



Children's Development Group Parent Handbook for Preschool 2020-2021

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Children’s Development Group for Speech, OT, PT, and Psychological Services, PLLC (CDG) Preschool is licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and approved by the New York State Education Department (SED). We are dedicated to improving the lives of children of all abilities, through the use of developmentally appropriate, child-driven, individually developed, learning opportunities. We embrace a “capacity building” approach to learning by building on the child’s strengths and interests rather than defining the child by his or her difficulties and delays.

OUR MISSION

To shape a creative and fun-filled learning experience, where tolerance and acceptance are valued.

OUR VISION

To improve the lives of children of all ages and abilities.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OVERVIEW/PHILOSOPHY

It is the philosophy of CDG Preschool that early childhood should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploring, and discovery. It is also our belief that our preschool program should consist of positive and purposeful strategies designed to help children meet their individual goals. CDG Preschool is a unique, integrated preschool for children who are 3 – 5 years of age. This preschool has the responsibility to assist children to achieve and function at their optimal developmental level. The mutual respect and collaboration between parents, teachers, aides, children, and peers is of vital importance in helping children meet their goals of independence and self-awareness. Developmentally appropriate, child-paired with teacher-directed learning activities, ensures optimal learning and success. The classroom strives to provide safe structured experiences in an inviting, comfortable, organized atmosphere that promotes active discovery and choice making to encourage the development of confident, socially conscious human beings.

INCLUSION PHILOSOPHY

At CDG Preschool it is our goal to encourage opportunities for the inclusion of special needs students with typically developing peers.

CURRICULUM

The *Creative Curriculum* is used for the CDG Preschool programs and focuses on child interest driven learning activities. Students are provided with daily movement activities and arts & crafts designed to aid coordination and fine motor skill development. **We also align our curriculum and learning opportunities with the NY State Common Core Standards for Preschool. This alignment helps ensure that your child has a positive experience as he or she enters the school-age setting.**

STUDENT EVALUATION

A screening will be completed for each child within 45 days of entering the classroom to determine developmental strengths and weaknesses. Parents will receive a written summary of this screening and strategies to assist in facilitating development. Parents are also invited to a first parent/teacher conference. Thereafter, unless otherwise requested, a written quarterly progress report will be mailed to parents in January, April, and June. Parental involvement is

encouraged and welcomed. If there are significant problem areas these should be discussed with the teacher via a face-to-face conference. Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns directly with the classroom teacher.

DATA COLLECTION

Screening and assessment results are used to guide individual/group instruction and monitor progress of developmental milestones. Children are screened and assessed in their dominant language. Results are kept confidential, placed in the child's folder, and stored in a locked file cabinet. CDG uses the Battelle Developmental Inventory-2 Screening tool to screen each child within the first 45 days of entering preschool. Screening results are shared either in written form or via a brief meeting with the family and linked to follow-up assessment if necessary. Assessment data are collected in a variety of ways: direct assessment, interviewing parents, observing free play, observing structured activity, work samples, and checklists. As a direct assessment tool, CDG uses the Pre-Kindergarten Assessment and Portfolio, ©Lovely Commotion 2015. Direct assessment results are shared during parent-teacher conferences. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time. Parents can also access their child's records by using a *Parental Process to Inspect and Review Child's Records Policy* form that you can request from your classroom teacher or by calling the CDG administration office.

PRESCHOOL ADMISSIONS/ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Children who are 3-5 years of age are eligible to enroll in the preschool. Admission requirements and enrollment procedures are as follows:

1. A child must be 3-years-old to be admitted into the program. Registration is based on availability.
2. The class is filled on a first-come/first-served basis according to the date of enrollment. The classroom teacher and/or the Executive Director set the date of enrollment after registration materials are completed and registration fee (\$25.00) is paid. To ensure a spot in the classroom or on the waiting list, the application form and registration fee must be received.
3. If the class is filled when a parent calls, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list- to fill vacancies as they occur.
4. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or religion.

