

# Concordia Place General Information Early Learning and Preschool Programs

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## Concordia Place

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[www.concordiaplace.org](http://www.concordiaplace.org)

Year round: September - August \* Days: Monday - Friday \* Hours: 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

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Children's ages:	6 weeks - 5 years of age	2-5 years of age
Program Capacity:	171 children	69 children
License & Accreditations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed by the State of Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services</li> <li>• Licensed by the City of Chicago</li> <li>• National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed by the State of Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services</li> <li>• Licensed by the City of Chicago</li> <li>• National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)</li> </ul>

## Memberships and Affiliations

- Member Department of Early Childhood Development, Northern Illinois District
  - Member Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children
    - Member Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children
    - Member National Association for the Education of Young Children
      - Member Action For Children
  - Member Kedzie Elston Business Industrial Council
  - Member North Center Chamber of Commerce
    - Member Lutheran Services in America

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# Welcome to Concordia

***Our Mission: Concordia Place believes in creating involved communities where all our neighbors can gather, learn, and grow.***

Concordia Place children's programs are more than child care: we are both a preschool and child care center that provides quality programs with an emphasis on education. Because we believe in the importance of education early in a child's life, our teachers have their degrees in either education, early childhood education, or child development.

We use teacher-directed and child-initiated activities that build both mental and motor abilities, teach social skills, encourage positive self images and develop self-discipline. We use a developmentally appropriate curriculum and follow the Illinois Early Learning Standards. In addition, learning through play along with parent involvement activities are keystones to the program. We use staff-child ratios appropriate for the age of the children.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Ratio Children: Teachers</b>
Infant	6 weeks – 14 months	8:2
Toddlers	15 – 23 months	12:3
Twos	24 – 36 months	16:2
Preschool	3 – 5 years	20:2

## **Where Everyone can Gather, Learn, and Grow**

Concordia Place believes that a family's income should not exclude them from quality programs for their children. We serve working families and single-parent families by operating year-round, five days a week with hours of 7:00am - 6:00pm. We offer a sliding tuition scale with a weekly payment schedule (instead of a full semester of tuition in advance) that benefits more than 70% of our enrolled families. We provide our programs without regard to race, gender, or religious affiliation.

It is our goal to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for children. Our program structure reflects a concern for the development of positive social skills. We believe that children who are comfortable in social settings and who can communicate effectively are children best prepared for the challenges of life. The program operates with a variety of structured and unstructured activities, developed around weekly themes, under the supervision of trained and qualified staff.

## **Our History**

In 1981, Concordia Lutheran Church responded to a request by three single-parents in the North Center community for help with child care by founding the Concordia Child Care Center. Its original goal was to provide after-school and full-day summer care for children ages six to thirteen years old. The school age program is open when schools are closed, giving working parents needed child care.

In 1989, the Concordia Child Care Center expanded to include full-day Preschool for children ages three to five years old. This expansion not only serves the child care needs of working parents with preschool aged children, but also serves parents with both preschool and school age children.

In 2001, Concordia Lutheran Church purchased a vacant Catholic facility to expand to serve the neighboring Avondale community. In 2002, Concordia Place was created and the Concordia Child Care Center was included in this new nonprofit organization. This new facility at 3300 N. Whipple not only replicates our successful preschool and school aged programs, but also has expanded programs to infants, toddlers as well as teens, seniors, and adult learning programs.

## Daily Schedule

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A planned, yet flexible schedule encourages children to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically. We adjust schedules to be age appropriate.

### Infants, Toddlers & Twos

With infants and toddlers, the group schedule is built around individual schedules. The individual rhythms of eating, sleeping, and exploring are the basis for which we plan our day.

For children under three years, sleep schedules reflect the child's rhythm and input from parents. Bottle feeding is individualized, based on the child's needs and input from parents. Mothers who are nursing their babies are welcome to come feed their babies at any time of the day.

#### Morning

- 7:00-8:30 Children arrive, greeting, self-directed play, bottles
- 8:30-8:45 Snack preparation, brief finger plays or singing at the table for awake, non-bottle fed infants and all toddlers/two-year-olds.
- 8:45-9:00 Snack, for non-bottle fed infants and all toddlers/two-year-olds. Bottle-feeding and sleep as individual schedules indicate throughout the day.
- 9:00-11:15 Self-directed play in planned learning areas (both indoor and outdoor, as weather permits). Teachers will have planned supervised activities for individual children and small groups.
- 11:15-11:30 Cleanup, wash up, and brief finger plays or singing at the table for awake, non-bottle fed infants and all toddlers/two-year-olds.
- 11:30-12:00 Lunch for non-bottle fed infants and toddlers/two-year-olds.

#### Afternoon

- 12:00-12:15 Lunch clean up and bathroom trips. Brush teeth as age appropriate.
- 12:15-12:30 Nap preparation: rest on cots, teachers rub backs, soft music is played
- 12:30-2:30 Nap time for many toddlers/two-year-olds; individualized wake-up
- 2:30-3:00 Wake up. Put cots away, put socks and shoes on.  
Snack preparation, brief finger plays or singing at the table for awake, non-bottle fed infants and all toddlers/two-year-olds.
- 3:00-3:30 Snack, eating on an individualized or small-group basis when children are ready.
- 3:30-6:00 Self-directed play in planned learning areas (both indoor and outdoor, as weather permits). Teachers will have planned supervised activities for individual children and small groups.

## Preschool (Ages 3-5)

### Morning

7:00 - 8:45	Children arrive. Children can work/play in interest centers: dramatic play, block, science, reading centers, free play, art activities.
8:45 - 9:00	Snack Preparation
9:00 - 9:25	Snack
9:25 - 9:35	Circle. Children share experiences, talk about the day, sing songs, and listen to stories.
9:35 - 10:15	Interest centers (see above).
10:15 - 10:30	Clean up and bathroom trips.
10:30 - 11:20	Outdoor play: gross motor activities. Indoors in inclement weather.
11:20 - 11:30	Return inside. Bathroom as needed and wash hands.
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch, family style.

### Afternoon

12:00 - 12:15	Lunch clean up and bathroom trips.
12:15 - 12:30	Nap preparation: rest on cots, teachers rub backs, soft music is played.
12:30 - 2:30	Naptime.
2:30 - 3:00	Wake-up. Put cots away, put shoes and socks on. Circle: songs and finger play, discuss afternoon choices for outdoor play or indoors if inclement weather.
3:00 - 3:30	Snack
3:30 - 4:15	Outdoor play: organized group games, tricycle riding, playing on playground equipment.
4:15 - 5:00	Interest centers (see above).
5:00 - 6:00	Free play, self-directed activities, pick-up.

## Starting Checklist

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Use this checklist to help you and your child prepare for a great learning experience!

Have you . . .

- Packed a blanket and pillow for rest time labeled with your child's name?  
(No pillows allowed for infants)
- Packed a tooth brush labeled with your child's name? (rounded for infants)
- Packed one extra set of season appropriate clothing to keep at Concordia in case of accidents labeled with your child's name? (Two sets for Infants, Toddlers and Twos)
- Purchased your Concordia T-Shirt for field trips and labeled with your child's name on the inside tag?
- Submitted all your forms, including authorized people for pick up and health forms?
- Paid your registration fee, activity fee, and tuition deposit?
- Paid the activity fee for your child if your child is 2 years of age or older?

