enroll year-round, we count your “year” from your family’s enrollment anniversary.) The requirement is per family, not per child, and the hours can be fulfilled by parents, step-parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, godparents, adult siblings, or any other family members. Families who choose not to participate will be charged \$100/hour for incomplete hours.

Examples of volunteer jobs are listed on our website at <http://www.creativemindscdc.org/family-involvement>. Some jobs happen at school (such as maintenance jobs or leading a special story/craft project in the classroom) and some can happen at home (such as sewing costumes or assembling small furniture items). Some are quick jobs and some can cover your whole eight hours in a single project. If you have an idea for a project that would help our program that isn’t listed, please speak up! We’re very open to ideas. The goal of this requirement is to help every family find a meaningful way to engage with our school so we can all benefit from each other’s gifts and talents.

Field Trips

Classroom teachers may decide to schedule educational field trips during the year. In such cases, prior written parent permission is required. We also usually request parent volunteers to assist in chaperoning and transportation. (Driving other children or accompanying us on a walking field trip may count toward your Family Involvement Volunteer Hours.)

If you are not able to drive your own child on a driving field trip, we can help arrange a ride with another parent. On the day of the trip, it is your responsibility to bring the car seat, labeled with your child's name, and all necessary straps or lock-clips attached. Children cannot be transported without a car seat, and the school does not stock extra seats.

Gate Codes

When you enroll, you will be given a customized security code for the gate nearest your child's classroom. Please feel free to share this code with grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, etc. who may be transporting your child to or from school. Please do not share it with anyone else because codes are specific to each family. If you do not recognize someone coming in, please ask them to enter their own code or to go through the office. Do not let them in with your code.

Good Fit

Our goal is for all the children in our program to have a positive school experience. Part of this means functioning within the student-to-teacher ratio for their age group. For example, the infant room has approximately a 1:3 ratio, so while all children do get individual attention frequently throughout the day, it cannot be continuous one-on-one care. This ratio goes up as the children grow more independent. For toddlers, the ratio is 1:6 and for preschool it's 1:9. (These are our target ratios for the majority of the day. For break times or other brief periods, we may go up to the legal cap of 1:4 for infants or 1:12 for toddlers and preschool.)

We recognize that some children need more individual support and guidance than others, depending on their temperaments, needs, and past experiences before starting at our school. Many times we are able to support these needs and help the children adapt smoothly to the group setting. Open communication with families is critical to this process, especially during the transition visits. These visits are designed to get children and parents acquainted with the classroom environment and routines. It gives the child, the families, and the teachers a preview of whether our program will be the right fit and what we can all do to help ease the transition.

Occasionally, a child needs ongoing long-term one-on-one attention for most or all of the school day in order to be successful. This may be due to developmental needs, aggressive behavior, language delays, feeling too overwhelmed in an open-ended child-led environment, or other causes. It is honestly very hard for us to support these long-term one-on-one needs in a group situation. Our teachers are trained early childhood education professionals, but are not qualified special education teachers or behavioral therapists.

We view these behaviors as a form of communication from the child — telling us in their own way that something about this setting is not working for them, so something needs to change to reduce their stress. In these cases, we work with the families to brainstorm solutions to fit their specific needs. Examples may include trying different strategies in the classroom, changing the child’s schedule, bringing in an outside support person for the child (funded by the family, the school district, or Early Start), or possibly finding an alternative care setting with fewer children or even lower ratios than we are able to provide. Our goal in every case is to find a win-win solution that allows the child to get the most out of their school experience and respects the needs of the other children and teachers in the class at the same time.

Illness, Injury, or Medical Emergency at School

If a child becomes ill at school, the child will be removed from the classroom and the parents will be called to come pick up their child as soon as possible. We will make the child as comfortable as possible until the parents arrive.

If a child is injured at school, the staff will administer first aid. For minor injuries, parents will receive an “Ouch Report” message through ProCare. For injuries that may require medical attention, the parents will be contacted immediately. For any serious emergency, we will call 911 and notify the parents immediately.