REGISTRATION

Registration may be an ongoing process throughout the year, depending on class size. An initial registration meeting must be held with at least one of the child's parents (or legal guardian) present for the following purposes:

1. Meet the teacher
2. Guarantee the child's place in the class
3. Complete registration form and other paperwork
4. Receive school calendar and other important information
5. Discuss registration materials and go over policies
6. Discuss curriculum at CDG Preschool
7. Answer any questions parent/guardians may have
8. Pay fees (parents must pay tuition fees at the registration meeting unless other arrangements have been made).
9. Obtain immunization records.

10. Obtain copies of custody/legal guardianship papers
11. Tour the classroom

TUITION

For those children coming to the classroom before 8:00am and staying after 1:00pm, childcare payment is tuition based. If your child misses preschool because of a trip, illness, etc. the full fee is still due. Childcare payments are required regardless of your child's attendance.

Tuition is \$3060.00 per year based on 180 days (required). Tuition is pre-paid based on the payment plan you select during initial application. Weekly (\$76.50), bi-weekly (\$153.00), or monthly (\$306.00) payment plans are available. All payments are due on the Monday of the payment schedule you choose. If you would like to change your payment plan, once submitted, please contact the administration office to ensure the change is documented.

Payments must be mailed to Children's Development Group 1701 Front Street Keeseville, NY 12944. Checks or money orders only. Make checks payable to Children's Development Group. Classroom staff cannot accept payments.

Payments that are one month in arrears will jeopardize the child's enrollment. In circumstances of late payment, arrangements for payment must be made by calling Margi Carter, Executive Director, 518-578-4912 or Karen Hachigian, 518-834-7072. Classroom teachers will not be able to help with payment issues.

Childcare hours are 7:30 am- 4:30 pm. There is a charge per child for each 15 minutes you are late for pick up. The following late fee schedule is current for the 2016-2017 school year:

\$5.00 for 1-15min

\$10.00 for 16-30min

\$15.00 for 31-60min

*We understand that emergency situations do arise. Any emergency situations will be considered on a case by case basis.

DAYS OF OPERATION/SCHOOL CLOSURES

The preschool is open from 7:30–4:30 Monday-Friday for child care. You will be required to sign-in and out in the classroom when dropping off and picking up your child. We will follow the School District calendar. If bad weather forces the School District to close, then our preschool will be closed. If school opening is delayed, our school day will be delayed as well. Please keep in mind that it is your choice to have your child attend school on delayed school days. The conditions of rural roads can be very hazardous. The safety of both you and your child far surpass the risk that may be involved in transporting for one day of preschool. Preschool will be in session the *full* day on scheduled E-town half-days. Lunch is not served by the school on ½ days so if your child typically purchases or receives lunch through the school, your child will need a bagged lunch on those days. Preschool will be in session on days when Elizabethtown school district has superintendent days.

TRANSITIONS

Transitioning into CDG preschool may start with visiting our classroom with your child. Enrollment applications can be mailed from our administrative office or printed out from our website, www.childrensdevgroup.com. Packets are sent home over the summer months for those children who have pre-enrolled and provided a deposit. Before the first day of school, the teacher/teachers meet with families individually and as a group at "Open House". Our first theme is: About Me and My Family.

Separation/Attachment

It is not unusual for a child to become teary or upset when separating from a parent in an unfamiliar situation. Remember, this is a new environment, with new faces. A child is bound to feel a little uncomfortable. Adults often have similar experiences when put in a similar situation. Be encouraging. Your smile, eyes, and body language communicate a lot. If a child senses any type of apprehension on your part, this enhances their own feeling of uncertainty. Separation is often harder on the parents than the child. When a family arrives feeling secure and confident, children are more likely to venture out and engage in play. Teachers will partner with families to build strong child/family/teacher relationships, communicate, acknowledge feelings, and make each transition as smooth as possible.

Transitions *within* our program occur as our youngest students return to us the following September. New enrollment packets must be completed to update us on your child's growth, interests, medical information, etc. Returning families are also encouraged to meet with teachers and attend "Open House". All updated paperwork must be complete prior to your child's first day of attendance.

Transitioning out of CDG preschool is an important time. At the end of the school year, a display is made with a list/picture of where each child will be in the fall. Pre-requisite skills for Kindergarten, given to us from the Kindergarten teachers, will have already been identified and practiced. Each child's skills by the end of Pre-K may be shared with Kindergarten teachers. We talk and read books about Kindergarten. We have an end-of-year celebration, inviting immediate and extended family. Portfolios are handed out, favorite Pre-K moments are remembered, and feelings about the future are shared. We also provide a family questionnaire. This information helps us evaluate our program and make specific improvements.