### **Additional Supplies Needed From Home for Infants, Toddlers and Twos**

- Disposable Diapers; When using cloth diapers parents must bring in a doctor's note stating the medical reason why disposable diapers cannot be used. In addition, the cloth diapers must have an absorbent inner ling completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material.
- Diapering Ointments-A & D ointment or prescription from doctor – in tubes only-no jars – clearly labeled with your child's name
- Baby Wipes
- Appropriate number of bottles (with formula or breast milk) labeled with child's name **and date**

## To Discuss With Your Child

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Here are some guidelines you might want to share with your child about what to expect.

1. Each child is given a cubby where he/she can place jacket, boots, and personal possessions.
2. Children may bring a small blanket, (and a pillow, if desired), labeled with his or her name. They may be kept at Concordia until Friday, when you must take them home to be washed. Please mark all items with your child's name.
3. Children should have a full extra change of clothing that is appropriate for the season. In order to prevent lost clothing, please see that all articles are clearly marked. Though we try and watch out for articles, the staff is not responsible for lost or misplaced clothing or other items.

4. Our program teaches good dental hygiene. Please send a toothbrush to keep in your child's cubby. All articles should be marked with the child's name.
5. The program is informal and very active. Children are encouraged to wear clothing that is not restricting. Gym shoes are preferable; we strongly discourage flip flops and dress shoes. Aprons will be provided by the center for art and water activities.
6. Our program offers lots of games and toys for a variety of interests. Children should not bring toys, sports equipment or other such belongings to the program. Often these things from home are lost, broken, or are the cause of unnecessary arguments. This can be avoided by leaving personal possessions at home. Be especially careful of choke-size items and sharp jewelry. However, it is sometimes comforting for a child to have something with them from home such as a special blanket for nap time or a favorite stuffed animal. If your child needs that special something from home, we welcome you to bring it to the classroom. Please label these belongings clearly with your child's name. Staff members are not responsible for any personal items.
7. Periodically, children ages 2 and up enjoy a special guest or activity or go on a field trip to interesting places in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. All children are required to wear their Concordia Place T-shirts on field trip days. They cost \$10.00 each.
8. Parents are welcome to send prepackaged, unopened cookies, cupcakes, or cake, on birthdays. Please let your child's teacher know in advance that you will bring a treat. In keeping with our Peanut Safe policy, **you must ensure that all the food items you bring to the center are peanut free.** For more information on peanut policy, please refer to the Medical and Health section of this manual.

## About Our Program

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One of the ways we achieve our program goals is to integrate them into our daily curriculum. We use *The Creative Curriculum* for our early learning and preschool programs. *The Creative Curriculum* is a comprehensive curriculum that is like a roadmap; it helps you get where you want to go. It includes goals and objectives for children's learning in all areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language.

The goals and objectives are what we want to accomplish and the curriculum helps us structure how we do that. *The Creative Curriculum* offers choices, encourages flexibility, and provides direction on how to reach the goals and objectives. It helps us to be intentional about the experiences we offer infants, toddlers, and twos while still having the flexibility to respond to the changing interests and abilities of young children. *The Creative Curriculum* uses ongoing assessment to decide how to respond to each child and to plan appropriate experiences. This enables us to care for and teach children well.

Our approach is not a predefined, prescribed book but is dynamic and incorporates to the needs of the individual child.

In our Early Learning program, our Assistant Director:

- Provides guidance to develop weekly lesson plans
- Works with teachers to implement the curriculum in the classroom
- Evaluates children's academic progress and suggest modifications to each child's teacher

In our Preschool program, we have a Type 04 teacher in each room to develop weekly lesson plans and evaluate children's' progress. Teachers are observers of children to recognize their individual needs. They use a wide range of teaching strategies that call for different levels of teacher involvement, which in turn, creates classroom communities where children learn how to work together and solve problems.

### **Program Goals and Philosophy**

The program goals that guide our program curriculum and teaching methodology are to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing, and relaxed environment for each child's physical, emotional, and social well being.
- Encourage children to develop a positive self-image, self-reliance, and a sense of their own independence.
- Teach children social skills: the ability to share, work together, communicate effectively, and respect one another.

- Provide structured and unstructured time for children to spend in a variety of activities and satisfying learning experiences.
- Provide children with the skills and techniques that allow them to gain control over their environment and competence in their abilities.
- Encourage active curiosity about the world and to promote enthusiasm for learning.
- Help children develop self-discipline by providing an environment with reasonable limits and expectations.
- Encourage good stewardship of our world: to care for their belongings, to show respect for the belongings of others, and to appreciate the world in which we live.

## **Program Objectives: Early Learning (ages 6 weeks – 2 years)**

The program is designed for optimum individual development at the child’s natural pace. Caring and learning are inseparable. In the program, children optimize their emerging physical, sensory-motor, perceptual, cognitive, and social skills.

### **I. Large and Small Motor Development**

We help large and small motor development by offering age-appropriate opportunities for children.

<p><u>Younger babies are offered opportunities to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach</li> <li>• Grasp</li> <li>• Kick</li> <li>• Hold</li> <li>• Pull up</li> <li>• Stand</li> <li>• Crawl</li> </ul>	<p><u>Toddlers and Two year-olds are offered opportunities to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grip</li> <li>• Throw</li> <li>• Manipulate objects</li> <li>• Walk</li> <li>• Run</li> <li>• Climb</li> <li>• Push</li> <li>• Pull</li> </ul>
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### **2. Sensory Exploration**

To enhance sensory experiences, children are given opportunities to explore:

- Texture
- Color
- Patterns
- Size and shape
- Smell and taste

- Weight

### **3. Cognitive Development**

Cognitive development is encouraged by providing experiences for children in:

- Object permanence
- Spatial relationships
- Classifying
- Collecting and dumping
- Cause and effect experiences
- Problem solving

### **4. Language & Music**

To encourage language and music skills children are given many opportunities for:

- Adult-child conversations
- Reading and language play
- Explorations in music rhyming and sounds

### **5. Personal Expression**

To enhance personal expression, we encourage children to participate in:

- Art
- Movement
- Imitation and beginning dramatic play
- Doll and stuffed animal play

### **6. Social Emotional Development**

We encourage social and emotional development in these areas:

- Expressing feelings and emotions properly and effectively
- Sharing playthings
- Feeling pride in accomplishment
- Practicing good table manners

## **Program Objectives: Preschool (ages 3-5)**

The following objectives are used to plan our curriculum, class projects, and to guide our activities in formal and informal play:

### **I. Social/Emotional Development**

Children demonstrate social and emotional development by:

- Being respectful of other's feelings, ideas, and belongings
- Appreciating the work of others
- Sharing playthings
- Feeling pride in accomplishment
- Expressing feelings and emotions properly and effectively

- Learning to take responsibility for one's actions
- Using materials appropriately
- Observing safety rules
- Demonstrating good habits of personal cleanliness
- Practicing good table manners

## **2. Language & Literacy Development**

Preschool children are encouraged to:

- Use verbal expression to converse socially with one another and share ideas
- Participate in rhyme and rhythm activities to develop phonological awareness
- Dictate stories to expand their reading and writing readiness skills
- Participate in activities which require listening and responding
- Understand that pictures and symbols have meaning and that text carries a message
- Understand that reading progresses from left to right and top to bottom
- Identify labels and signs in the environment
- Identify some letters, including those in own name
- Make some letter sound matches
- Predict what will happen next in stories using pictures and content as guides
- Recognize separable and repeating sounds in spoken language
- Retell information from a story
- Respond to simple questions about reading material
- Demonstrate auditory comprehension of stories by making comments

## **3. Math Readiness**

These tasks encourage preschoolers in their math development:

- Learning one to one correspondence
- Number recognition
- Learning to count
- Understanding the meaning of small, large, more, and less
- Participate in activities that focus on sorting, graphing, ordering, and comparing objects
- Recognizing shapes
- Comparing quantities
- Demonstrate a beginning understanding of measurement, patterns and problem solving

## **4. Social Studies**

We encourage preschoolers to:

- Learn about and accept their own heritage and different cultures
- Tell about themselves, including name, address, and city
- Describe interests, such as pets, games, and toys
- Establish friendships at school
- Describe the many ways of being a friend
- Describe the physical appearance and characteristics of their classroom
- Understand family needs, roles, and relationships

- Describe some interests and activities of family life
- Recognize the importance of responsibility at home and in school
- Identify community workers and the services they provide
- Recognize the reason for rules

## **5. Science**

Through hands-on experiences and activities, preschoolers:

- Learn about good nutrition
- Use senses to observe and explore material and natural phenomena
- Use simple tools and equipment for investigation
- Makes comparisons among objects that have been observed
- Observe and describe simple seasonal and weather changes
- Show awareness of the environment
- Observe, describe, and compare characteristics, basic needs, and life cycles of living things
- Express wonder and ask questions about their world
- Begin to be aware of technology and how it affects life

## **6. Gross Motor Development**

The large muscle groups and coordination will be enhanced through activities that will help the children recognize and understand the following:

- Coordinate body movement in large and small spaces
- Relationship of body to objects and other individuals
- Movement with balance and control

This is accomplished through:

- Outdoor play: climbing, riding tricycles, playing with balls, etc.
- Indoor play: building with large blocks, moving creatively in dance and exercise, participating in running, jumping, and other physically active games

## **7. Fine Motor Development**

The small muscles of the hand and eye-hand coordination are improved through manipulation of small motor materials such as:

- Puzzles
- Practicing lacing, zipping, and buttoning
- Cutting
- Modeling clay
- Stringing beads
- Building with small blocks and legos
- Art projects

## **8. Art**

Art projects encourage children to:

- Enhance creativity and self-expression
- Learn the meaning of color, line, texture, shape, form, and design
- Use a variety of art materials for sensory experience and exploration
- Use personal symbols - simple shapes and lines to draw and paint self, people, and environment
- Recognize artwork of others

## **9. Music**

Through music, children:

- Discover and explore sounds in the environment
- Distinguish differences among varied sounds
- Discover and develop their own singing voices
- Distinguish between high and low tones and between loud and soft tones
- Distinguish between fast and slow tempos and respond rhythmically to them
- Build a repertoire of simple songs
- Chant nursery rhymes and participate in singing games
- Identify simple melody and rhythm
- Participate in directed and creative musical activities to enhance role-play, creative movement, and development of rhythm
- Experience vocal and instrumental music as media for self-expression, enjoyment, and appreciation of music

## **10. Drama**

Dramatic play encourages children in a variety of expressions:

- Expression of feelings and thoughts
- Problem solving and role playing
- Sense of working together in a group
- Sense of accomplishment and personal fulfillment
- Sense of ease in presenting before a group

## **Room Transitions**

Our children's programs are designed for optimum individual development at your child's natural pace. We consider multiple factors when determining the timing for a child to transition into the next class, including the child's age, the dynamics in the class, availability of spaces in the next room, and your child's individual needs; consequently, please do not set your child's expectations that they will transition to another room on their birth day.

Parents will be informed two weeks before transitioning their child into the next class. We transition the children as smoothly as possible by encouraging visits to the new classroom to spend time with the teachers and children. We hope that by transitioning your child slowly into the new classroom routines, this change will be easier for both you and your child. We

encourage parents to take some time during your child's transition period to get to know his/her new teachers and classmates.

## **Special Programs and Field Trips**

Special programs and field trips (whether off-site or in-house) are an important part of the educational program, so we periodically invite guests lead special activities at our centers or take children ages two and up to nearby places. We provide adequate, responsible adult supervision for these excursions through staff and adult volunteers. We charge a \$35 activity fee every three months to cover the cost of these special programs for children ages two and up.

If you are interested in accompanying us on a field trip, talk to the Program Director or Head Teacher to express your interest. We try to ensure that everyone who has expressed an interest can participate, but we may have to limit the number of volunteers. We determine the number of volunteers we need depending on the type of field trip or activity. We appreciate donations to help cover the costs for volunteers; however, Concordia will pay entrance fees for the number of volunteers we need. You need to arrange for your own meal if the trip or activity is over lunch time. You may accompany the children on the bus if there is room, but sometimes circumstances require that you arrange your own transportation.

If you are interested in participating in an activity or field trip, but we have reached the number of required volunteers, speak with the Program Director to see if the activity could accommodate people and you would be responsible for any transportation and entrance expenses. Some activities, such as theater performances, have limited seating.

## **Outdoor Play**

The Department of Children and Family Services requires that all children go outside daily. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

## **Rest Periods**

All children will have a daily naptime of 2 to 2-1/2 hours' duration. Children who do not sleep are encouraged to play quietly on their cots until it is time to get up. Parents should bring a small blanket (and a pillow, if desired except for infants) labeled with the child's name. This is to be kept at the center for naptime and taken home on Fridays to be washed.

## **Parents Are Welcome Too**

Parents are welcome to come and spend time at the program. You are welcome to come on field trip days or participate in our other activities. Adult visitors and volunteers can share in the children's work and play.

Parent participation is an integral part of our program and a valued aspect of our effectiveness and quality. We ask parents to:

- Read and answer all correspondence from school
- Attend individual and group meetings
- Participate in fundraising activities
- Participate in the Parent Club

### **Communications**

The Parents' Bulletin Board is a vital source of information for you: articles, messages, and other information relevant to parents. Please check the Parents' Bulletin Board daily. You will receive a monthly newsletter. In addition, we put individual communications about your child in your child's mail slot or cubby.

### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Parents will receive a daily note stating whether their child ate lunch and took a nap and what was discussed at group time. Our staff is always happy to meet with parents. Please speak to your child's teacher or the Program Director if you have a question or concern.

### **Parent Feedback**

We conduct a yearly Program Evaluation to solicit parent input and include parents in our program improvement efforts. Once the evaluations are complete and compiled, we provide parents a summary of the findings.

### **Parent Club – You are already a member!**

By getting involved in the Concordia Parent Club, parents benefit from social and educational events. Concordia leadership benefits by hearing parents' ideas and concerns. Together, parents and Concordia leadership form the Concordia Parent Club. You do not need to do anything to join – by enrolling a child at Concordia, you are already a member!

Parents from each room volunteer to help organize and lead the Parent Club activities. They also serve as representatives and help generate ideas. For each event, we seek parents to volunteer.