Each child must have a current medical release form in his/her file outlining emergency contact numbers, allergies, doctor’s contact numbers, and permission for staff to administer first aid and/or call 911 if needed. *If any phone numbers on this form change, please contact us with that information as soon as possible* to ensure that the form is kept up to date so we can reach you in case of emergency. Please also keep us up to date with any changes in your child’s medical history that may be relevant when providing emergency care. (For example, if your child develops seizures, has an allergic reaction to a particular antibiotic, or begins taking a new prescription medication on a regular basis, we would need to be able to relay that to emergency personnel.) Your child’s safety is extremely important to us.

Illness Policy

When your child is in the beginning stages of becoming ill, he/she is the most susceptible to getting worse and is most contagious to others. Sending a child to school when he/she is not well is stressful for the child and detracts from classroom activities. It is also likely to prolong their illness.

When a child has a fever, we are required to send a child home. According to our state licensing requirements and program policy, parents may be called to pick up their child early from school for any of the following health-related reasons:

- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Lice

- ✓ Unexplained rash
- ✓ If a child feels too ill to function properly in a group setting

As your child recovers, please take care of them at home until they feel well enough to return. They must be free from diarrhea, vomiting, and fever for 24 hours (*without* symptom-reducing medication), free from lice nits or any rash discharge, and should be able to eat normally and participate in indoor and outdoor activities, before returning to school. Specific illnesses may have additional rules as described in a posted Exposure Notice. We recognize that taking time off work when your child is sick can be difficult, but these mandates are necessary and beneficial for all children and teachers.

Immunizations

For the well-being of all of our children, and in accordance with California law, we require all children in our program to be fully immunized prior to enrollment. Children under 18 months old must be current with all immunizations for their age prior to enrollment and must continue getting all required immunizations at each age milestone as required by law. Every time your child receives a vaccination, please send us an updated copy of their vaccination records for our files. You can drop off a printed photocopy or email a PDF to richa@creativemindscdc.org.

Exemptions based on personal or religious beliefs are not permitted. Children who are on a delayed or alternative vaccination schedule for documented medical reasons must receive *all* starter doses before starting school and must receive each subsequent required dose on time in order to continue attending school. Additional documentation from a licensed California pediatrician is also required by law in these cases. Please see the director before enrolling if this applies to your family.

The list of immunizations required at each age is included in the enrollment packet and posted on our website. All families are required to notify us immediately if your child is, or may have been, exposed to any illness on the vaccination list or to another serious illness including COVID-19.

We respect that families may have strong and diverse opinions on this topic, so feel free to speak with Richa if you have any questions, but please know that this policy is strictly enforced.

Incidental Medical Services

In addition to prescription and non-prescription medications, we will provide the following incidental medical services when necessary, provided we have sufficient staff training and documentation to provide the services safely and effectively in each child's case, in accordance with Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Article 6, Section 101226:

- Blood-glucose monitoring for children with diabetes
- Insulin administration by injection or pump
- Inhalers and/or nebulizers for children with respiratory problems such as asthma
- EpiPen Jr. or EpiPen injections for children with life-threatening allergies
- Emptying ileostomy bags

- Emergency anti-seizure medication
- Other incidental medical services when necessary

Only staff members who are trained in administering these medications will be responsible for administering them to children. We will not provide glucagon administration or gastrostomy tube care.

Late Pick-up Fees

As stated in our tuition schedule and admission contract, there is a \$1-per-minute late fee, payable on pick-up or the next day, for children picked up after their scheduled time. This applies to part-time children as well as full-time. For example, if a child is scheduled to attend 9:00–1:00 and is picked up at 1:15, the late fee would apply for those 15 minutes. The same is true for 3:00, 4:30, or 5:00 pick-ups. After five late pick-ups in a calendar year, the fee increases to \$5 per minute. Please select a schedule that fits your family’s needs and then be as consistent as possible with that schedule.