Our program promotes the quality and continuity of teacher-child relationships through such policies as avoiding both teacher and teacher assistant absence on the same day. And if the teacher is absent, the teacher assistant moves into the teacher role to ensure that the class routine/schedule is maintained. On the rare occasion that both the teacher and assistant are out on the same day, a detailed lesson plan is provided for substitutes and if at all possible, the executive director will sub in the teacher's place.

RELEASE OF CHILD

If a child is to be picked up by someone other than his/her usual caregiver, parents/guardians should send a written note stating who will be picking up the child. Only in cases of necessity or emergency should a change be made over the telephone. Staff will call the parent/guardian back to confirm the information regarding the change. The person picking up the child will be required to present identification when they arrive at school. In cases of joint custody or custody situations, please provide a copy of the custody agreement to the classroom teacher. Custody agreements will be strictly adhered to. If changes in custody occur it is your responsibility to provide the change information to the classroom teacher.

DRESS

Please label all sweaters, jackets, coats, school bags, backpacks, etc. with your child's name inside. For your child's safety please do not put name labels outside of the item. Dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing for painting and playing outdoors. Send your child each day dressed for outside play. Tennis shoes are required for outdoor play. Dress-up shoes have slick soles and sandals/flip-flops are dangerous and inappropriate for active play. Children can keep a pair of tennis shoes or other appropriate outdoor play shoes at school. Children's clothing should be uncomplicated so that they can easily use the bathroom by themselves.

Please ensure that your child has appropriate weather clothing. Children will go outside to play every day, weather permitted.

"POTTY POLICY"

Part of CDG's Preschool curriculum includes toilet training. In order to support this curriculum, we ask that parents do not send their children to school in pull-ups or diapers past the last school day in September. All children must be in big boy/girl underwear beginning the first of October. If a child has a potty accident, we will change them into dry clothing. Please ensure your child has several changes of clothing. Special circumstances must be discussed with the classroom teacher and a toilet training plan developed. Being independent with toileting is a large part of child development and social-emotional growth.

MEAL POLICY

Breakfast will be provided for all children. Children must bring lunches from home or purchase lunches from the school cafeteria. Free/reduced lunch eligibility is determined based on information obtained at registration. A snack is also provided for those children staying for afternoon childcare. If your child brings his/her lunch from home, please ensure the lunch is a balanced and nutritious lunch, including milk, a vegetable or fruit, a grain or bread, and a meat or a meat alternative (cottage cheese, egg, cheese, etc.). If you would like more guidance, please seek advice of the classroom teacher/assistant.

Treats are welcome for special occasions; however, snack will always be available.

CDG OBESITY PREVENTION

CDG has adopted a formal obesity prevention program, Let's Move! Childcare. This program focuses on four goals at the preschool level: Get Kids Moving, Limit Screen Time, Nurture Healthy Eaters, and Provide Healthy Beverages. Visit <https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org> or www.letsmove.gov for more information.

CDG SCREEN TIME/TECHNOLOGY DEVICE POLICY

Children do not have access to television or video while in care. CDG has adopted this policy for the following reasons.

- Watching TV and playing on devices get in the way of children exploring, playing, and interacting with grown-ups and their peers — all of which encourage learning and healthy physical and social development.
- As children get older, too much screen time can interfere with being physically active, reading, doing homework, playing with friends, and spending time with family.
- Children who consistently spend too much time watching TV and using devices are more likely to be obese or overweight.