The Parent Club has organized social events, such as spaghetti dinners and morning coffee hours. The Parent Club uses input from the fall parent survey to identify areas of interest for educational topics. Most recently, the Parent Club hosted a Sibling Rivalry discussion group and

an informational session on the application process for kindergarten in Chicago Public Schools, including magnet schools and other special programs.

## **Child Assessments**

### **Purposes of Assessments**

Assessment is the process of gathering information about children in order to make informed decisions. We use assessments to support learning, to identify special needs, for program evaluation and monitoring trends, and for program accountability. Through assessment, teachers obtain useful information about children's knowledge, skills, and progress by observing, documenting, analyzing, and reviewing children's work over time.

Child assessment methods are consistent with program curriculum and philosophy because they assess the areas of social, emotional, and physical development as well as social skills; the ability to share, work together and communicate effectively. Teachers determine the developmental progress and learning of the children through observations and assessment results. Teachers also use assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices.

### **Curriculum**

By observing and assessing the children, teachers find what interests the children and use this to plan their curriculum for the classroom. Teachers write weekly curriculum that is based on a subject that interests the children, which can be extended for a longer period of time based on the level of the children's interest. Observations and assessment results also help the teachers determine the developmental progress and learning of the children.

### **Program Improvement**

We also use the findings of our assessments to make improvements to our programs, such as increasing teacher trainings or implementing special programming.

### **Assessment Tools**

Staff members are trained on how to use the following assessment tools and how to interpret their results through in-service trainings, outside workshops, and the Creative Curriculum teacher's manual.

#### **Observations**

Informal observations of the children are gathered continually by the classroom teachers within the school environment.

#### **Developmental Screenings – Early Learning**

Within 45 days of a child's enrollment, parents fill out an Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Ages and Stages is a parent completed child monitoring system. The scoring of the questionnaire determines if children are within the normal range of

development, if they need to be rescreened after a period of time, or if they need to be referred to a specialist for further evaluation and support.

### **Developmental Screenings – Preschool**

In the fall of each year, developmental specialists from the Chicago Public Schools Child Find Program administer the Early Screening Inventory – Preschool (ESI-P) at our centers. If a child enters the program after the screenings have taken place, a trained staff member will use the same assessment tool and method to screen the child within 45 days of enrollment.

CPS Child Find specialists also administer hearing and vision screenings in the fall, usually in October, as part of the ESI-R screening tool. Children enrolling after the hearing and vision screening will be included in the next scheduled screening on-site at Concordia.

The ESI-P also includes a Parent Questionnaire, which makes the assessment more comprehensive by gaining an overview of the variety of conditions, problems, and events in the child's life that could lead to risk factors for normal development.

The scoring of the ESI-P determines if children are within the normal range of development, if they need to be rescreened after a period of time, or if they need to be referred to a specialist for further evaluation and support.

### **Developmental Continuums**

Formal assessments using the Creative Curriculum Developmental Checklist are completed three times per year, in the fall, winter, and spring.

Teachers use their observations to complete the checklist, which reviews cognitive, developmental, social, physical, and language development, from the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum.

### **Work Sampling**

Teachers collect children's work in individual portfolios in order to see their progress over time. Portfolios can include artwork and writing samples.

### **Conferences**

Formal parent/teacher conferences occur twice per year, in the fall and the spring. Informal conferences regarding your child's development can occur as needed throughout the year.

### **Concerns and Referrals**

If a teacher observes that a particular child has some difficulty in any of the learning objectives, he/she takes these steps to ensure that the concerns are addressed by the teacher and by the family:

1. Recognize a possible developmental delay or difficulty.
2. Keep daily notes on the child for two weeks.
3. Schedule a meeting with the parents and the assistant director of the program to discuss the teacher's observations of the child.
4. If the parents are interested in receiving further support, the assistant director will call our representative at Community Partnership Programs (Chicago Public Schools) for children ages three to five and Early Intervention for children 6 weeks through two years.
5. With signed permission from the parents, a representative from Community Partnerships or Early Intervention observes the child at school.
6. If the representative thinks that the child needs to be further evaluated, the family is referred to their neighborhood Chicago Public School for children ages three to five and to Early Intervention for children ages 6 weeks through two years.

### **Confidentiality**

Observations, assessment information, ESI-P results, etc. are filed in the child's educational file and stored in a locked cabinet. Information that the staff obtain about a child's performance is shared only with parents and appropriate center staff. If Concordia feels a referral is appropriate, we obtain your signed permission. See Privacy and Confidentiality for more information.

## **Food**

### **Meals & Snacks**

Our program ensures children receive healthy snacks and meals. Our program includes a mid-morning snack, lunch, and mid-afternoon snack. We serve healthy foods, avoiding "junk" food and sweets. Each week's menu is posted on the Parents' Bulletin Board.

### **Peanut Free**

Concordia Place has a Peanut Safe Policy. The snacks and meals provided by our program do not contain peanuts. For more information on our Peanut Safe Policy please refer to the Medical and Health section of this manual.

### **Infant Foods & Formula**

Parents of infants will provide specific information on food and formula to their child's teacher. It is important that the teachers caring for your child have accurate information regarding formula changes, dietary restrictions, and new food introductions in order to provide the best care. Other than formula and breast milk, all food is provided by the center. We cannot accept food from home unless accompanied by a physician's note.

Infants younger than six months are not offered solid foods and juice unless the practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by families. If juice is served, it is 100% fruit juice, and the amount is limited to no more than four ounces daily and is offered in a sippy cup.

### **Outside Food Prohibited**

Other than formula and breast milk for bottle-fed children, all outside food is provided by the center. We do not allow children to consume food from outside of the center. Out of respect for the other children in the classroom, we ask that you comply with this request and not bring food from outside. Exceptions will be considered for religious and medical reasons only. A physician's note must accompany all requests for dietary changes due to medical reasons. If exceptions are made on religious or medical grounds, parents are responsible for following the Peanut Safe Policy and not bring food that contain peanuts, peanut products or that have been produced in a factory that processes peanuts or peanut products. Parents who have a doctor's note to bring outside food, must provide nutritional food and not include "junk" food, sweets, desserts, sugary beverages, candy, or other food products lacking nutritional value.

### **Milk**

In our Infant and Toddler rooms, staff will discard after one hour any formula or human milk that has been served but has not been completely consumed after a feeding or has not been refrigerated. Children enrolled in the Toddler or Two classrooms that are not on formula or breast milk will be served whole milk daily. Older children are served 2% milk daily. Non-dairy milk may be brought by the parents for a child upon receipt of a physician's note.

### **Child and Adult Care Food Program**

Concordia Place is a member of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which subsidizes us in serving nutritious food to the children. The Child and Adult Care Food Program is available to all eligible children without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in any U.S.D.A.-related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250.

## **Program Guidelines**

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Concordia operates with the following guidelines for eligibility and participation in the program. Parents and children are required to comply. These guidelines meet our State licensing requirements and our program goals.

### **Eligibility - Admission**

Children must be between the ages of 3 and 5 years old and completely toilet trained for admission to our program at Seeley and between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years old for admission to our programs at Whipple. Children are accepted into our program on a trial basis for up to three weeks.