If you know ahead of time that you will need a later pick-up time on a given day, you can avoid the late fee by making arrangements with the director for extra time at the drop-in rate. No drop-in hours are permitted beyond the school closure time in the evening.

If something comes up at the last minute and you know you will not be able to make your appointed pick-up time, please call the school to let your child’s teachers know. This helps us in planning coverage for each room and allows us to reassure your child that you are on your way. The late fee still applies in this case.

Lost and Found

Please label ALL items your child brings to school (e.g. shirts, socks, underpants, lunch boxes, car seats, jackets, blankets, etc.) to prevent lost articles. Our school has a “lost and found” bin in the kitchen if your child has lost something. From time to time, all unclaimed items in this bin will be donated to charity.

Lunches & Snacks

Nutrition is an important part of our curriculum at Creative Minds CDC. Each child needs to bring a lunch and morning and afternoon snacks to school every day. (We do not have a cafeteria or any option to purchase “school lunch.” Meals and snacks all come from home.) Every classroom has a microwave, so beyond the traditional PB&J sandwich, feel free to send entrees such as pasta, burritos, stir-fry, and other dishes your family enjoys at home. To support your child’s well-being and our eco-friendly approach, please pack any heatable food in microwave-safe reusable containers. Glass is permitted.

Eating nutritious foods is extremely important to developing a healthy body and a creative, productive mind. The children are encouraged to eat the protein/main entrée part of their lunch first, followed by their vegetables and fruits with milk, but we cannot strictly police this for

every child. We also encourage children to listen to their bodies when choosing what to eat. Please eliminate any candy, cookies, and sugary juices. In line with the guidelines from the health department, we always encourage healthy choices of whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Creative Minds CDC is *not* a nut-free school by default, but in case of a child with severe allergies, we reserve the right to ban allergen-triggering foods in individual classrooms or from the entire campus if necessary for that child's safety.

Medication

Medication brought to the school — prescription or non-prescription — must remain *in its original container* from the store, pharmacy, or doctor's office. It must be handed directly to a teacher so it can be stored out of reach of children. When possible, it's helpful to have a second bottle/package of the medication to leave at school, rather than carrying it back and forth every day. This helps prevent missed doses caused by forgetting to bring it to school or take it back home.

Medication must be labeled with your child's name, the date the medication is brought to school, and the expiration date. For the staff to administer medication, the parent must fill out a printed permission form that gives a description of the medicine, what time to administer it, the dosage (amount and frequency), the duration, and a parent's signature.

Every child's enrollment packet includes a similar but simplified permission form for *over-the-counter* topical products such as sunscreen or diaper cream. A separate individual medication permission form is legally required for topical prescriptions or for any kind of pill, syrup, injection, or inhaled medication. These forms are available in the office or on our website.

Additional paperwork from the doctor is also legally required for certain medications including EpiPens, asthma inhalers or nebulizers, diabetic testing and medications, seizure medications, and others—please see Richa if any of this applies to your child. We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your child's medical needs, including learning to administer insulin or other necessary medications, but please realize that we are not nurses or medical professionals, so there are limits to what we can safely provide.

Nap Time

Nap times are quiet times when children are encouraged to rest. Some of the children have long days, and because our program is highly active, nap time is an important time to recharge. The school will provide the bed and sheet. Each child needs to bring a personal blanket, labeled with his/her name, to be taken home weekly for washing. A small stuffed animal is welcome as well for children two years old and above. No pillows, please, unless they're built into the roll-up kind of nap mat. Older preschoolers who do not nap anymore are asked to rest quietly during the first hour and are welcome to read books or color while sitting quietly on their cots after that. We do not have a non-napping room.

Outdoor Activities

It is important to a child's health to spend time outdoors to receive fresh air, experience a varied environment, and exercise their large muscles. Brain development for children is closely related to physical exercise.

