



Child Care & Preschool Family Handbook 2018 - 2019

Isaiah 40:11

He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in His arms
And carries them close to His heart;
He gently leads those that have young.

226 West John Street
Matthews, NC 28105
(704) 845-4673

www.COSKidsMatthews.org
www.facebook.com/COSKids

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COSKids Child Development Campus:

Child Care is a part of a larger ministry called Christ Our Shepherd which seeks to serve our community and its families. The following programs are also a part of COS Kids Child Development Campus:

- Half-Day Preschool (8 – 2)
- After School Program
- Summer Camp (K – 5th grade)
- Matthews Christian Library
- Single Parent Ministry

For more information about any of these programs, call 704-845-4673 (HOPE), or visit www.COSKidsMatthews.org.

Purpose Statement:

To strengthen our community by shepherding local families.

Licensing and Staff:

COSKids Child Care is licensed by the state of North Carolina with a “5 Star License” and operates under the guidelines set forth by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education. Under these guidelines, our teacher-child ratios must not exceed those listed below at any time:

Age	# of children per adult
6 weeks-12 months	5
12-24 months	6
2 years	9
3 years	10
4 years	13
5 years	15

Under the “5 star” license, our lead teachers must be highly qualified with education and training in Early Childhood Education. In addition, all of our teachers are required to receive in-service training on a yearly basis.

WHERE TO START

Call List Policy:

There are times when we cannot guarantee enrollment for a year or more within an age group. If this is the case for your child, you have the option of being added to our “Call List.” Individuals on the call list will be contacted if an opening arises within 12 months of the call. Individuals on the call list will be contacted about 1 year following their initial contact to see if they would like to remain on the list for the following year.

Tours and Orientation:

- Enrollments happen on a rolling basis throughout the year. We encourage you to set up a tour so you can check out our amazing campus and staff and see all we have to offer.
- We will also have an open house and curriculum night during the first month of the new school year. You will be able to meet your child’s teacher, see the classroom, turn in any last minute paperwork, and ask any questions you may have. You will also receive your parent packet with our school calendar and other information you will need throughout the year.

Waiting List Policy:

If we anticipate we will have an opening in your child’s age group within the next 12 months, you have the option to pay the \$85 waiting list/registration fee. This fee is non-refundable. By paying the waiting list/registration fee, you are assured that we will contact you when the next opening becomes available.

When we contact you with available space, you would need to begin weekly payments at the date available to hold the spot. Otherwise, you would be moved down to the next spot on the waiting list. We cannot guarantee that a space will open in any certain time period.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

COSKids Child Care offers full-time classroom experiences for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years in addition to a half-day (8 am – 2 pm) classroom option for children 3 – 5.

- Children are grouped according to age. Infants-toddlers will be transitioned to the older classes when they are developmentally ready and as spots become available. Once children are in the two-year-old classes, we will generally transition based on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' (CMS) cut-off date for starting Kindergarten (August 31st). Promotion day is on/around the last Monday in August, but each child must be 3 or 4 years old by August 31st of the upcoming school year to be considered for enrollment in the 3's and 4's classes, respectively.
- Please Note: We recognize that children potty-train at their own pace. You and your child's teacher will work together to provide the best environment for potty-training success. Children whose classroom will be in the Upper Building on the campus must be fully potty-trained according to Mecklenburg County Sanitation Regulations.

To enroll your child at COSKids:

1. Fill out an information card.
2. Turn in the \$85 non-refundable registration fee for the first child and \$50 non-refundable registration fee for each additional child.
3. Approximately one month before your enrollment date pick up a registration packet and complete all the included paperwork:
 - Childcare Application
 - Children's Medical Report (must be signed by Physician)
 - Medical Action Plan, if necessary
 - Immunization History
 - Acknowledgement of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules
 - Walking Permission Form
 - Photo Permission Form
 - Discipline Policy
 - Child Care Parent Handbook (sign and return the last page)
 - Electronic Payment Sign-Up
 - Abusive Head Trauma Policy Acknowledgement
 - Infant Feed Schedule (children 15 months and under)
 - Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy (children 12 months and under)
4. Send a picture of your child (head and shoulders) to our Business Administrator for our emergency records at RHavican@coskidsmatthews.org Be sure to include your child's first and last name in the email.

FEES AND TUITION:

- Weekly tuition has been determined by a yearly calendar and is a set amount for each week. There will be no adjustment made for vacation*, holidays, inclement weather or other closings.
- Each tuition payment is due by Friday for the following week. Please see our payment sheet for current rates.
- We ask that parents sign up for automatic credit or debit payments through Tuition Express, our electronic payment service. Payments will be withdrawn directly from your credit card, savings or checking account. It's easy and trouble-free.
 - Payments will be electronically paid on Friday for following week.
 - Authorization form is due upon enrollment along with a voided check.
 - First payment will be withdrawn the Friday before your child's first week of care.
- If you are not able to set up an automatic debit payment, you may set up an automatic credit card payment, pay online at www.coskidsmatthews.org, or pay in our office with check, cash, or credit card.
- Make all checks payable to COSKids. Please put your child's name and program in the memo part of the check and drop your check in the pay box.
- Do not leave cash in the pay box; a receipt must be given for cash payment. Please see an administrator for a receipt. Please do not give your tuition check to a teacher.
- A \$10 late fee will be added to your account on Monday at 6 pm if your account is not paid in full for the current week of service.
- A \$25 insufficient fund fee will be added to tuition for each returned check through both Tuition Express and through regular check processing.
- Families who are enrolled on a part-time basis must identify specific days that they will attend. Days cannot be "traded" due to holidays, vacation, weather, etc. If you desire to permanently change days you must contact the Main Office at least 2 weeks in advance of the change.

