



Parent Handbook

2022/2023

WELCOME

Welcome to Columbia Children's Center! We are a California Corporation owned by the Chenoweth Family since 1992. We provide quality early care and education services to children aged 18 months through 5 years. We are a state licensed facility with a total licensed capacity of 82 children.

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

Please use this handbook to familiarize yourself with our program policies and procedures which help our program function effectively. It is your responsibility to read and follow the policies outlined and to request clarification if necessary. These policies and procedures are designed to help staff and families understand their roles.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children have the right to a nurturing, safe environment where they can feel comfortable and secure. We believe that children have a right to develop to their maximum abilities and that teachers have the responsibility to provide opportunities for this development to occur.

We recognize that each child is an individual and that each child must be allowed to develop at his or her own pace. We accept and respect differences between children including developmental and physical differences and differences in racial and ethnic heritages. Every child regardless of sex, race, religion or ethnic origin must have the same opportunities and advantages as every other child.

We sincerely hope that in treating each child with love and respect, they in turn will learn to treat others with that same love and respect.

We believe that children learn best through active participation with their environment and that the teacher's job is to provide a variety of opportunities and experiences to promote growth in all areas. We strive to thoughtfully plan activities that meet the developmental needs of differing children and which follow sound early childhood developmental principles.

The philosophy of the program is to develop a positive self-concept and attitude toward learning, self-control and a sense of belonging. CCC provides your child exploration of music and movement, creative art, science and nature, objects and events, dramatic play, literature and language, health and nutrition. It is the goal of CCC to provide experiences for your child to know the community and social roles, and to understand and respect social and cultural diversity.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Columbia Children's Center admits children regardless of gender, race, color and national or ethnic origin. After an interview with the parent and child, the director and caregiver will decide on placement depending upon availability.

STAFF

Columbia Children's Center has been under the direction of Cortney Dasmann since 2016. Our teaching staff have been carefully chosen based on their background, experience and joy for working with preschool aged children. All staff meet or exceed the requirements of our state licensing agency, including background checks, fingerprinting and FBI clearances. All staff have proof of immunizations and are CPR Certified and First Aid trained.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our **Young Toddler Program** serves children from 18–36 months. Our maximum teacher to child ratio is one 1:6. The maximum group size in this program is 12 children. We provide a nurturing environment that is structured enough to allow children to learn and grow in a safe and confident way. Here at CCC your child can explore and learn through age appropriate activities and toys. Children are encouraged to use their words to express their wants and needs. In our Young Toddler classroom, we focus our activities on creating learning and social experiences through play.

Our **Early Years Program** serves children 2-3 years. Children are grouped by developmental age as well as their potty training ability. Our teacher to child ratio is always within state licensing standards of 1:12 however more often our ratio is 1:9 or less. Teachers work together with families to toilet train children if necessary. Children enjoy daily activities that include sensory play, art, music, group for stories and songs, manipulative and many hours of outdoor fun including outside art activities, reading, sand play, music and movement.

Our **Preschool Program** serves children who are completely potty trained and between the ages of 3-4 years old. Our maximum teacher to child ratio is 1:12. The maximum group size is 36 children. The Preschool Program consists of the Red, Orange & Yellow Groups. These groups share a spacious classroom and playground. These groups are combined as a whole during some of the day and rotate separately between the inside and outside areas according to our daily schedule. The goals of the Preschool Program are to provide a fun, safe, positive environment; emphasizing confidence building and self-esteem. The Preschool Program concentrates on listening and basic cognitive skills such as colors, shapes and alphabet and number recognition.

Our **Kindergarten Readiness Program** serves children between the ages of 4-5 years old. Our maximum teacher to child ratio is 1:12. The maximum group size is 36 children. The Kindergarten Readiness Program consists of the Blue & Green Groups. These groups share a spacious classroom and playground. These groups are combined as a whole during some of the day and rotate separately between the inside and outside areas according to our daily schedule. Our Kindergarten Readiness Program curriculum is designed to make sure your child is more than ready for kindergarten. Our curriculum includes Zoo Phonics, Spanish, sign language, language development,

math, science & nature, art, music & movement, social studies, outdoor play including sand, water and large motor skill activities. Our goal is to have your child be prepared and know what to expect in the first year of elementary school.