Proper clothing is essential for the enjoyment of these activities. During warm weather, light clothing with layers that can be added or removed as needed is helpful. In cold weather, layers are again effective because the temperatures can vary dramatically between indoors and outdoors. Hats and sunscreen are important year-round as we go outside every day.

Your child's clothes or shoes may get wet or muddy during the day. To the best of our ability, we only provide materials and experiences that are washable, but it is still best to save your brand new designer clothes and shoes for home. Please send children to school in things that can get messy so that your child can freely explore the learning environment. It interferes with natural learning opportunities when children have to stop and worry about getting in trouble at home for getting their clothes messy during the day.

Caring for our equipment is part of learning to respect our community. A variety of outdoor play equipment is provided for the children, including natural materials. Many times teachers involve children in bringing the equipment out and putting it back. We also expect children to play with one another in safe ways. Inconsiderate or unsafe play will not be tolerated, and playing with dangerous objects is forbidden.

Parent Partnership

Parent participation is highly valued at Creative Minds CDC. As described previously, each family is expected to volunteer eight hours per year, but you are always welcome to do more than that. Parents also help in less tangible but equally important ways when they communicate to their children the trust they have in their teachers to do what is in the best interests of the child. It is very helpful when parents mirror the teachers' behavior expectations at home. (For example, hitting other people is not allowed at school, so it's important not to allow your child to hit you or their siblings at home either.) This consistency really reinforces the learning that is happening at school, which is essential for the partnership to work between school and home. To help facilitate this partnership, each classroom posts photos and notes regularly and invites parent conversations on a daily basis. Periodic parent conferences are also available. Feel free to talk with your child's teacher about more ways that we can work together to provide a consistent message for your child.

Parents' Rights

As a parent/authorized representative, you have the legal right to:

1. Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in care.

2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office.
3. Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
6. Receive from the licensee the name, address and telephone number of the local licensing office.
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the child care center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
8. Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form.

Parent Visitations

We welcome parents as visitors at any time. We have an open door policy, and have observation windows available to unobtrusively observe the classes in their normal state. However, if you plan to interact with children (outside of regular pick-up or drop-off times) and/or do a planned activity with them, please do call ahead or talk with the teachers to schedule your visit.

Personal Employment of Teachers

We value our teachers and invest a great deal of time and expense to assure that each teacher meets our standards of excellence for your children. We require that each parent understands this, and agrees to not solicit our staff for personal or corporate employment that would conflict with their employment at Creative Minds.

Personal Hygiene

Infection and germs can easily be spread when children are in a group setting. At Creative Minds CDC, we pay close attention to hand washing throughout the day — upon arrival, after toileting or diapering, after playing outside, before and after eating, and before and after cooking projects. Children are taught to keep their hands and faces clean before and after all meals. Please help us by reinforcing this behavior at home.

Personal Rights of Children

Under California law, each child receiving services from a child care center shall have legal rights which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.
2. To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.

3. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
4. To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative, if any, informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving unit of the licensing agency and of information regarding confidentiality.
5. To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of his/her choice. Attendance at religious services, either in or outside the facility, shall be on a completely voluntary basis. In child care centers, decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual advisors shall be made by the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child.
6. Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night.
7. Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint [for children with special needs] approved in advance by the licensing agency. [Note: High chairs and cribs are not considered restraining devices.]

Personal Toys

Please leave personal toys at home. We have plenty of materials here for all children to enjoy while at school. It's very hard for a young child to share a toy brought from home, and special toys sometimes get lost or broken in such a busy environment. Please leave these items at home or in the car. (Even bringing a special toy into the classroom at drop-off and then taking it back right away as you leave is often very difficult for young children. It gets their day off to an easier start when the toys simply stay at home or in the car.)