*Families can request 1 week of adjustment for vacation each year after being at COSKids for 6 months and if your tuition balance is currently zero. Vacation requests should be placed with the Administrative Secretary at least 2 weeks prior to the first day of vacation.

Summer Activity Fee:

The Toddlers, 2's, 3's, and 4's classes will have program enhancement activities during the summer months. These activities may include special gym classes, music classes and celebrations. You will be charged for this fee at the beginning of the summer. Please ask in the Main Office for an estimate of this additional fee.

Scholarships for Single Parents:

As part of Christ Our Shepherd, COSKids Child Care and After School offers scholarships for up to half the cost of tuition to single parents who qualify financially. For more information about our Single Parent Ministry, contact Lori Davis at LDavis@coskidsmatthews.org (Single Parent Coordinator) or Sue Sproat at SSproat@coskidsmatthews.org (Executive Director).

Subsidy

We also accept payments from Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI) through the North Carolina Child Care Subsidy Program. For more information about receiving financial assistance in Mecklenburg County from CCRI, visit www.childcareresourcesinc.org. In Union County, contact Child Care Subsidy Services at 704-296-6131.

Late Pick-Up Charge:

Please keep in mind that Child Care closes at 6:00pm. There will be a late charge of \$1.00 per minute after 6:00. If your child is not picked up by 6:30pm, we will call an authorized person on your registration form. We are required to call the Department of Social Services if a child remains in care at our Center after 7:00pm and we cannot reach you or an authorized individual. If you know you will be a few minutes late due to unforeseen circumstances, please let us know by calling the office. Parents who are late on a regular basis may be subject to dismissal from our center. Please be on time.

HOURS, CLOSINGS, ATTENDANCE, DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Child Care operates between 6:30am-6:00pm, Monday-Friday. We ask that you drop your child off by 8:30am in order for him or her to eat breakfast and begin the day.

- You will need to escort your child into the classroom each day and sign them in. The teacher will greet your child at the door. Please try to have your child in the classroom on time. When you drop off your child late, he or she may miss our morning welcome activities and learning experiences and may have a more difficult time jumping in with the rest of the class.
- The teachers will greet parents and children when they arrive, but please remember the teachers' time and attention will be directed at your child and the other children in the room, therefore this is not the appropriate time to discuss concerns with them. It is easiest to communicate with teachers through written notes or phone calls, but if you would like to set aside time to meet, that can be arranged.
- When you come to pick up your child, be sure to check both the cubby and file for artwork and notes. Soiled clothing must be kept out of the children's reach, so you may have a note directing you to its location.
- Please refrain from cell phone usage while dropping off or picking up your child.
- We encourage you to spend a few minutes helping your child make the transition and speak briefly to the teachers and other children. It is often easier for a child to leave if he or she has had a few minutes to get "finished" and accustomed to the idea of stopping his or her play. We also encourage you to take the time to praise works of art or treasures and make any discards later on.

Child Absences:

In case of illness or other cancellations, please notify us by 8:15am. You may email us at:

dsand@coskidsmatthews.org,

rrichardson@coskidsmatthews.org

ttownsend@coskidsmatthews.org

Or call 704-845-4673 and leave a voicemail message on the main line.

- If you know your child will be out, please let us know at least one day in advance so we can adjust meal counts and staffing accordingly.
- A minimum of two weeks notice of withdrawal is required; otherwise two more weeks of tuition will be charged.

Calendar:

Child Care is open January-December with academic activities from August-May and supplemental academics as well as field trips, water play days, and other special activities over the summer.

- We will be closed on the following days:
 - Labor Day
 - Thanksgiving (day of and day after)
 - Christmas Day (2 days)
 - New Year's (1 day)
 - Good Friday
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
- We will also close one day in late August and one day in February for Staff Development Day. Staff development and in-service are required by the state of NC to maintain our license.

Inclement weather

In the event of inclement weather, we will communicate any closings or delayed openings of the campus through text messages and emails to parents, as well as recording a message on our voicemail (704-845-4673) and posting an announcement on our Facebook pages. Generally speaking, if CMS chooses to close due to poor road conditions, we will also close. However, on subsequent days, we will monitor conditions so that we may reopen as soon as safely possible. In the event that CMS should have a delayed opening, we will most likely have a delayed opening as well, opening at 9am since many of our teachers also have children in public schools. We will always make sure the parking lots and sidewalks are clear before we open. Our ultimate goal is to be as safe as possible. To sign up for text message alerts, send a text to 81010 that says "@coskids"

