



Family Handbook

2024

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Corning, NY 14830

West Location:

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Welcome to Corning Children's Center!

We look forward to getting to know you and your child. We realize that choosing early childhood education and care for your child is a very important decision, and we appreciate the confidence you place in us by selecting Corning Children's Center as your child's home away from home. We strive to provide high quality, loving early childhood education and care for children and their families.

Under the leadership of an energetic Board of Directors and with the vision and support of Corning Incorporated, Corning Children's Center has been offering high quality care and early education to the children of our community since 1980 in the Corning area. In the ensuing years we have grown considerably and in September 2024, we opened our second location in Painted Post, NY.

This handbook will highlight who we are as a Center, including our philosophy, policies and activities. In it we offer information that will help you work with us to provide the best care and education possible for your child. This is, however, only an overview. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions or need additional information, we encourage you to ask any of our dedicated staff.

Thank you for choosing Corning Children's Center. We look forward to playing, growing, learning, and developing together.

Cordially,

Corning Children's Center Staff



Mission & Values

MISSION

Corning Children's Center strives to set the standard in early care and education by inspiring learners, leaders, and dreamers.

VALUES

We value curiosity, connection, and community

I live these values by:

1. Practicing Curiosity

- I offer experiences that are developmentally appropriate, open-ended and follow the child's lead.
- I make time for play and recognize the benefits of it.
- I approach learning by asking, listening, encouraging, receiving, and responding.
- I willingly explore and develop awareness of differences and similarities.
- I approach each day with a sense of possibility and positivity.

2. Cultivating Connections

- I include, celebrate and demonstrate compassion for all humankind.
- I take pleasure in both my own heritage and the diversity of others.
- I choose courage over comfort by facing difficult tasks and conversations rather than avoiding them.
- I take responsibility for creating and building professional relationships.
- I practice gratitude with my team, colleagues, families, and community.

3. Fostering Community

- I unite with families, staff and community members on our journey to meet the individual and collective needs of our community.
- I demonstrate respect and compassion with others.
- I seek out and listen to others' needs in order to develop ideas and solutions.
- I respond to others in a prompt, courteous and knowledgeable manner with thorough follow-up.
- I seek opportunities to partner with individuals, businesses and organizations.



Fast Facts

- Corning Children’s Center was established in 1980 to serve families throughout the greater Corning area.
- Corning Children’s Center is a nonprofit organization.
- We provide care for over 300 children aged 6 weeks through 5 years old.
- Accreditation:
 - We are proudly rated through Quality Stars New York
 - The Center held an accreditation through Middle States Commission on Elementary Education since 2005 and is in the process of pursuing accreditation through NAEYC.
- The Center is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.
- Delays and closures are rare for us. In the event of weather-related closing, we will notify staff and families using our Procure system.
- The Center works in partnership with the Corning Painted Post School District to offer Universal Pre-K to clients and community members.

Continuity of Care Classrooms

Corning Children’s Center has set the standard in early care and education by offering Continuity of Care since 2000. Our Continuity of Caregiving option was developed in response to the increasing body of research demonstrating the many positive results of firm, sustained attachments in a child’s early years.

Our model enables children to stay with the same classmates and the Lead Teacher/Teacher team (barring staffing changes) every year, from the time they enter the Center through their Preschool (3-year-old) year.

For their last year with us, before they leave for kindergarten, children move without their primary caregivers into their PreK classroom. This allows them to gain practice in moving to a new classroom, adapting to the expectations of new teachers, and making new friends within the context of a safe, familiar environment. Many parents find that this consistency over time gives their children a sense of comfort and stability as they form bonds with friends and caregivers who become like an extension of their family.

In our Continuity of Caregiving rooms, there are four age groups:

- Infant: 6 weeks to approximately 12 months old
- Young Toddler: approximately 12 to 24 months
- Older Toddler: approximately 24 to 36 months
- Preschool: 3 and 4 years old

In our Traditional classrooms (when needed), there are three age groups:

- Infant: 6 weeks to 18 months
- Toddler: 18 months to 3 years
- Preschool: 3 and 4 years old

In our Pre-K rooms, 4- and 5-year-olds prepare to enter Kindergarten the following fall.