There are three exceptions to this rule:

- Books or music with the child's name written on them are always permitted and encouraged to be shared in class.
- Weekly "sharing" (show-and-tell) in preschool is a chance for your child to bring an item or photo that relates to the letter of the week or to the current project topic. Please label the item and put it in the "sharing basket" on the counter.
- One soft "lovie" (soft doll or stuffed animal that makes no noise and does not light up) is allowed at nap time for children two years old and above.

Weapons or toy replicas of weapons are not allowed at all, even if kept in backpacks or intended as "sharing" (show-and-tell) in preschool.

Primary Caregiving

We practice primary caregiving in the infant/toddler classroom (Green Room). A primary caregiver is a child's "special teacher." This does not mean that a child and their primary caregiver maintain an exclusive relationship, but it does mean that the teacher becomes the in-class expert on the individual child. The primary caregiver's responsibilities include providing consistent care in a way that maximizes the potential for learning in all experiences, the child's care routines and daily observations, and discussions with families and setting appropriate learning objectives in partnership with families. Among other benefits, primary caregiving facilitates a strong secure attachment between child and teacher, a strong positive sense of self for the child, and a trusted care partnership with parents.

ProCare

Messaging

ProCare is a comprehensive app that facilitates communication between families and school on a daily basis. It is our primary means of messaging between families and teachers, and of sharing photos and daily reports about your children's experiences during the school day. Our monthly newsletters are also found in the app to help you stay engaged.

Teachers can generally respond to messages in the early morning or while children are napping. If you have a more urgent message, of course feel free to call the school office anytime at 1-408-445-0101.

Check-in & Check-Out

The ProCare app replaces paper rollsheets for tracking attendance. As described earlier, you can check in/out with a PIN and/or full signature on the screen, or contactless using a QR code and GPS location. The app also automatically tracks children's time to help calculate drop-in and late pick-up charges.

Tuition Receipts

The ProCare platform also helps coordinate tuition payments and receipts. Through your ProCare login, you can download and print your own tuition receipts for FSA reimbursement or tax purposes.

Photos

One of ProCare's most exciting features is photo sharing! Through the app, teachers can upload and share photos of what your children are doing at school during the day. Families are then able to download those photos for their own use, such as photo albums or sharing with grandparents who live far away.

Only enrolled families have access to our ProCare platform; these photos are not posted on the web for the general public to see. Out of respect for other families, *please do not post or share photos of other people's children on social media or any other venue*. If you choose to share a photo you've downloaded from school, please make *sure* that only your own child is visible in the photo.

Disclaimer: By enrolling at Creative Minds CDC, parents and guardians hereby grant and authorize Creative Minds CDC to take, edit, copy, publish, distribute, and make use of any and all pictures or video taken of your child(ren) to be used in and/or for promotional materials and digital communications. This authorization shall continue indefinitely unless you otherwise revoke said authorization in writing. You understand and agree that these materials shall become the property of Creative Minds CDC and will not be returned.

Recycling

Respect for our shared environment is part of our Reggio-inspired philosophy. To that end, we do our best to follow environmentally responsible practices in all areas of our program. For example, we make a daily effort to re-use materials in art and science projects. Anything else that can be recycled or composted will be recycled or composted, rather than thrown in the trash. We also encourage families to pack reusable containers in children's lunches, rather than using Ziploc bags or single-serve packages.

Safe Sleep Policy for Infants

In accordance with California state licensing regulations to help prevent SIDS and other sleep-related hazards, we observe the following rules for children in Green Room (under age 2):

- No swaddling. Sleep sacks that let their arms be free are okay, or one loose blanket over them as they sleep is okay, but we are not allowed to swaddle them at any age.
- The crib mattress or cot will have one fitted sheet provided by the school. We cannot use extra blankets or quilts underneath the child as they sleep.
- Pacifiers cannot have anything attached and cannot be tethered to the child's clothing or blanket. No attached clips, cords, or stuffed animals (such as the Wub-a-Nub brand) are allowed on pacifiers.
- No stuffed animals or lovies are allowed in the cribs or hanging over the sides.
- Children who fall asleep elsewhere or arrive at school already asleep will be moved to their crib or cot right away. They are not allowed to sleep in strollers, car seats, or on the classroom rug, even if that's where they fall asleep on their own.
- A teacher is in the crib room the entire time when children are sleeping in there, either in cribs or on cots. Children never sleep unattended.
- All infants are laid to sleep on their backs. Infants who are capable of rolling forward and backward independently may roll themselves over to sleep on their stomachs if they prefer. Children who cannot roll both ways independently yet will be turned back over to their backs if they happen to roll over in their sleep.