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

- Dress your child in comfortable play clothes that will handle a variety of activities including outdoor play, art projects and "potty breaks." The children will get messy and dirty during play.
- One of our goals is to encourage our children to be self-sufficient. Please help by sending your child to school in clothes that allow for a child to say, "I can do it!" Dress your child in clothing that can be removed easily – belts, suspenders and overalls are not appropriate.
- All children go outside if the weather permits- if it is above 32 degrees and below 90 degrees and not actively raining. In the winter, please make sure your child brings a coat, mittens and a hat clearly labeled with your child's name. Rainboots are wonderful on rainy days but do bring inside shoes also.
- Rubber-soled shoes or sneakers will allow for a greater margin of safety on the outdoor equipment and are preferred. No flip-flops or sandals. Children hate to get mulch in their shoes and sandals, flip-flops and even Crocs can really frustrate them. It is our center policy that shoes are to be worn at all times, even during nap times.
- Avoid clothing with strings. These may get caught on playground or gym equipment.
- All children should bring in a complete change of clothing (including socks) to leave at school in case of accidents. Please mark this clothing clearly, put it in a zip-lock bag, and leave it with the teacher. Keep in mind, you may want to change the outfit based on the seasons.
- For toddlers and two-year olds who are potty-training, you will need to provide “Pull-Up” type diapers and wet wipes for your child.
- Always label all items, especially the precious ones. We do our best to keep items with their owners but sometimes things will get temporarily misplaced.

ITEMS FROM HOME

We ask that children leave personal items at home unless specifically requested by the teacher. Oftentimes, children like to put coins or small items in their pockets. These can be extremely dangerous choking hazards. Additionally, teachers cannot be responsible for personal toys, and it can create hurt feelings if something gets broken.

- We ask that you limit bringing items from home to only their special sleep items (blanket and “lovie”). These should be appropriately sized to fit snugly into your child’s cubby. Label these items with your child’s name or initials.
- We welcome “found” treasures like rocks and pinecones for our science tables, but be sure that your child understands that the item is for the classroom when they bring it in. We will always acknowledge how special these things are and take our cues from the child as to what to do with them.
- Your teacher will notify you of any “show and share” days. Label items that will return home with your child’s name or initials.
- We also ask that you do not bring pets or other live animals to school. Live animals are not allowed on our campus, with the exception of classroom fish and hamsters.

COMMUNICATION

- Currently we use a communication app called KidReports for the teachers to communicate daily with the families. This app is set up prior to your first day of attendance through email and can be viewed either through a smartphone, tablet or computer. Parents have the ability to adjust how often they receive notices of teacher's entries. In infant classrooms, the app will be updated quite often throughout the day, almost real-time for diaper changes and feedings. In toddler, 2s and preschool classrooms, teachers will update the app every day during rest time and generally one or two other times due to the fact that these children need the full attention of the staff throughout the day.
- Every child has a mail folder in the classroom. Check this daily at drop-off and pick-up. This is where the children will put completed work and we will add printed notes for families.
- Make sure we have your current email address, as this is an excellent way for us to keep you updated on classroom and school activities.
- Be sure to check out our closed group on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/COSKids>). We love to post upcoming events, photos, and other great information that will give you a peek at all the wonderful activities pertaining to your child's day.
- We also have a promotional Facebook Page that can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/COSKids>

Change of Personal Information:

Please notify the office - in writing - of any changes in your address, e-mail, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, and authorized pick-up list.

MEALS (Breakfast, Lunch & Snack)

Please note:

- *We are a peanut-free facility.
- *Any food brought in for parties must be store bought.
- Infants up to 15 months of age will follow the individual feeding schedule provided by you. Once children are over 15 months old, breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are provided for all children in attendance at serving time.
- For **children younger than 15** months who have been introduced to table food, parents may choose items from the weekly menu that they would like served to their child. Once children are comfortable eating solid foods, they are given the opportunity to eat all food provided on the menu each day.
- **Breakfast** is typically served between 8:30-9:00 am, **lunch** is served between 11:30am-12:00pm, and **snack** is served between 2:30-3:00pm. Unfortunately, we cannot save food for a child after these designated times.
- Our food service meets the NCDCDEE for the appropriate number of servings of fruits/vegetables, grains, proteins and fats. It is our goal to provide your child with healthy, nutritious food that meets the needs of their growing bodies.
- Menus will be emailed to each family on Thursday, and paper copies can be picked up from the office. We will also post weekly menus on the classroom parent boards.

SPECIAL DIETS due to Food Allergies, Intolerances, or Preferences

At times a family will need to adjust their child's diet due to allergies, intolerances or preferences. COSKids will do our best to meet the needs of each family.

If your child requires a special diet due to a FOOD ALLERGY, immediately notify the Main Office of the concern. Food allergies, diagnosed by a physician, require special paperwork and attention. The severity of the reaction must be taken into consideration, and we may need to seek additional training for the staff.

- Epi-Pens for severe food allergies are stored in the child's classroom and will travel with the child on campus.
- The child's allergy will be posted in the classroom as well as the kitchen.
- We are a peanut-free facility, so we do not anticipate exposure.
- Allergies to fruits are dealt with in-house by substitution.
- Allergies to large groups of foods, such as wheat, soy, eggs, are most easily dealt with by having the family bring in a substitution, such as Gluten-Free Pasta on spaghetti day. More information on substituting foods is on the following section.
- Families can choose to "Opt Out" of food from COSKids. More information on Opting Out is on the following page.

If your child requires a special diet due to a PREFERENCE, notify the Main Office of the preference.

- Preferences will be posted in both the classroom and the kitchen.
- Preferences such as Vegetarian, Vegan or Milk are dealt with by having the family bring in a substitution, such as Almond Milk, to replace traditional milk. More information on substituting foods follows.
- Families can choose to “Opt Out” of food from COSKids. More information on “Opting Out” will be found below.

FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS

- We are required to serve on the following plan:
 - Breakfast Snack: Choose 2 Components from Fruit/Vegetable, Protein, Grain, Milk
 - Lunch: Protein, Grain, Fruit, Vegetable, Milk
 - Snack: 2 Components-choose from Milk, Fruit/Vegetable, Grain, Protein
- If you choose to make a food substitution, it must be a fruit for a fruit, a vegetable for a vegetable, grain for grain, milk for milk, protein for protein.
- Food substitutions must be brought to the COSKids kitchen on the morning that the food is to be substituted.
- All food must be labeled with the child’s first and last name and the date it is dropped off (date it is to be served). Food can only be served on the date is labeled/dropped off.
- Milk substitutions can be brought to the kitchen on Monday, labeled with the child’s first and last name in addition to Monday’s date. We recommend bringing half-gallon containers. Milk must be picked up on Friday each week, or it will be discarded.
- **If you do not provide an appropriate substitution due to a preference, your child will be served from the menu. For example, if you would like your child to be served Soy Milk but you do not bring in a new carton on Monday, then your child will receive regular milk.**
- Talk to the Lead Teacher in the classroom to make sure that they are aware of the substitution coming from the kitchen on the given day.

OPTING OUT OF COSKIDS FOOD

- If you choose to opt out of COSKids food, you must provide all meals and snacks, including snacks for special events.
- We will not serve your child any food items from COSKids.
- We will only offer water to drink beyond what you bring.
- Food must be prepared at home. We are able to warm food if needed, but we will be unable to cook any additional food.
- Food must be brought to the COSKids kitchen on the morning that the food is to be served.
- All food must be labeled with the child's first and last name in addition to the date it is dropped off (date it is to be served).
- All food must be labeled for breakfast, lunch or snack.
- Drinks can be brought to the kitchen on Monday, labeled with the child's first and last name and Monday's date. We recommend bringing half-gallon containers.
- Drinks must be picked up on Friday of each week, or it will be discarded.
- Drinks should be labeled for breakfast, lunch, and snack.

Birthdays & Special Snacks:

- Discuss your plans with your child's teachers in advance.
- All food items must be commercially prepared instead of homemade as required by the Health Department. Additionally, we are a peanut-free facility.
- Many families like to celebrate their little ones' birthday at school. You may bring a special, store-bought snack for your child to share with his or her classmates during snack time.
- We are not allowed to have balloons in the classrooms as required by the Health Department. In addition, we also ask that no favors or toys be given out.
- Birthday invitations or special snacks will only be given out at school if the whole class is included.
- There will also be opportunities for special snacks throughout the year. If you would like to help in this area, please share that information with your child's teacher.

HEALTH POLICIES

Upon enrollment, each child is required to submit a completed Medical Report and Immunization Report. The Medical Report is only updated when there is a change in your child's health. The Immunization Report must be updated annually.

- Please do not send a sick child to school. We will make every effort to prevent the spread of illness, but we need your help.
- You will be called if your child becomes ill while at school, and you will be expected to pick him or her up promptly.
- If you cannot be located, we will call the emergency contact names you have given us on your registration form.

Colds & Viruses:

- Sickness includes fever, diarrhea, congestion, sore throat, upset stomach, or ear pain.
- Children with a temperature over 101° should be kept at home.
- Children who have vomited should be kept at home.
- Children who have diarrhea or stools looser than normal, should be kept home.
- Children should be free of fever, vomiting or diarrhea, or without medication for 36 hours before returning to school.*

*For example, if your child had his or her last fever on Monday at 10 a.m., he or she must be fever-free until Tuesday at 10 p.m. At that time, your child can return to school on Wednesday.

Rashes, Infections and Illness that requires a physician's treatment:

Please notify us if your child has been exposed to these, or any other communicable disease/condition, including measles, whooping cough, or chicken pox. We will then notify all parents of possible exposure. You and your child's identity will be kept confidential.

- Children who have undiagnosed rashes should be kept home.
- Children with untreated pink-eye (conjunctivitis), head lice, ringworm, open sores, impetigo or other skin diseases should be kept at home.
- Children who are treated for the above conditions must be on their prescribed medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school or with a physician's release.

Please keep your child at home if full participation is not possible. We cannot keep a child inside when the class is outdoors or limit his or her activities within the classroom due to staffing/ratio requirements.

Medication and Permission Slips:

Epi-Pens and breathing treatments are the only prescription medications we can administer to your child with your doctor's written permission. Over-the-counter medications such as teething cream, diaper cream and sunscreen can be administered with your permission only.

You can obtain a permission slip from your child's teacher or from the front office. Signed permission forms are only applicable for six months (prescription) or for one year (over-the-counter meds) and must be completed in full.

Injuries, Emergencies, and Notification:

We do our best to keep all children safe each day. However, little ones are busy, and accidents can sometimes happen.