Before a child begins the program, we must have specific forms on file. These forms are all reviewed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at each inspection. Your child's file will contain all of these forms and copies of any correspondence, including incident reports and observations. You have the right to examine your child's file upon request. Following is a list of these forms:

- Children's Program Application Form (front and back)
- Program Admission Form (front and back)
- Emergency and Medical Information Form (front and back)
- Permission to Participate Form
- Consent Form (signed by each designated pick-up person)
- Emergency Evacuation Form
- Discipline and Terminations Procedures Form
- IDHS Certificate of Child Health Examination (to be completed by physician)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Enrollment Form
- Tuition Agreement Form
- Licensing Standards Receipt Verification
- Parent Consent for Pre-Kindergarten Screening (Preschool children only)
- Birth Certificate, original or certified copy

### **Discipline Procedures**

#### **Discipline Philosophy**

We use these procedures to encourage self-discipline for a child:

1. Redirect the child with firm, positive statements.
2. Talk to the child about the relationship between the act and the consequence.
3. Persistent, unacceptable behavior will be reported to parents by the classroom teacher or Program Director. A conference with a parent may be called, to discuss the best approach to help your child redirect their behavior.

## **Termination Procedures**

In the case of a child's unacceptable behavior, we try to work with the parents using these procedures:

1. Teacher documents a child's behavior in an incident report
2. Teacher and Program Director discuss the situation
3. Parents and program staff meet to discuss the situation in a positive manner
4. We work together to devise an action plan
5. We schedule a date to evaluate if the plan is being effective

If Concordia feels it cannot meet the needs of a child, the child is removed from the program.

## **Dismissal**

Concordia seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual children's differences, but on occasion our program is not equipped to handle the emotional or physical needs of a child and/or a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting. Some examples may include:

- A child appears to be a danger to him-or herself, other children at the center, center employees, or anyone else at the center.
- Medical, psychological, or social service personnel working with the center determine that continued care at the center could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child.
- Where accommodations required for the child's success and participation would place an unreasonable burden on center resources and finances, and removal is in the best interest of the child or center.

Families must follow the policies outlined in this manual. In addition to the above situations, children may be immediately dismissed from the program, at the discretion of the Program Director, when the family fails to comply with the regulations of the program, including:

- payment of tuition and fees
- timely pick-up of the child
- irregular attendance or frequent or prolonged absences with no medical or approved reason
- failing to provide required documents or complete required forms including but not limited to medical and proof of income on a timely basis

We expect our school families to exercise good judgment, loyalty, honesty, respect, and integrity in all dealings with Concordia, its employees, and students, on or off premises. Any conduct that could be detrimental or harmful to Concordia, its facility or staff members, or students, is unacceptable. Families may also be immediately dismissed from the program, at the discretion of the Program Director, should a parent or guardian exhibit:

- conduct that is inconsistent with the philosophy and goals of the program

- aggressive, rude or inappropriate behavior toward any center children, staff or other visitors
- behavior that endangers any center children, staff or visitors
- conduct that could be detrimental or harmful to Concordia, its employees, or students, on or off premises, including electronic behavior.
- spread rumors or accusations about Concordia, its employees, administrators, families, and visitors through gossip or other means of communication, e.g., e-mail, text messaging and blogs

## **Common Challenging Behaviors**

Physical aggression, temper tantrums and biting are among the most common challenging behaviors exhibited in groups of young children. It is always upsetting and can be frightening for children, parents and teachers alike. We focus our energies on prevention. We observe so that we can anticipate when a child might exhibit a challenging behavior and redirect the child to a more appropriate situation or behavior. Understanding the reasons for their behavior helps us use effective strategies to prevent the behavior. There are many reasons why a child may exhibit these behaviors including: teething, experimenting, exploring cause and effect, imitating behaviors, trying to approach or interact with another child, frustration (especially for non-verbal children), noise and confusion (especially during transitions), when they feel threatened (including when a toy is being grabbed from them) and when there has been a change in a routine or a person who they trust has left.

Each child is different so when we begin to notice a child with a pattern of challenging behavior we will call you to schedule a meeting to talk with you about our observations and questions. At this meeting we will brainstorm strategies and write a prevention plan with timelines. If the behavior continues or grows more intense this may signal that the child needs special assistance and we will set up a second meeting to discuss referrals to a community resource agency that specializes in developmental therapy.

## **Program Hours**

The program operates from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please make sure your child arrives by 9:00 a.m. for full-day and ½ day morning programs and by 2:30 for ½ day afternoon programs. Please take your child directly to his room and sign in on the sign-in sheet on the Parents' Board. This is necessary because the days planned activities start at this time. In addition, latecomers disrupt the group. In case of illness, please call us by 9:00 a.m.

## **Holidays**

Concordia is closed in observance of these holidays (and in some instances, the observation date will differ from the holiday):

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Thanksgiving           | 6. New Year's Day   |
| 2. Day after Thanksgiving | 7. Good Friday      |
| 3. Christmas Eve          | 8. Memorial Day     |
| 4. Christmas Day          | 9. Independence Day |
| 5. New Year's Eve         | 10. Labor Day       |

### **In-Service Days**

One day per quarter, the program is closed for staff training, program assessment, and other operational needs. We publish these dates on our annual calendar. Child care will not be available on these days, and parents must make other arrangements.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Pick-Up Policy**

1. **Sign Out of Child:** At the time of pick up, each child must be signed out by a person authorized to pick up that child. This policy is for the protection of you and your child. Failure to sign out a child will result in a \$5.00 penalty assessment. Multiple incidents of failure to sign out a child could result in a dismissal from the program.
  
2. **Pick Up Time:** You may pick up your child at any time during the day, although we provide the schedule so that, if possible, you can plan around the program schedule. If you need to pick up your child before 4:00, please let us know in the morning so that we can make arrangements. Many days the children are at the park or on a walk and do not return until later in the afternoon.
  
3. **Late Pick Up:** We ask parents to strictly adhere to the 6:00 p.m. pick-up deadline. If, for some reason, you are delayed, please call to inform us. While we understand that emergencies do arise, if you are delayed and unable to pick up your child before 6:00 p.m., then you are solely responsible to make other arrangements for your child to be picked up. Our staff members will not hold your child responsible for the situation and any discussion of the situation will only be with the parent or guardian and never with the child.

Children who have not been picked up by 7:00 p.m. may be released into the custody of the Chicago Police Department. This is not our choice, it is the law.

We charge a late pick-up fee of \$10.00 for the first fifteen minutes plus one dollar each minute thereafter. This is payable with your next tuition payment. Continuous tardiness will necessitate your child be withdrawn from the program.

- 4. Authorized Pick-Up Person(s):** Only those persons authorized, in writing, on the Permission Form and Consent Form will be allowed to pick up your child. This policy is for the protection and safety of your child. Under no circumstances can we release your child to anyone who has not been properly authorized in writing.

You should secure at least three (3) alternative persons who can pick up your child. Each person designated as an alternative pick-up person must meet all of these requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have and present at the time of pick up, an acceptable photo identification card (driver's license or other recognized form of identification).
- Be available to pick up the child between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Be authorized by you, in writing, on the Permission Form and Consent Form as an alternative pick-up person.
- Have a current telephone number on the Permission Form.

In cases of separation or divorce, parents **must** understand that by law, both parents are considered authorized to pick up the child, unless a copy of a certified legal document to the contrary is on file at the center.