For children 12 months and younger, the state also requires an Individual Infant Sleep Plan that provides written details about your child's sleeping habits and whether or not they are able to roll forward and backward independently. You and your child's primary caregiver will fill this out together when your child first joins us and update it as they grow.

We respect that every family has their own traditions and routines for sleeping at home, and that children often find different sleeping rhythms in different settings. At the same time, young

children benefit from as much consistency as possible between home and school. Our rules are set by state law. This means we don't always have the flexibility to adapt our sleeping practices to match your family's routines at home, so we ask you to consider adapting your style to mirror these school rules wherever feasible. (For example, because swaddling is not allowed at school, it's helpful for your child to get used to sleeping without a swaddle at home too.) This helps ease their transition into group care and lets them get more restful sleep while they're here.

Please note that these regulations are periodically updated by the state government. We will inform you of any changes as soon as they become available.

Scheduling

Each child is enrolled with a specific schedule (hours and days). Tuition and staffing are based on this enrollment. Because of this, we are not able to "trade" or "switch" single days when part-time children miss one of their regularly scheduled days (ex: swapping a Monday for a Friday if the child is enrolled Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday). All children are welcome to attend extra days or longer hours, depending on space available, for an additional daily or hourly drop-in fee. Permanent schedule changes may be made, depending on space available, with tuition pro-rated for the rest of the month if applicable.

We do our very best to accommodate our families' scheduling needs, but we do reserve the right to modify a child's schedule (including pick-up time and days attended) if necessary.

School Closure

In an emergency such as extremely inclement weather, we will text all families at once using an automated system and may have a message on our answering machine that will give details. We will also attempt to inform you via email or ProCare message, but of course this depends on power and internet availability. *Please keep your current phone numbers and email address(es) on file here at all times so we can reach you in case of emergency.*

Special Needs

If your child has any form of special needs, we will ask you for a copy of his or her IEP/IFSP and an Exchange of Information form when you enroll. In order to help your child thrive in our school, we need to understand everything we can about their needs and abilities. It's very important that we be included as much as possible in any assessments or decisions about services. Of course we respect your right to privacy with this information, but please realize that open communication is the single most important factor in your child's success in our program.

We strongly encourage speech therapists, occupational therapists, or other special education professionals working with your child to visit our site and share their strategies and observations with the classroom teachers. Children's behavior and skill performance in a group setting is often very different than one-on-one at home or in a therapy office, so it is important for the therapists to see your child in their natural daily environment. We are also happy to send a staff member to

any IFSP/IEP meetings to support your family and facilitate the connection between home, school, and any therapists or other members of your child's care team.

Sometimes children do not qualify for public services but still receive speech or occupational therapy or other services through their health insurance or private payment. We still ask you to include us as much as possible in this process. We are open to having therapists observe here, sending our teachers to observe a therapy session off-site, or other ways we can help in your specific situation. We appreciate copies of any reports, observations, or other documentation these professionals give you, even if your child does not have a formal IFSP/IEP.

Whenever possible, we will work with a child on their area of need. We have had many children with special needs of varying degrees and diagnoses, and many of them do very well in our environment. The greatest success comes when there is open communication between parents, teachers, and therapists so we can offer consistent expectations and strategies for your child throughout their day. While we will do our best to support your child and family, please remember that we are not a special education site and there are limits to what we can do. Some children thrive better in a different environment, so if necessary, we will be open with you about whether or not we are the best fit. Every child's well-being is our top priority.