- If your child sustains a minor injury such as a bump, scrape, or bruise, we will monitor closely. For more substantial bumps or bruises, we will contact you and complete an injury report letting you know what happened.
- For injuries that involve blood exposure between two or more individuals, special procedures, as outlined by Mecklenburg County Health Department, must be followed. See the following information for a detailed explanation.
- For serious injuries, seizures, trouble breathing, or other life-threatening conditions, a teacher will tend to the injured child immediately, while another staff member alerts the Director or other staff member for assistance. If necessary, 911 will be called immediately. A telephone is located in each classroom and in the front administrative offices. The Director or the next in charge, if the Director is not present, will then be responsible for choosing the appropriate action to obtain proper medical care. If the Director needs to consult a medical professional, the physician-as specified on the child's emergency card-will be contacted. If the injured child is to be taken to the hospital, he or she will be taken by ambulance/emergency vehicle with an accompanying staff member. No staff member will transport the injured child.
- Unless another hospital is listed on the injured child's emergency card, the injured child will be taken to Novant Matthews located at 1500 Matthews-Township Parkway. The phone number for Novant is 704-384-6550. You will be notified about the incident as soon as appropriate measures for the immediate care of your child have been taken, and you will be directed to meet your child and the accompanying staff member at the hospital.

Procedure for Incidents involving *Blood Exposure:

*A “blood exposure” is defined as contact with blood or bodily fluids to which universal precautions apply, such as:

- An injury to the skin (e.g. cut with a sharp object).
- Contact with mucous membranes.
- Skin that is chapped, abraded, or otherwise affected so that an effective skin barrier is not present.
- A bite or injury, which results in blood exposure.

A human **BITE** will rarely transmit a bacterial infection if proper first aid is given. Hepatitis B, C, and HIV can potentially be transmitted during a human bite if the skin is broken and blood exchange occurs.

When a bite or injury occurring in the child care setting involves a break in the skin and potential blood exposure, the Center will follow the guidelines set forth by the Mecklenburg County Health Department:

- Assess the bitten area and clean with soap and water.
- Check both children’s immunization records and determine if they are up to date on their tetanus (DtaP) and Hepatitis B vaccines.
- If the director or staff member is not sure if the child is up to date on their immunizations, call the Health Department’s Child Care Nurse so that the child’s record can be evaluated.
- Notify the parents of both children immediately.
- File an incident report as outlined above.
- Notify the center’s licensing consultant by phone.
- Both children (or parties, i.e. the teacher) involved in the biting incident should be tested for Hepatitis B, C, and HIV. The testing should be done at a private pediatrician’s office. However, if the patient has no financial ability to pay for the test and does not have insurance, they can have the test done at the Mecklenburg County Health Department. The Center should contact the Child Care Nurse Consultant so they can arrange for the testing to be done at the Health Department.
- If one parent refuses to have their child tested, the director or staff member should contact the Child Care Nurse from the Mecklenburg County Health Department immediately so an investigation can be initiated.
- The Health Department will not follow up with the children if both sets of parents refuse testing.
- If both sets of parents agree to have their child tested, the Director will be responsible for exchanging the names of the children and their physicians. The Director will then call each child’s pediatrician with the following information:
 - Child’s name and DOB

- o Description of what occurred
- o The other physician's name and contact number
- o The other child's name and DOB
- The Director should be a liaison between the parents and the physician in order to insure confidentiality.
- Physicians will exchange test results since there is counseling involved with Hepatitis B, C, and HIV results. Physicians will also be responsible for contacting their own patients and giving them test results.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- If one of the children tests positive for Hepatitis B, C, or HIV, the child's physician will contact the Health Department.

Health Goals

Lack of access to a healthy lifestyle during early childhood is a critical national problem that leads to long-term negative health. By providing age appropriate, fun, activities, we seek to inspire an early love of and fitness that will provide the foundation for healthy living.

- Our goal is to promote a healthy active lifestyle among staff, children, and families through high-quality fitness programs, nutrition tips, and education. By offering increased opportunities for physical activity among children, we hope to inspire an early love of sports and fitness that will serve as the foundation for a healthy way of life. This approach allows for the involvement of families to support what is learned while in our care so that health promotion becomes a natural way of life for everyone. Furthermore, through our commitment to health promotion and prevention, we provide the framework to help children build positive relationships, self-confidence, independence and the ability to deal with adversity.
- Our goal is to MAKE HEALTH PROMOTION FUN! We want to inspire our staff and families to lead a healthy, active life and hope that through early exposure to fitness, our program will help children develop a love of fitness that translates into healthy choices as they grow.
- By teaching children at a young age that a healthy lifestyle can be fun, while allowing them to enjoy benefits associated with programs such as obesity prevention, oral health, sun and water safety, and making healthy choices, we hope to raise the trajectory of these children's lives and see them become healthy, successful, and compassionate teenagers and adults.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The first requirement for a safe, loving, and enriching environment is structure within the classroom. This is established through consistent guidelines presented in a positive manner, in which children are secure in knowing the classroom routine and expectations. The emphasis is on what they can do rather than what they cannot do. The classroom is a “walking place,” rather than a “Don't run!” place.

- All families that enroll at COSKids are asked to read and sign acknowledgment of our full discipline policy.
- Children that are “having a rough moment” are reminded of the classroom rules and redirected to more appropriate behavior. When this doesn't work, time away from the activity to think about their behavior may be necessary. (As a general rule of thumb, time-away's will last for approximately the number of minutes corresponding to the child's age—a two-year-old would have a two-minute time away; a five-year-old would have a five-minute time away.) These actions help children realize that there are consequences associated with their behavior. Likewise, they will learn that having good behavior and showing God's love comes with many rewards.
- It is extremely important that parents and teachers work together to solve any problems that persist and decide on the appropriate action together. An important part of classroom management is the fact that all misbehavior in the classroom is dealt with in the classroom. You, as parents, will be notified of any ongoing problem, but we do not expect a child to be “punished” at home for what goes on here at school. At the same time, it is important that behavioral expectations are the same at school as they are at home. It is confusing to a child to have a different set of rules at school and at home. We aim to support your standards at home—not conflict with them—and we hope that you will do the same.
- If a child has repeated incidents of aggressive, disruptive, or other inappropriate behavior, including biting, (see biting addendum on the following page) despite appropriate actions being taken, he or she may be subject to suspension or expulsion from our program. Please be assured that we will do everything we can to prevent this course of action. We understand that your little one is learning, and it is our goal to help and support you through this process every step of the way.

Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary stage that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his or her peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills, are impulsive, and do not have a great deal of self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. We will encourage children to “use their words” if they become angry or frustrated. The staff members will maintain close and constant supervision at all times.

The safety of the children at our center is our primary concern. Our biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm “No...we don’t bite!”
- The staff member will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- The staff member will remove the biter from the situation and will redirect him or her to appropriate play.
- The wound of the bitten child will be assessed and cleansed with soap and water. If it is determined that there was blood exposure,* further steps will be taken (see below).
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident (confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained), and an incident report will be filed. Note: If a bite requires medical treatment, a copy of the incident report must be mailed to our licensing consultant within 7 calendar days (Child Care Requirements Licensing Guidelines, Section .0802 (d) EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE).
- The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.
- If biting continues, the biter may be suspended for a period of time. If the biter’s behavior does not change, he or she may not be able to return.

SAFETY

Transportation Safety

Please be very cautious when driving on campus, and please do not park in the driveway next to the main entrance. Cars left in the driveway block other cars from both entering and leaving the parking lot. Extra parking spaces are available on Charles Street, Ames Street, and in our gravel lot on Freemont Drive. We also ask that you do not leave your car motor running—we want to protect our children and the quality of the air they breathe.

- Please remember that an adult must always accompany a child when walking through our parking lots. Children, of any age, should not be sent back into the building by themselves. Please do not leave your child unattended in your car. Even if you think you will only be gone for a minute, this practice is very dangerous. Leaving your child unattended in a car is considered child neglect.
- Children under eight years of age or less than 80 lbs. in weight must be properly secured in a weight-appropriate child restraint system. Motor vehicle accidents are the number one killer of children in our nation according to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The NTSB also reports that 8 out of 10 child-safety seats are not properly installed, putting children at increased risk of serious injury or even death. The Matthews Police and Fire Departments, as well as many local car dealers offer safety checks for proper safety seat installation free to the public. Be sure to stop in and ask them if you need help.
- Please do not leave personal items, such as purses, laptops, or cell phones unattended in your vehicle. Thieves are known for targeting schools and breaking vehicle windows to attain these items.

Additional Child Safety Points from the North Carolina Department of Transportation:

- Use rear-facing child restraints (CRs) - in either a rear-facing-only (infant) seat or convertible seat - for children until at least 2 years of age or until they reach the maximum height and weight for their seat. For optimal protection, the child should remain rear facing until reaching the maximum weight for the car safety seat, as long as the top of the head is below the top of the seat back.
- Use forward-facing CRs with a harness for children who have outgrown the rear-facing capabilities of the seat. After being turned around to face the front of the vehicle, children should ride in a front-facing restraint with harness until the harness is outgrown. The upper weight limit for many harnesses is 40 pounds, but a more and more models have harnesses that can be used over 40 pounds.
- Use belt-positioning booster seats - used to raise a child up and make the lap and shoulder belts fit correctly - when the front-facing harness seat is outgrown (40 pounds for most models). The child should continue to use the belt-positioning booster until the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fits correctly.

- Add-on shoulder belt adjusters are not recommended since they are not covered by any Federal standards and may do more harm than good.
- Never tuck the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back. Both of these common practices are dangerous and illegal.
- The type of harness must be appropriate for the size of the child. Harnesses with shields do not fit small infants well.
- All parts of the harness must be present and in good condition.
- In general, the harness straps should be at or below shoulder level for rear-facing restraints and at or above shoulder level for forward-facing restraints. Refer to the CR manufacturer's instructions to be sure.
- The harness must be as snug as possible without pressing into the child's skin and causing physical discomfort. You should not be able to pinch the strap to make a fold in the harness webbing.
- NEVER install a rear-facing child restraint in front of an active front air bag.
- The rear seat is safer for children than the front seat. Whenever possible, child restraints should be installed in the center-rear seat.

Emergency and Evacuation

Each month we will conduct a fire or emergency drill (lock down, shelter in place, etc.). Drills will happen at various times of the day so that staff can prepare for every eventuality. All staff members receive yearly training on emergency planning and procedures. If you would like to review COSKids' plan, please see the Main Office.

Security

Upon enrollment each family will receive two security cards. These cards are specific for your family. Each of the outside doors for both buildings along with the hallway doors has a security card reader.

- Please do not allow anyone to enter the building with you that you do not know.
- If someone approaches you and asks for you to let them in, please either escort them to the Main Office or Atrium Desk, or direct them to contact the office by phone at 704-845-4673.
- Please notify the office immediately if you lose your card so we can turn off its access. Extra or replacement cards are \$5 each.