Lastly, **you** are required to keep this information accurate and current **at all times**. It is not the responsibility of the center that this information is up to date.

### **Health and Medical**

As required by State Law, every child enrolling in our programs must have a health form on file on which your doctor verifies that the child's immunizations are up to date. A physical examination, including a T.B. test and lead test, by your doctor is required. This form should be less than 6 months old when your child first starts and must be updated every year. We will notify you when a current medical form is needed.

Before your child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, when a child is overdue for any routine health services, you must provide evidence of an appointment for those services. The exception is for any immunization for which parents are using a religious exemption.

Do not bring your child to the program if he or she is suffering from any contagious or communicable diseases. No child shall be admitted with these symptoms or conditions:

- Temperature of 100 degrees F. or greater
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Any unexplained rash

- Nasal discharge accompanied by any of the symptoms of coughing, fatigue, fever of 100 or greater, a sudden change in mood or disposition
- Mucus producing cough
- Redness of eyes or discharge
- Signs of body pests, such as head lice

If a child becomes ill while at Concordia, we will notify you, and you will be required to take your child home until fully recovered. The child will be separated from the group in order to prevent other children from becoming infected.

After your child is free of any symptoms for a period of 24 hours, your child may return to the program. A doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious is required whenever a child has been absent for five days or longer, or returns after only 24 hours on medication prescribed by your doctor.

Immediately report to the office if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, such as strep throat, pin worms, viral infection, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc. Notification is important for the health of all the children in our program.

The State of Illinois, Department of Children and Family Services, requires that all members of day care institutions look for, and report to the State, evidence of any and all cases of suspected child abuse. We are therefore obligated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the State.

### **Peanut Policy**

Due to the prevalence and severity of some peanut allergies, Concordia has a Peanut Safe policy. Because peanut allergies can be serious and life threatening for some children, we strive to provide a safe and healthy school environment for everyone. Our food program uses no foods containing peanuts or peanut products.

Peanut Safe environments can only be achieved if everyone does their part. We ask parents to comply with our peanut policy by not bringing in treats for parties that contain peanuts, peanut products or that have been produced in a factory that processes peanuts or peanut products. Your help and cooperation is integral.

Although we strive to provide an environment safe of peanuts, we cannot guarantee a peanut-free environment.

### **Medications**

We cannot administer over-the-counter medications to any child at any time. Prescription medication will be given to your child if the medication is in its original bottle with the date, child's name, and times of day it is to be administered. We also need a note from you **and** a note from the doctor stating the nature of the illness, type of medication, amount of medication

to administer, and the times to be given. Please hand the prescription to the Program Director or Head Teacher, with instructions attached. Medicine is placed in a locked box in the refrigerator or in the medicine cabinet in the Program Director's office.

### **Incident Reports**

An incident report will be filed for any accident or injury with a detailed description of the incident. The parent will be given a copy of the report.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident, we will contact the parents. Your child will be taken immediately to the nearest hospital. You should go directly to the hospital – not to Concordia. Concordia carries liability insurance for its operations. In the case of medical emergencies or accidents, the family's insurance is the primary coverage.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

Concordia has developed an Emergency response plan that helps us respond to many types of emergencies. Depending on the situation, we will use one of these protective actions:

- Immediate evacuation – Students are evacuated to a safe area near the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire or other similar emergency.
- In-place Sheltering – Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- Total Evacuation – total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility.

**For our Whipple center**, we have agreements to relocate our preschool children to Linne School, 3221 North Sacramento Avenue or in the event that Linne is closed, to Brands Park, 3259 N. Elston Avenue, Chicago, IL. There is also an agreement to relocate infants and toddlers in the event of an evacuation to Daughters of Charity Building, 3335 N. Whipple.

**For our Seeley center**, we have agreements to relocate our children to St. Benedicts Catholic School at 3901 N. Bell.

- Modified Operation – may include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems, such as utility disruptions, that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Concordia is enrolled with the Emergency Closing Center. In the event of a facility emergency, please listen to Chicago media stations for such announcements. Announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above can be found on WGN radio, WBBM radio, Channels 2, 5, 7, 9, 32 and CLTV.

During an emergency, please do not call the school. This keeps the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. We have set up an emergency notification system.

Should any emergency arise, you will receive a pre-recorded telephone call informing you of the situation.

We use the contact information you provided on your form for your emergency contact telephone numbers. Should your contact phone numbers change, it is important that you notify the front desk immediately.

Also during an emergency, only those persons you list on the designated pick-up form will be allowed to pick up your child. We will not accept different pickup arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

### **Building Security Measures**

The security and safety of your children is our first priority. We want to assure you that we have security measures in place at each of our sites. We have external door locks, security cameras, door monitoring from multiple stations, and screening procedures for people entering our buildings. Teachers in each classroom do not allow children to leave with anyone unless they are on the authorized pick-up form.

Please read the security procedures for your child's program site.

#### **Whipple Site**

The Whipple site uses a badge reader system to help prevent unauthorized persons from entering our building and program areas. All persons entering the building will be granted entry via our external door by staff. Parents will be provided with limited access badges for internal doors, permitting them only to access those program areas in which their child is currently attending. Each family will be issued up to two badges without cost. You may purchase additional badges for \$10. If you forget your badge, you may be asked to show identification before a staff member will give you access to the children's program areas. Please keep your badge in a safe place. Replacement badges are available for \$20. If you lose a badge, IMMEDIATELY notify us so that we may inactivate your badge. When you withdraw your child from Concordia, you must return all the badges you have been issued. You will be charged the lost badge fee for each unreturned badge.

#### **Seeley Site**

Our Seeley site is equipped with an external camera used to monitor persons entering our program areas. Only recognized persons to the program are allowed access through our front door. Individuals that staff members do not recognize will be asked to identify themselves and give a reason for their visit before they are let in the building.

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these procedures. You are part of our security systems, too. Do not allow people you do not know to enter our buildings with you as you enter or leave.

### **Animal Control Policy**

Healthy household pets that present no danger to children are permitted in our center. Gerbils, hamsters, and guinea pigs which appear healthy may also be kept in the center.

All animals are physically separated from children both indoors and outdoors except as a portion of a specifically planned program activity under the direct supervision of a staff member.

Immediate treatment will be obtained for any child who sustains a bite or scratch from an animal and the child's parents are notified immediately. In addition, the center will notify the county animal control administrator.

Animals and/or pets are properly housed, fed and maintained in a safe, clean and sanitary condition at all times.

1. Domestic animals, birds, or fowl are not permitted at any time in areas where foods are prepared and maintained.
2. A responsible staff person is assigned to take care of any animal or pet on premises.
3. The center is free of stray animals which may cause injury and/or disease to children.

### **Pest Control Policy**

Concordia Place is committed to providing children in its care with a safe environment, which include preventing exposure to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children and property from pests such as insects, weeds, and rodents that may be found in the facility and its surrounding grounds, under some circumstances they may pose a hazard to children and staff. To minimize potential pesticide exposure to children and staff, pest control practices in this facility include a variety of non-chemical and chemical methods.

In the areas used by the child care facility, Concordia:

- Ensures that pesticides are applied by certified pesticide applicators or registered technicians.
- Bases pest management decisions on the results of regular inspections. The facility avoids routine use of pesticides not exempted below.
- Ensures that pesticides are not applied when children are present at the facility. Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children are removed from the area before pesticides are applied. Children do not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.