Student Teachers & Observers

Our school welcomes student teachers and observers from local colleges as part of their early childhood education teacher training programs. These college students sometimes come once or twice, or sometimes come regularly for an entire semester to complete required "lab hours" or "field experience." Sometimes they are observing a randomly selected child of a particular age and sometimes they are observing the classroom environment, group, or teaching style as a whole. These student interns are treated as volunteers and are supervised at all times. Confidentiality is a top priority while these students are completing their assignments – children's real names are not included in observations and any photos are used strictly for educational purposes. With the closing of so many college lab schools in the area, community sites such as ours are a very important part of the teacher training system. We are grateful for the opportunity to support the next generation of great early childhood education teachers, and for the extra help that they provide to our program while they are here volunteering.

Supplies and Clothing

Throughout the year, children may be asked to bring in supplies to contribute to projects in the classroom. For example, teachers may request fresh fruit for a cooking project or empty toilet paper rolls for an art project. We appreciate your contributions!

For all ages, a change of weather-appropriate clothing is required, including underwear and footwear. When dressing younger children for school, clothing should be easy for them to get on and off, especially when using the toilet. Overalls with straps, jumpers and leotards are difficult to manage in hurry.

Sandals, flip-flops, and very loose-fitting shoes can be treacherous for young children at school and should be left at home. Sneakers and socks that are easy to put on and off (such as Velcro or slip-on sneakers) will help your child feel successful and safe. Sturdy sandals with heel straps and closed toes are also permitted.

Vacations and Absences

Your tuition pays for direct operating costs: salaries, rent, supplies, insurance and maintenance of the facility. When you enroll your child, you are reserving the time, space and provisions for your child, whether your child attends or not. This becomes all the more important because we reserve your child's spot based on staffing ratios as mandated by state law. For these reasons, tuition remains the same regardless of days missed due to illness or vacation.

Waiting List

We always welcome siblings, cousins, friends and other referrals! We do not always have immediate openings, however, so please plan ahead and notify us as soon as possible if you intend to enroll a younger sibling in our program. This is especially important for infants, where we have fewer total slots available. It's common to reserve an infant slot before the child is born.

We require a \$150 non-refundable registration fee with the application form to hold your child's space for up to 30 days. To reserve an available space more than 30 days in advance, we also require a non-refundable deposit of half of the first month's tuition. This deposit will be credited directly onto your first month once your child starts.

If you are not sure of your family's plans, or if there are not any available spaces to reserve, you can get on our "waiting list" without any fees or deposits. Please understand that being on the waiting list does not guarantee a space. It simply means we will contact you if a space becomes available.

We do our very best to honor the start date you request, but we reserve the right to adjust your child's start date if needed based on unforeseen circumstances. If you need to adjust your child's start date after reserving a space, we can usually accommodate changes of up to two weeks before or after the planned date. Changes beyond that will depend on space available and may require an additional deposit.

Checklist: Enrollment

Enrollment paperwork (to be brought on or before your child's first day)

- Admission contract
- Notification of Parents' Rights form (Lic. 995 & Lic. 995E)
- Personal Rights form (Lic. 613A)
- Identification and Emergency Information form (Lic. 700)
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment form (Lic. 627)
- Child's Preadmission Health History — Parents' Report (Lic. 702)
- Physician's Report (Lic. 701) Medical assessment required, including TB skin testing if indicated by the child's physician.
- Immunization requirements met (recorded on Physician's Report or records attached)
- California Immunization Registry (CAIR2) permission form
- Needs and Services Plan (for children below 24 months of age, and for children with special needs)
- Current copy of the IEP/IFSP and Exchange of Information form (for children with special needs)
- Parent Consent for Administration of Medications and Medication Chart (Lic. 9921) for any medication to be given at school (if applicable)
- Parent Consent for Topical Ointment form for sunscreen, diaper cream, Neosporin, etc.
- Permission slip to share your email address with other families
- Family Involvement Volunteer Hours sign-up sheet
- Family orientation checklist (completed with a teacher during your child's visiting days)