Please provide written notice if someone other than those authorized normally to pick up will be picking up your child. All unfamiliar individuals picking up a child must present their driver's license or other government issued photo I.D.- even if they are on the authorized pick-up list. If someone comes to pick up your child who is not on the authorized pick-up list, and we have not received notice from you, we will contact you immediately. We will NOT release your child to unauthorized, unidentified, or unverified individuals.

CUSTODY DISPUTES:

At times there are custody disputes that arise in which a parent asks to remove the other biological parent from the authorized pick-up list. COSKids' primary goal is for the safety of the child. In the state of North Carolina, the law is that a known biological parent must be allowed access to his or her child unless a court order has indicated otherwise. Our policy is to ask Matthews' Police Department to step in during these difficult situations to help the family find the best possible solution.

CURRICULUM

Learning is included in every minute of every day your child spends while he or she is at COSKids. Everything he or she experiences throughout the day—from free play to the planned activities of the classroom—are all part of the classroom’s curriculum.

We are a developmental preschool, which means we concentrate on each child's total development. The objectives of the curriculum are planned to promote spiritual, intellectual, social/emotional, language/literacy and physical growth. Each area is very important in developing a well-rounded child. It often looks like we are playing, but in reality we are also learning...

- to work and play together
- to respect the rights of others
- to listen as well as speak
- to express ourselves creatively
- to grow in self control
- to grow from dependence to independence
- to listen to direction and to follow them
- to develop good work habits
- to finish what we start
- to clean up after work time
- to participate in group activities
- to enjoy using a variety of materials
- to share toys, equipment, and experiences
- to dramatize stories and experiences
- to develop an interest in books
- to develop an interest in the world around us
- to improve muscular coordination
- to stay with plans for increasingly longer periods of time
- to develop new interests and extend old ones
- to understand new words and to be able to use them
- to understand music and appreciate different instruments and sounds
- to be happy and follow Jesus

Infants

Babies need to be held, loved and encouraged to safely explore their world. Our caregivers will be consistently responsive to your little one. We understand the importance of keeping you up-to-date on all aspects of your infant’s day, and we will give you a written daily report of your infant’s feeding, sleeping, diapering and learning activities.

Babies enjoy one-on-one activities with their teacher including gross-motor development exercises, social play and picture books. Our caring teachers will make reading to, talking to, and singing with your baby a priority in order to foster language development.

Toddler/Two's

Your child is now walking, talking, and becoming more independent. Your little one's budding enthusiasm for learning will be nurtured through our theme-based curriculum which will provide a multitude of fun, age-appropriate experiences with language, colors, shapes, and critical thinking skills. Your child is becoming more aware of others, so we will provide lots of opportunities for children to socialize and learn how to work within a group. We will also provide daily opportunities where songs, movement activities, and stories are introduced.

The world of your busy toddler/two year old is a physical one. Movement is a major way that he or she learns and interacts with that world. We want all children to appreciate the fun that comes with fitness while we educate their minds to make healthy choices. By including plenty of safe outdoor play and serving nutritious meals prepared here on site, our goal is to promote a healthy lifestyle. Also, because music is so important to development, your child will enjoy a weekly music session once in the two- year old's classroom.

We also recognize that children potty-train at their own pace, so you and your child's teacher will work together to provide the best environment for potty-training success.

Even the youngest toddler can begin to feel the love Christ has for him or her. We will incorporate prayer and Bible stories into our day to help grow your child's knowledge of God.

3-5 Years

Preschoolers learn best by doing. As a result, we combine planned learning experiences and structured play in a safe, fun and nurturing environment with plenty of opportunities for unstructured discovery. At this stage, your child is making more decisions and fostering confidence. His or her language skills will grow to encompass the skills needed for a lifelong love of reading, writing, and learning. Preschoolers can choose to play and work in different learning centers, each one equipped with developmentally appropriate materials designed to entice and challenge them.

In addition, your child's weekly schedule will include a 'Chapel Time' where he or she can participate in Bible stories and songs. Children will learn basic concepts such as 'God made everything', 'God loves them and wants them to love and help others', and 'we take care of the things God made.' Also, because music is so important to development, your child will enjoy a weekly session with our music instructor.

Unit studies stimulate interest in a variety of subjects from 'Farm Animals' to 'Transportation.' Our Bible Curriculum introduces and reinforces God's plan for our lives as found in the Holy Bible. The emphasis does not end there; however, as God's creation and evidence of His love is found in every area of our curriculum. At COSKids, we use the Creative Curriculum and Weekday Early Education Curriculum Guide for Three's, Four's and Five's. This is supplemented with additional material brought from other resources and teachers' experiences.

Learning Centers are areas in a classroom which define a special focus or afford a specific opportunity not otherwise available. Centers allow children to make choices and to move freely and independently throughout the learning environment. Center activities rotate often throughout the year to help pique your child's interest and to invite him or her to come see, do, and learn.

Learning Centers include:

- Art Center- Uses a variety of materials to stimulate creativity. The emphasis is on the process rather than the product. Be sure to praise your child for the work they have done, even if it is not "perfect"—each child's creation IS perfect in its own special way.
- Dramatic Play- Opportunities for dress-up and acting-out day-to-day activities of home life, and other "play pretend" experiences.
- Music- Allows children to have the chance to dance and play to the "beat of their own drum." Children will get a chance to play and learn about different types of instruments, experiment with different rhythms, and observe different types of sounds (high vs. low, soft vs. loud, short vs. long notes, etc.).
- Science- Experiments and opportunities to watch, wonder and question.
- Sand and Water Table- Opportunities to observe how liquids and solids can interact.
- Blocks- Opportunities for building, making patterns, and working with different shapes.
- Small Motor/Manipulatives- Encourage practice of eye/hand coordination and fine finger dexterity.
- Large Motor Activities- Encourage use of large muscles through outdoor or gym activities, such as running, jumping, climbing, skipping, walking a balance beam, and riding a tricycle.