CHILD'S PLACEMENT

The first 6 weeks will be a probationary period to evaluate your child's adjustment. If at any time the center determines it is unable to meet the needs of the child, enrollment will be terminated.

SCHEDULING

Children are placed on a fixed schedule. We are not able to trade days. Days may be added, at the extra day rate, if space is available.

Children can arrive between the hours of **7:00 a.m.** and **9:30 a.m.** We encourage you to have your child arrive by 8:30 a.m. in order to receive the most benefits from our program.

Pick up times for our **half day** children are between **11:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**

Pick up times for our **full day** children are between **2:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.**

At the end of the day, please be considerate of our staff and be sure to arrive in plenty of time so that they can depart the center at 5:30 p.m. Late fees will apply for any children picked up after 5:30 p.m. Excessive late pick ups may be cause for termination of services.

If your Child is left beyond closing time, the supervising teacher will make every attempt to contact you and/or others authorized to pick up your Child. If no arrangements can be made by 6:15 p.m. we are required to call Child Protective Services. They would be assuming custody until you or another authorized person could be located.

HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open year round **Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.** Our holiday closures are listed in the calendar section.

NAPS & QUIET TIME

Quiet time is from **12:30 p.m.** to **2:30 p.m.** daily. Each child is provided with a napping mat and cot. Napping mats should be labeled with your child's name and taken home weekly for laundering and returned the following week. Please do not bring blankets from home unless they are needed to help ease your child's transition from home.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Please observe all city traffic regulations when entering and exiting the parking lot. Please use the 3 designated parking spots when they are available. **Do not park at the red curb, this presents a possibility of danger to children arriving and departing the center.**

Guardians and designated adults must sign children in and upon drop off and pick up. Please do this on the Procure app on your device or by using the QR code in the front lobby. Door codes and Procure access is only given to legal guardians and those that pick up often. Please do not share your code with anyone as these are assigned to individual people instead of to the child.

At drop off, the adult must escort the child to their classroom or playground (wherever their class is presently located) and be sure to notify the teacher that the child has arrived. **Never leave your child unattended**. Please inform the teacher of any special circumstances that may affect your child during the day.

At pick up, please be sure to notify the teacher that you are taking the child home. Children will only be released to authorized pickups that are known to the teacher. In the event that the teacher does not know the person, they will ask to see identification and confirm that they are on the authorized pick up list. Children will not be released to anyone under 16 years of age or anyone suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Those families that have custody issues should consult with an attorney regarding legal protection for their children. Columbia Children's Center can not legally prevent a non-custodial parent from picking up a child outside the parenting agreement unless there is a court order on file that limits visitation. Columbia Children's Center cannot be held liable for a parent's violation of a parenting agreement.

TRANSITION

We encourage parents and children to visit prior to actual enrollment to provide an opportunity for the child to become comfortable with the environment.

For children entering school or childcare for the first time, it is usually advisable for a parent to remain on call for the first several days. Our teachers are experienced in handling separation problems that might occur and we will contact you if we feel the emotional needs of the child warrants it. Please do not attempt to sell school before your child enters. Most fear is of the unknown, and this makes children apprehensive.

Give your child some extra time spent with you, hugs and kisses and extra love during the first few days of school. During the first days at CCC, don't question your child about "what did you do today?" Allow the beginning days to be gentle, casual, and non-threatening by not constantly reminding your child of it at home but by responding to the child's questions or comments. A relaxed, unhurried, and unworried attitude on the part of the parent's or guardian(s) is essential for an easy adjustment.

REQUIRED PAPERWORK

All forms provided to you upon enrollment, must be completed before your child may attend. The only exception is the Physicians Report which may be returned within 10 days as long as a copy of the child's immunization record is provided before attending. All documents in a child's file are considered confidential records and are not disclosed to outsiders, except officials of the California Department of Social Services.