Reminders

- Make a plan for what to do in case your child needs to be picked up early due to illness, injury, or natural disaster. Which parent or other caregiver will come? If they're unavailable, whom else should we call? Please be sure the other people listed on the emergency card know that they are listed as possible emergency contacts, and please write the name that matches their driver's license, even if they are usually called something else.
- Label everything your child brings to school, including socks and underwear, blankets, sippy cups, pacifiers, etc. Reusable label options are at www.creativemindscdc.org/links.

Checklist: What to Bring — Infants/Toddlers (Green Room)

What to bring on your child's first day:

- Diapers (1 large package)
- Diaper cream*
- Extra clothes (at least two complete outfits, weather-appropriate, including socks)
- Shoes, hat and jacket for outside time (hat optional)
- Blanket or sleep sack (will be sent home weekly for washing)
- Pacifier if your child uses one (no pacifier clips or cords allowed)
- Family photo (one 4x6 photo, horizontal/landscape orientation, with all pictured family members' names written on the back or emailed to your child's classroom)
- Any medications to be given at school, in original prescription or over-the-counter package with your child's name on it, with signed consent form*

* Parents' written permission is needed before we can use these items.

What to bring daily:

- Bottles or cups (prepared at home and labeled with your child's name, plus one extra just in case of late pick-up) – Please label the bottle lids too.
- Any food that needs to be refrigerated

Dry food items to be brought weekly or as needed:

- Baby cereal/oatmeal
- Baby food jars or tubs
- Crackers, teething biscuits, Cheerios, etc.

Reminder: Please be sure ALL items are labeled with your child's name.

Checklist: What to Bring — 2s & Young 3s (Rose Room)

What to bring on your child's first day:

- Diapers or Pull-ups (1 large package) unless fully toilet-trained including nap
- Diaper cream*
- Extra clothes (at least one complete outfit, weather-appropriate, including socks plus at least two pairs of underwear for children who are toilet-training)
- Shoes, hat and jacket for outside time (hat optional)
- Blanket/special naptime items (will be sent home weekly for washing; no pillows please)
- Family photo (one 4x6 photo, horizontal/landscape orientation, with all pictured family members' names written on the back or emailed to your child's classroom)
- Any medications to be given at school, in original prescription or over-the-counter package with your child's name on it, with signed consent form*

* Parents' written permission is needed before we can use these items.

What to bring daily:

- Refillable water bottle your child can identify and open independently, labeled with your child's name
- Sippy cup of milk (optional), labeled with your child's name
- Lunch and snacks (please place food to be heated in glass containers or microwave-safe plastic) in a lunch box, labeled with your child's name. Label individual containers that will need refrigeration, or use an ice pack to keep the lunchbox chilled until lunch. Note: school will provide the utensils.

Reminder: Please be sure ALL items are labeled with your child's name.

Checklist: What to Bring — Preschool (Blue & Purple Rooms)

What to bring on your child's first day:

- Pull-ups (if needed during naptime)
- Extra clothes (at least one complete outfit, weather-appropriate, including socks, plus at least two pairs of underwear)
- Shoes, hat and jacket for outside time (hat optional)
- Blanket/special naptime items (will be sent home weekly for washing; no pillows please)
- Any medications to be given at school, in original prescription or over-the-counter package with your child's name on it, with signed consent form

* Parents' written permission is needed before we can use these items.

What to bring daily:

- Refillable water bottle your child can identify and open independently, labeled with your child's name
- Lunch and snacks (please place food to be heated in glass containers or microwave-safe plastic) in a lunch box, labeled with your child's name. Label individual containers that will need refrigeration, or use an ice pack to keep the lunchbox chilled until lunch. Note: school will provide the utensils.

Reminder: Please be sure ALL items are labeled with your child's name.