Each class' schedule varies slightly, but all include "Welcome" activities, learning centers, circle time (stories, songs, games, etc.), art, playground/gym time, free play, snack time, and lunch time. Our schedule is somewhat flexible so that we can include special programs, guests, story times, movies, parties, performances, and other special activities as well.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We want you to be as involved with your child as you can and would love for you to help with storytimes, centers, or special activities. If you would like to attend any of our activities, please just let us know. We simply ask that you keep your visits to special occasions so that we can encourage independence and autonomy. We have many exciting campus-wide events throughout the year as well, and we would love to see you there.

You will receive a monthly calendar to acquaint you with the unit studies, Bible stories, Bible verses, special activities, and other information of interest for your child's class. We also send home daily sheets which helps to inform you about your child's behavior, nap, and activities of the day. Please take time to review these and talk to your child about them so that he or she will know that you value the time spent in school and are interested in what they are doing.

Since COSKids is part of a non-profit organization, Christ Our Shepherd, we offer scholarships and support to single parents and their families and will therefore have many opportunities for volunteers or donations throughout the year. For more information about our Single Parent Ministry, contact Lori Davis at LDavis@coskidsmatthews.org or 704-845-4673.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Annual Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled in the late winter for all 3 and 4 year old classes. You are welcome to schedule conferences with teachers, either by phone or in person. Teachers will make every effort to be available to you, but please avoid lengthy conversations at arrival or dismissal.

*Please note: It is most important that we avoid discussion about your child in front of your child. Little ears hear a great deal and take your words to heart.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

COSKids promotes an environment where all children and families feel welcomed and valued. It is our goal that all interactions among staff and families cultivate an understanding and awareness of how we can work together to create the best learning environment for the children. Cultural and Linguistic awareness is important to our staff, and we strive to ensure that the quality of care we provide extends to creating a climate where all families feel supported. We support the position that cultural competence is all interactions associated with communication, languages, beliefs, values, practices, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relationships and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious, social or political group. We use the following NAEYC Principles to meet this policy:

- We acknowledge that children are nested in families and communities with unique strengths.
- We build on and identify the strengths and shared goals between COSKids and families and recognize commonalities in order to best educate the child.
- We actively involve families in the early learning program.
- We help all families realize the cognitive advantages of a child knowing more than one language, and provide them with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve home language learning.
- We honor a family's cultural values and norms.
- We ensure that children remain cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to their home language and culture.
- We help develop essential concepts in the children's first language and within cultural contexts that they understand.
- We develop and provide alternative, creative strategies to promote all children's participation and learning.
- We provide children with many ways of showing what they know and can do

In addition to the NAEYC principles, we also implement:

- The hiring of teaching and support staff who are trained in languages other than English.
- Professional development in the areas of culture, language, and diversity.
- Printed materials available to staff and families in their preferred language.
- Translators provided when requested.

We evaluate our program standards annually to ensure that we are adequately serving the needs of our families. Information is gathered via surveys, verbal feedback, and family meetings.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

All staff and the provider should be aware of each child's developmental goals and the support needed to achieve them. Goals that are written in the child's IFSP/IEP and should be incorporated into the daily program. It is encouraged that if the child participates in therapies, that the therapies take place within the classroom, if possible. In turn, information is shared with the teachers so that they can best support the needs of the child. The staff or the provider is responsible for meeting the needs of all children in their care. For example: during group time, an early childhood educator can give a child an athletic ball to sit and bounce on. This satisfies the child's need for motion and the IFSP/IEP goal of socialization by allowing the child to watch, listen and respond. Inclusive practice meets IFSP/IEP goals most effectively when:

- All children, including children with additional support needs, are valued, active participants in group social play and in the program's experiences and routines.
- Positive attitudes are demonstrated by the staff or the provider when making changes to accommodate all children.
- All staff or the provider is aware of the goals of children's IFSP/IEP and support them in everyday activities.
- Staff or the provider works as a team with parents and other professionals to develop, carry out and review IFSP/IEP for children with additional support needs.
- Staff or the provider pursues specific training in inclusive practice.

COSKids Child Care Parent Handbook and Policy Acknowledgement

COSKids Child Development Campus seeks to create a love of learning, a joy of discovery, and a positive attitude towards the educational process. We foster a thirst for learning about God and His world.

Child's name: _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name (print): _____

Circle Class: Infants Toddlers Twos Threes Fours Partial Day

Number of Days: 2 Days 3 Days 4 Days 5 Days

I/We have read and will honor the policies of COS Kids Child Development Campus.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I/We will pay _____ tuition weekly. I understand that tuition is due on Friday for the following week. A grace period is given of Monday at 6 pm. Any accounts that are not in paid in full by Monday at 6pm will be assessed a weekly \$10 late fee.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I will give at least 2 weeks notice before withdrawal. If I do not give at least 2 weeks notice, I will be responsible for 2 more weeks of tuition.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please sign and return this page to the front office.
Welcome to COSKids! We're so glad to have you with us!