IMMUNIZATIONS

California law requires all children entering our center to have the following immunizations: DPT, MMR, HIB, HEPB and Varicella. Any additional immunizations, required at a later date, are the responsibility of the parent (s)/guardian (s). Please provide proof of immunizations for center records.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Our illness policy can be found on our [website](#). Please familiarize yourself with this policy so that we can all be as safe and healthy as possible during these times. If you have any questions about the policy please message Lisa or Cortney using the Procare app.

PERMISSION TO REENTER AFTER ILLNESS

After an absence of two weeks or more, due to illness of any kind, a physician's permission must be obtained before your child returns to the center. After an absence of two months or more because of illness, a new physician's readmission form must be filed.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

It is extremely helpful when you can administer medication before or after center hours. There may be times, however, when your child needs medication during the day. CCC staff will make every attempt to administer medication prescribed by your physician which is dated, labeled, and in its original container, **if** you have completed a Consent to Administer Medication Form. **CCC is not liable for any missed doses.** Medication will be administered between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon.

Consent to give medication forms must be filled out and given to the teacher or director. Medications to be given at the center must be stored in the refrigerator or in the director's office. If you plan on leaving medication for your child for the day, please consider the time it will take to fill out the proper paperwork and adjust your schedules accordingly. If you feel your child is in need of over the counter medication, then he/she is probably too ill to attend. Please allow your child to recuperate before returning to the center.

FIRST AID

CCC will maintain first aid supplies sufficient to care for minor injuries. The first aid supplies shall include only those items to be used for minor cuts and bruises. Parents will be notified when a child has been given first aid via Bright Wheel.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of a serious illness or injury we will notify the child's emergency contact and call #911.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Columbia Children's Center is licensed by the State of CA. Our facility number is #421711657. As stated in our licensing regulations (Title 22), Community Care Licensing has the authority to interview children and staff as well as inspect facility records without prior consent.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

All staff members are mandated reporters and are trained as such. We will report incidents of possible neglect or abuse to Child Protective Services and will cooperate in any investigation of such abuse or neglect. We do not have discretion in this matter and must make referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone. Staff are not allowed to comment to guardians, other staff or any other persons on the subject.

POLICY ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO

No smoking is allowed in or near the CCC building. Children will not be released to a parent or guardian who is suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

2022/2023 CALENDAR

Columbia Children's Center operates year round with the exception of the following holidays and inservice/maintenance days.

September 5, 2022	Labor Day	February 20, 2023	President's Day
November 11, 2022	Veteran's Day	April 28, 2023	Inservice Day
November 24, 2022	Thanksgiving Day	May 29, 2023	Memorial Day
November 25, 2022	Day After Thanksgiving	June 15, 2023	Graduation
December 26, 2022	Christmas Holiday	June, 19, 2023	Juneteenth
December 27, 2022	Christmas Holiday	July 3, 2023	Independence Day
January 2, 2023	New Year's Holiday	July 4, 2023	Independence Day
January 16, 2023	Martin Luther King Jr.	August 4, 2023	Inservice Day

VACATION

A credit, up to a maximum of one week's tuition, shall be given for time away from the center. This credit is limited to one week per calendar year and requires two weeks prior written notification. More information about this is noted in our Tuition Agreement.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Children look forward with anticipation to seasonal and/or religious holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Kwanza, Hanukkah, New Years, Valentine's Day, May Day, Fourth of July, Halloween, Cinco de Mayo, etc. All ethnic and cultural events are recognized with age-appropriate activities, songs and crafts. If you do not wish your child to participate in a specific observance, please make other arrangements for their care for that day. Our teachers respect individual diversity and will do their best to make your child comfortable in the classroom regardless of their participation in celebrations.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child is special and needs a time to feel very important, so we celebrate birthdays. Parents may make arrangements with the child's teacher to bring muffins or snack. Party favors and gifts should be saved for parties at home.

WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Columbia Children's Center reserves the right to terminate services for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to pay tuition/fees per our schedule.
- Aggressive or abusive behavior by a parent or child either physical or verbal.
- Failure to adhere to all of Columbia Children's Center's policies as outlined in this handbook.
- Failure to comply with requirements of Community Care Licensing.
- Failure to provide necessary documentation and paperwork.
- Fraud, including falsifying documents presented to the program.
- Our inability to meet the needs of your child.
- Parent or child constitutes a safety or legal hazard to children, staff or the program

VISITATIONS

We welcome all visitors. Please check in with the director or a teacher. Parents are encouraged to visit their children unannounced to check on progress or just give a hug as long as this does not cause an emotional disturbance to your child.