(Resource: Let's Move! Childcare)

LARGE MOTOR PLAY

Children go outside to play every day, weather permitting. In inclement weather, large motor play occurs in the small gym. The children get at least 15 minutes of structured and/or unstructured large motor play for every hour in attendance. Besides the playground, a variety of portable equipment is used to encourage play. Some examples of portable equipment are hoops, scarves, balls, big trucks, sand toys, bubbles, and the parachute. More structured large motor activities occur in the classroom such as the tunnel, the small trampoline, dance, and yoga. Running, jumping, balancing, climbing, kicking, throwing, and catching are targeted skills.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Pacifiers and sippy cups are not considered age appropriate for preschool children as they may inhibit the development of oral motor abilities. Please do not bring these items to school with your child. Children will be using straws and open cups for drinking. Blankets and soft toys will be kept in the child's locker at times other than nap. We discourage toys from home as we cannot be responsible for toys being broken or lost. Our classroom will have many fun toys, books, and other items needed to encourage creative play and learning.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in the classroom. We ask that arrangements be made in advance, with the teacher, so plans can be made to utilize parent availability. It is also important to limit the number of parents in the classroom on a given day. Parents are invited into the classrooms starting October first. This will allow the children time to adjust, settle into a new routine, and develop a level of trust and comfort with the teacher. Please make other arrangements for siblings/other children while you are visiting at school.

PARENT/CHILD SEPARATION

It is not unusual for a child to become teary or upset when separating from a parent in an unfamiliar situation. Remember, this is a new environment, with new faces. A child is bound to feel a little uncomfortable. Adults often have similar experiences when put in a similar situation. Be encouraging. Your smile, eyes, and body language communicate a lot. If a child senses any type of apprehension on your part, this enhances their own feeling of uncertainty. Separation is often harder on the parents than the child.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OR SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS – SICK CHILDREN

If a child displays any of the following symptoms of illness, while at preschool, the parent/legal guardian or other approved responsible adult will be called to take the child home to recover. The sick child must remain out of care until they are without symptoms for a 24-hour period or have obtained a doctor's note stating he or she is no longer contagious.

- Fever over 100.0
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (more than once per hour).
- Evidence of head lice, including finding live lice or nits on the child.
- Severe flare-up of asthma which is not alleviated by prescribed treatments
- Complaints of severe ear, throat, or stomach pain by the child that prevents him from participating.
- Discharge, redness, or itching in one or both eyes.

INJURIES

If a student becomes injured while at school, staff will immediately assess the situation and treat the child's injuries, with basic first aid. If injuries are severe and require professional medical attention, staff will contact an ambulance and the parents/guardians following predetermined guidelines. When a child is injured, parents/guardians will always be notified, regardless of the severity of the injury. An incident/accident report will be sent home with the child and kept on file in the classroom.

DISCIPLINE

Our discipline is age appropriate. We follow a behavior management program called **1-2-3 Magic**. Reading material and DVDs will be available in the classroom for your review. It will be extremely important for parents/guardians to carry over this management program at home. This will facilitate continued success while at home and school. A training opportunity for parents will be offered during the first quarter of the school year.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

By law, all staff at CDG Preschool are considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse; therefore, all observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to child protective services.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

Over the counter and prescription medications may be administered to childcare children (children coming before 8:00am and/or staying after 1:00pm), at preschool, by a Medication Administration Trained (MAT) employee. Prior to administration, a consent form must be completed by the parent/guardian for over-the counter medication or by the parent/guardian and physician for prescription medication. These forms will be available in the classroom. All medication must be in an original unopened container and properly labeled by the pharmacist with the child's name, date, and dosage. Medication **MUST** be hand delivered by the parent/guardian and not sent in with the child, in the child's backpack, or given to the bus driver to deliver.

FORMS NEEDED FOR ENROLLMENT

- Proof of a recent physical (within the year)
- Proof of current immunizations
- Enrollment application with two confirmed emergency contacts (please advise emergency contacts that they will be contacted monthly to confirm phone numbers and availability.)
- Any medical information if applicable
- Consent to obtain/release information form
- Blue emergency form
- Prescriptions/consent for any medication administered by our team

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

Children's Development Group supports children and families. We can answer questions and provide information about a variety of topics regarding child development. We can also help access community

resources or additional supports, to address concerns that affect the family as a whole. Individual concerns will be addressed in a discreet and confidential manner.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for choosing Children’s Development Group Preschool for your child. We strive to give your child the best early learning experience possible. We do, however, recognize that parents are truly the first and most important teachers.

Jeannette Linney, SET
Special Education Classroom Teacher

Margi Carter, MA, CCC-SLP, CAS
Executive Director