- Provides at least two operational days but not more than 30 days advance notice of pesticide application to parents and staff except in emergencies where pests pose an immediate health threat to children or staff (e.g. wasps).
- Notifies parents and staff as soon as possible when advance notice is not provided and include an explanation of the emergency, the reason for the late notice and the name of the pesticide applied.
- Makes accessible, upon request, all records of pesticide applications and advance notices for at least 90 days.

This policy does not apply to the following exempted uses of pesticides:

- An antimicrobial agent, such as disinfectant, sanitizer, or deodorizer, or
- Insecticide baits and rodent baits.

### **Toy Donation Policy**

Concordia appreciates that parents, neighbors, and friends provide gift-in-kind donations for our programs. The children benefit from donations of books, videos, games, and toys. For their imaginary, dramatic play, children also enjoy costumes, clothing and shoes in small sizes for girls and boys, purses, and small business jackets.

Below are some guidelines to help ensure that your donation can be put to good use:

- It is most helpful when we receive items that are clean. Please wash or wipe down items before donating them.
- Complete items only; for example, no puzzles with pieces missing.
- Please check that the books are in good condition and do not have missing or torn pages.
- We regret that for sanitary reasons, we cannot accept donated stuffed animals.
- Please do not donate toys or games that require batteries.
- We do not accept weapons or other such items.

### **Staff Qualifications**

Our staff is selected for their professional qualifications and personal traits suited to meet the many needs of the children. We consider these qualifications:

- Emotional maturity
- Willingness to cooperate with the program's objectives
- Respect for children and adults
- Patience and flexibility
- Physical and mental health
- Good personal hygiene
- Academic requirements set by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

### **Non Solicitation**

Concordia recruits and trains teachers and staff to the highest measures of quality so that we provide your child and the other children in our programs the best nurturing and developmental environment possible. Solicitation of employees for alternative employment violates the relationship of trust with Concordia and potentially effects the quality of the care we provide to the families enrolled here. For a period of not less than 6 months subsequent to leaving our program, families agree that they will not seek to employ, entice away, or even attempt to entice away anyone currently employed by Concordia or anyone who was employed by Concordia in the preceding six months.

## **Privacy, Confidentiality, and Document Retention**

Concordia Place collects, uses, and retains information about participants in our programs and their families for many purposes, such as account payment, records of the child, donations, etc. These records are required for various licensing and government reporting purposes as well our own program and business operations and are the property of Concordia Place.

Concordia staff members and parents are required to respect the confidentiality of each child and family enrolled in our programs, including enrollment records, anecdotal records, parent-teacher conference notes, developmental assessments and other personal records. Teachers may make notes for their anecdotal records but such notes will be considered as confidential information.

Discussions concerning a child or family, with anyone other than the child's parents or guardians, or other staff members having direct contact with the child, are strictly prohibited. Personal information about families or children in our care will be divulged to staff members only to the extent of what is necessary to know in order to support the child in care. Discretion and privacy are required when discussing confidential family and child information, particularly taking care not to be overheard by staff, parents or children.

Concordia uses private and confidential information to compile statistics about our program and operations that we report to licensing, program funders, and other required reporting. Your personal information is not identifiable.

We use photographs, videotapes or tape recordings of children for program purposes as well as funding reports, program quality assessment, etc. In the initial enrollment forms, families indicate their written permission for us to use these for any outside purposes, such as marketing and media.

We will not give out information to a third party without your prior written approval. It is our policy not to share information about a family with anyone other than appropriate staff members or our representatives.

Lists of parents' email or home addresses and/or phone numbers are treated as confidential. This information may be used by staff, parents or others working on behalf of Concordia for events, projects, communications or other express purposes. The lists will not be given to parents or any one else for non-Concordia related purposes.

In addition, Concordia staff, parents, and other volunteers and representatives may form committees or task forces for activities, such as completing special projects, holding special events, or conducting fundraising efforts. These committees may exchange information, such as contact information or personal background. This information will be used only for its originally intended purpose. Committee members are prohibited from using any information gained for their personal use.

### **Access to Written Records**

All records concerning children and families are maintained in locked files at the center. Only the directors, teachers and administrative staff have access to these files. Parents and/or legal guardians may also have access to their child's file.

Child enrollment records will not leave the locked files, except by an authorized staff for specific purposes. Records may not be removed from any Concordia premises except as required for legal purposes; in such instances, a subpoena is required for the removal of any records.

### **Mandated Reporting**

Staff members are expected to communicate with parents and supervisors regarding any concerns about a child's well-being. When a child's health and safety is endangered, staff members are legally obligated to report their suspicions of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities by calling the state's DCFS hotline. The Children's Program Director and Executive Director will be notified by the reporting staff for the appropriate follow-through. In the process of investigating such reports, the authorities may have access to the child's records on file at the center.

### **Document Retention**

We have developed a document retention policy for our various types of documents based on IRS recommendations, industry standards, as well as adaptations from the 23 Illinois Administrative Code Section 375. When records are no longer active, they are archived and stored in a locked closet. After the document retention time has expired, the information is shredded by a professional shredding service.

## **Program Oversight and Governance**

Concordia Place children's programs are directly administered by our Children's Program Director and each site has a Program Director. Any concerns about your child's program and care should be first discussed with your child's teacher and the Program Director. If you feel your concerns are not resolved, you may meet with the Executive Director.

In addition, the Board of Directors governs all the Concordia Place programs. Our Board consists of people who have demonstrated a passion for the Concordia mission. Parents whose children are enrolled in one of our programs, members of Concordia Lutheran Church, neighbors, and members from other community and business organizations are all eligible. They review organizational goals, funding, program policies, etc. Should you have a policy concern you wish to be brought before the Board, send a written request to Rev. Nicholas J. Zook, President of the Board, at 3855 N. Seeley, Chicago, IL 60618.

Parents are encouraged to participate at Concordia. If you are interested in joining Concordia committees, we would be happy to discuss your participation.

# Tuition & Fees Policies

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## Registration and Enrollment

### Enrollment during a program year

Concordia begins its new program year on the first Tuesday after Labor Day, and it runs for a full 12 months. Concordia operates its children's programs year round, including summer, spring breaks, and Christmas breaks. Our curriculum does not change during the summer; in other words, we do not offer preschool or early learning September through June and just child care during July and August. Children continue to develop and learn throughout the summer. Our year-round program also provides the consistency from which young children benefit.

Families may enter the program at any time during the program year. As openings are available during the program year, Concordia fills them from our waiting list to the first family who has submitted a complete packet of forms, paid their deposit, first week's tuition and registration fee, and is available to start on the date of the opening. **Concordia does not hold open slots.** Should a family not be available to start on the date of the opening, Concordia will offer the opening to the next family on the list.

### Registration for a new program year

During registration for the next program year, currently enrolled families have first priority for openings, provided we receive a completed and signed tuition agreement for each child by the stated deadline along with a first week's tuition and registration fee. Each program year, there is a per child registration fee that is due by June 1st. Concordia applies the deposit of currently enrolled children toward their deposit to the next program year.

After we register current children, we open registration to new children. Concordia reserves an opening for a child for the start of the next program year when we receive a complete packet of forms, deposit, first week's tuition and registration fee.