COMMUNICATION

The fastest and most effective way to communicate with us is through the Bright Wheel app. You can use this to message your teacher or use the Admin function to message the director or for billing questions.

You can also call (805) 922-KIDS and select your child's classroom if you need to briefly speak to your child's teacher.

Please note, the teacher's priority is caring for the children. Please keep phone calls short and understand that they can not always immediately reply to Bright Wheel messages. If there is something you would like to discuss at length, please schedule a time to do so.

ABSENCES

Please message your child's teacher using the Bright Wheel app if your child will not be attending or is running late. This helps your child's teacher with planning for the day.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

While parents are at Columbia Children's Center, they are expected to:

- Treat all children with respect, compassion and empathy
- Support an environment that promotes health and safety
- Model cooperation and communication
- Promote children's self esteem through positive guidance
- Respect children's choices and self-expression
- Respect children's rights by not expressing physical affection or disciplining children other than your own

Any adult who uses inappropriate language, threatens staff or acts in an aggressive manner will be asked to leave the property. Columbia Children's Center reserves the right to suspend or terminate services to a family in the event that a member of the family is inappropriate or threatening to staff, children or other adults on the premises.

CLASSROOM SCHEDULE/CURRICULUM

Your child's daily schedule can be found on our website under **Program**. Please note these schedules are guidelines as we believe that the needs of the children are a priority over following a rigid schedule.

CLOTHING

Dress your child for comfort and active play including closed toed shoes. It is likely that your child will come home with dirty, painted or torn clothes at times. We **do not** provide aprons for the children to wear. Clothing is the responsibility of the parents as children's freedom to play and learn is more important to us than clean, neat and tidy clothes at the end of the day.

We recommend that you label the inside of your child's clothing with a permanent marker or name labels. We encourage children to care for their clothing, but we do not take responsibility for lost clothing. Occasionally your child may wear another's child's clothing or shoes home by mistake. If this should happen, please return the items the next day.

NUT AWARE

We recognize that food allergies can cause serious, life threatening conditions for some children. Nut allergies can be deadly. Children with nut allergies can go into anaphylactic shock, a life threatening allergic reaction, from eating or just being in the vicinity of their allergens. **To keep all the children safe, Columbia Children's Center will aim to eliminate nuts and nut products since they have been determined to cause allergic reactions in children.**

Here are some nut free lunch alternatives as well as a link to some [safe snack](#) ideas.

- Sunflower Seed Butter/Spread. This is a great alternative for peanut butter and can be found at Trader Joes and Target.
- Hummus/Tahini. These great alternatives are based on chickpeas and sesame.
- Mini Pizzas
- Wraps. Stick some chicken, beans, cheese in a tortilla or wrap.
- Pasta Salad
- Bento Box with vegetables, fruit, cheese and meat pieces.

If your child eats peanuts, nuts, peanut butter or any other nut product before coming to school, please be sure they wash their hands, arms and face thoroughly before coming to school. Please note that hand sanitizer does not kill the allergens so be sure to use soap and water.

We will **not** provide snacks which contain nuts, nut oil or almond extract or indicate that they were manufactured in a facility using nuts. **We ask that parents do the same when providing their child's lunch. Please also avoid Pesto in your child's lunch.**

We will take additional precautions in the classroom in order to minimize risk of incidental contact with nuts. Classroom materials, not intended for consumption, (e.g. art activities, sensory table materials, science and math materials etc.) may not contain nuts or indicate that they were manufactured in a facility using nuts. The classroom tables will be disinfected at the following times: prior to children arriving, after any food is eaten by the children, and at other times deemed necessary based on the activity performed.

Education and awareness about allergies will be promoted within our center. All staff shall complete epi pen and allergy awareness training once per year.

Parents of a child with a food allergy, must complete a Food Allergy Plan prior to their child attending the center.

WHAT TO BRING/KEEP AT CCC

Lunch - Parents provide lunch for their child. We suggest that lunches are kept small unless your child has a large appetite - a whole sandwich is usually too much. Please keep sweets to a minimum. Lunch should be packed in a lunch box or bag and labeled clearly with your child's name on the outside. Food should be prepared and "ready to eat" (i.e. prepared according to your child's chewing abilities) and parents are strongly encouraged to include ice packs and/or a thermos to keep the food fresh. We do not refrigerate or reheat children's food.

Water Bottles - Please send your child a water bottle each day. We ask that you **label the bottle clearly** with your child's name. We can refill the water bottle throughout the day as needed.

Jacket/Sweatshirt - Please provide your child with a jacket or sweatshirt each day. Our weather is constantly changing and we spend a lot of time outdoors. **Please be sure to label the jacket with your child's name.**

Extra Change of Clothes - Children are required to have an extra change of clothes and underwear kept at the center. This will ensure that your child will have dry clothes available after water play or an accident that may occur throughout the day. We recommend that you place these items in a 1 gallon ziplock bag. **Please mark all removable clothing brought to school with your child's name.**

Napping Mats - Full day children are provided with a napping mat which includes a top sheet and built in pillow. Parents are responsible to take these home weekly for laundering. Due to limited storage space, please do not bring blankets from home without approval from your child's teacher.

Diapers & Wipes (If needed) - Parents are responsible to supply diapers, pull ups and wipes if needed. We supply you with an area to store several days of these items and we ask that you ensure that we always have a stock on hand.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Please keep toys from home at home. Your child may bring special items (stuffed animals, photographs etc.) to share ONLY on a special occasion or on a teacher's designated share day if applicable. Share items are limited to what can fit in your child's cubby when not in use.

SNACK

If your child does not eat breakfast at home, you may bring food for them to eat before 7:45 a.m. Please get your child started with their breakfast when you drop them off and the teacher will help them finish and clean up. Please bring disposable utensils, cups or dishes or bring food that does not require warming.

We provide morning and afternoon snacks for the children. Below is our snack menu.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Granola Bar Milk	Fruit Milk	Muffins or Bagels Milk	Fruit Milk	Cereal Milk
Afternoon	Crackers Juice	Crackers Juice	Fruit Milk	Cheese or Yogurt Juice	Crackers Juice

SUNSCREEN

We do not supply/apply sunscreen to the children. We ask that parents apply it to their child each morning as needed.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is important that you notify CCC immediately of any changes in home address, telephone numbers or place of employment and home so that we will be able to reach you in an emergency.

PARENT CONCERNS

Our vision is to provide a high quality, safe and stimulating environment for your child. In order to meet that vision and to help us improve we appreciate your involvement and feedback. We take your concerns and feedback seriously and make every effort to address issues within our center. We also welcome any new ideas or positive feedback. If you have any concerns, please speak to your child's teacher or Cortney Dasmann, our director.

GUIDANCE IN WORKING TOWARD POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Guidance toward positive behavior allows children to develop their opportunities for growth. Setting limits with children gives them the security of knowing their strong emotions will not lead them to do things they will later regret.

Our approach to guidance is to set clear, predictable limits in a sensitive manner. We are committed to developing a positive sense of self-esteem. At no time will your child be struck, handled roughly, or verbally abused as a disciplinary measure. We request that parents do not spank their children in the center. Our philosophy of limit setting arises from two important areas of concern; not hurting oneself and others and respecting one's own and other people's physical environment

Please note that we set up the environment in a way that minimizes limits. If a child's behavior is inappropriate, our first action is to redirect the child, use positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, and use natural or logical consequences. When children are ready, we believe they should be included in determining the natural or logical consequences of inappropriate behavior. Children's involvement helps them become responsible for their actions toward others as well as towards property. For example a child might be included in repairing a book they just tore up. After this is done the teacher and the child would talk about the feelings behind the behavior and ways to deal with his or her anger. Time-outs (Resting Body) are used as a means of giving the child an opportunity to calm down and re-establish inner control. When the child and teacher are ready, they will talk about the inappropriate behavior and about feelings and solving the problem. Children are always responsible for cleaning up after completing their projects or play activities.