If any family registered for a new program year but decides to not attend after the registration deadline, they forfeit their tuition deposit, first week's tuition, and registration fee.

### Due at Enrollment: Registration Fee, First Week's Tuition and Deposit

Due at registration is an annual registration fee of \$75.00 per child that covers application to the program. Also payable at registration time is the first week of tuition and a deposit equal to one week's tuition. For families who are on the IDHS Child Care Certificate Program or other subsidy programs the deposit amount is determined by the income level and our sliding tuition scale, not a co-pay amount.

The tuition deposit will be applied to your child's last week in the program provided that you give appropriate notice. See Withdrawal section below for more information.

## Tuition

Tuition covers the cost of your child's enrollment for the whole program year and includes teacher salaries, classroom materials, snacks, insurance, and equipment.

The tuition for the program is prorated into weekly amounts to ease payments for the parents. These weekly amounts do not represent either a per hour rate or a per day rate for the program, only a weekly breakdown of the total cost of the program. Parents are required to pay the weekly amount (one week minimally in advance) regardless of the total number of days for that week that the child attends the program. We cannot give tuition refunds for the days your child is absent. This includes days absent due to illness and vacation. Families must pay for every week that their child is enrolled in the program.

**We do not accept payments in cash.** We accept payments by check, money order, or automatic transfers through our Simply Giving program. Simply Giving is an easy program that you can decide on what date and what amount you make payments. There are no costs at all to participate in this program. Please speak with your Program Director or the front desk staff to enroll.

To make our program affordable to families of all income levels, tuition is based on a sliding tuition scale adjusted by gross family income and size. The Board of Directors reviews the tuition scale, and any changes are published two months in advance.

Please note that Concordia Place is a non-profit organization. Your tuition payment covers only a portion of our program costs. We rely on individual contributions, in-kind donations, as well as grants from private foundations. We ask that parents participate to the fullest extent possible to help maintain the quality of our programs. There are numerous opportunities for parents to help such as purchasing tickets to fundraisers, donating needed items, or by making a general gift to our annual fundraising campaign. You may also add a gift to each tuition payment with a note of intent.

Some families choose to pay in advance in larger increments than a week. For example, some families pay on a monthly or quarterly basis. If you wish to pay your tuition in larger installments, please speak with the Program Director.

Concordia works with parents to collect outstanding balances but reserves the right to use a collection agency as we deem necessary.

## Payment Schedule and Late Fees

All tuition is payable at least one week in advance. The tuition for the week is due no later than Monday. Payments made after Monday are delinquent. A \$5.00 late fee, per day, is charged for any payments made after Monday. After one week of delinquent tuition payments, parents will be asked to withdraw their child from the program and are responsible for payment of any balance due on tuition for the time their child was enrolled in the program.

## Returned Check Fees

We charge a \$25.00 fee for any returned checks. After a returned check, you are required to pay your tuition by money order.

## Other Charges and Fees

Parents are responsible for paying charges and fees described elsewhere throughout this manual, including, but not limited to, late pick-up, failure to sign-out, t-shirt and activity fees. These charges are payable in the week the charge or fee was incurred.

## Withdrawals

If any family registered for a new program year but decides to not attend after the registration deadline, they forfeit their tuition deposit, first week's tuition, and registration fee.

During the program year (after September 30 and before June 1), families may withdraw a child from the program by providing a four-week written notice to the front desk staff. Families who withdraw their child without appropriate notice forfeit their tuition deposit.

Withdrawal and subsequent re-enrollment will entail an additional \$75.00 registration fee and all other applicable fees and deposits.

## Tuition Determination

Tuition categories are determined according to gross combined family income and size. For each additional child in the family, a \$4,000 income consideration is given to determine the tuition category. Families with more than one child in the program will receive a 5% reduction, per week, on the total tuition for both children.

## Sliding Tuition Scale Effective Sept. 7, 2010

### Early Learning (ages 6 weeks – 2 years)

	<b>Infants</b> 6wks-14mo	<b>Toddlers</b> 15 – 23 mo	<b>Two's</b> 24 – 36 months
Gross Family Income	<b>5 Full Days</b>	<b>5 Full Days</b>	<b>5 Full Days</b>
\$15,500 and under	\$201	\$167	\$145
\$15,501 - \$26,000	\$227	\$199	\$187
\$26,001 - \$36,000	\$262	\$231	\$212
\$36,001 - \$45,000	\$304	\$237	\$229
\$45,001 and over	\$358	\$307	\$270

### Preschool (ages 3-5)

	<b>Tuition Full Day</b>		
Gross Family Income	<b>5 Days</b>	<b>3 Days</b>	<b>2 Days</b>

\$15,500 and under	\$117	\$78	\$58
\$15,501 - \$26,000	\$146	\$102	\$73
\$26,001 - \$36,000	\$200	\$119	\$94
\$36,001 - \$45,000	\$222	\$152	\$108
\$45,001 and over	\$251	\$167	\$120

## IDHS - Action for Children

The Illinois Department of Health Services (IDHS) helps low-income families pay for the child care services needed to work or go to school (training) and other work related activities. The IDHS Action for Children program is a state run subsidy program which may be able to assist you with paying child care costs with our center.

A few things to keep in mind if you decide to use Action for Children to subsidize your child's care with our center:

1. **You** are responsible for completing the application, submitting it to the IDHS offices, ensuring you receive a response and ensuring you reapply to continue receiving these services once your eligibility period ends.
2. Until Concordia receives notification of your approval for the Action for Children subsidy, you will be charged weekly according to our sliding scale.
  - a. If you are found **eligible**, we will change our invoices to reflect your co-payment from the beginning of your eligibility period.
  - b. If you are found **ineligible or you fail to complete the application**, you will be held responsible for all tuition under our sliding scale during the time your child attended our center.
3. You may either submit the application in person at the Action for Children offices or mail in your application. Keep in mind that applications mailed take longer to process. For a timelier response, we advise you to submit your application in person.
4. Concordia does not determine your IDHS weekly co-payment. This is determined solely by Action for Children as it is under their discretion. Any concerns regarding your determination must be directed to their offices.
5. You are responsible for a weekly fee of \$17 per child in addition to the co-payment determined by Action for Children. These fees are not subject to our sibling discount.
6. It is solely your responsibility to ensure you have coverage through Action for Children. Concordia may send you reminders from time to time concerning your coverage as a courtesy but it is not our responsibility. Please be aware of when your eligibility begins and ends. You must reapply for assistance one month before your coverage period ends.

For more information or to download forms, please visit Action for Children's website at [www.actforchildren.org](http://www.actforchildren.org).

### **Other Child Care Subsidies**

Some families may be eligible for other programs which may be able to assist you with paying child care costs. For example, there are child care military subsidies. It is solely your responsibility to apply for any of these programs and ensure that you are eligible.

You are responsible for a minimum weekly fee of \$17 per child. This amount may be increased depending on the subsidy amount provided by the program so that the total amount Concordia receives corresponds to the program's sliding tuition scale using your income and family size. These fees are not subject to our sibling discount.

# PARENT MANUAL AGREEMENT

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

WE HAVE FULLY READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE FOREGOING PARENT MANUAL AND  
AGREE TO ABIDE BY ITS TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

SIGNATURE OF PARENTS

MOTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and return this page only.