Child/Caregiver Relationships

Corning Children's Center practices a relationship-based philosophy that promotes consistency and continuity of care. This approach fosters strong, positive relationships that will act as a secure base for exploration and learning in the classroom. Child/caregiver connections are central to brain development, emotional regulation, and overall learning. Opportunities will be provided for each child to develop meaningful relationships with caregivers.

Caregivers should:

- Use a variety of safe and appropriate individualized soothing methods for children who are upset.
- Engage in frequent, multiple, and rich social interchanges, such as smiling, talking, appropriate forms of touch, singing, and eating.
- Are play partners as well as protectors.
- Are attuned to children's feelings and reflect them back.
- Communicate consistently with parents/guardians.
- Interact and develop a relationship in the context of everyday routines (e.g., diapering/toileting, feeding).
- Respect and value each family's cultural diversity.

Staffing Requirements

- Staff are hired based on qualifications established by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).
- All new staff hired have completed reference checks, SCR and SEL (State Central Registrar Clearance checks), physical and drug screening.
- Upon hiring, new staff complete an orientation period and are supervised until they have completed the required orientation period.
- Annually, all staff complete a minimum of 15 hours of training across 10 required OCFS topic areas.

The staff in each room includes:

- 1 Lead Teacher
- 1 Teacher
- 1 or 2 Teaching Assistants

Other staff who may be in your child's classroom include:

- Members of leadership including the Education Coordinator and Child Development Specialist
- Substitutes teachers
- Student Interns and Student Observers
- Therapists (OT, PT, Speech, etc.)

Staff Changes and Turn Over

We know that trust is important to you and your child, and that trust grows within your relationships with staff. This is one of the primary reasons we instituted our Continuity of Care program. We are proud of the longevity of our staff. However, turnover does happen. Some changes are internal as staff receive well-earned promotions, request changes to other age levels or as we work to create

an appropriate balance of skills and experience in our classrooms. Other changes are beyond our control and are the result of staff making career or personal changes or when they experience family or personal emergencies. Whatever the reason may be, families will, whenever possible, be given two weeks' notice of any changes in staffing that affect their child.

Curriculum

As educators, we foster exploration and understanding of the world, so our curriculum planning focuses on expanding the child's knowledge and experiences in the world. We believe it is important to provide a rich array of experiences that develop children's skills and knowledge and stimulate their imagination. Programming is deliberate, purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and individualized.

We believe that this combination of nurturance and stimulation will lead children to make friends, explore and learn about their world, have fun, and ultimately help them develop to their full potential as they develop toward independence with openness to the world and learning.

Each classroom team works together to develop weekly plans following our Frog Street curriculum which reflects the interests and developmental needs of the children in their room. Staff members plan activities which are designed to help children grow in all developmental areas: physical, social/emotional, creative, and cognitive. They also work with the Education Coordinator to assure that their plans are developmentally appropriate and reflect current knowledge in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Family involvement is strongly valued and encouraged.

Enrichment Opportunities

- Gardening
- Cooking
- Attending field trips around our community
- Visiting authors, musicians, and other special guests
- Experiencing holidays and/or traditions as a lesson focused on different cultural experiences (family initiated)
- Participating in International Mud Day

Daily Classroom Schedule

Classroom daily schedules are based on the age of the children and specific child needs. Families are given a daily schedule upon enrollment and as changes are made.

Daily schedules include, but are not limited to, free play and exploration, mealtimes, outdoor play, teacher directed learning times, and nap/rest times.

Outdoor play is scheduled daily, except during inclement weather. (Inclement weather is determined based on a weather chart supplied from OCFS.) Staff are expected to use good judgment in determining the length of time children are out in hot or cold weather.

Nap and Rest Time

Nap time is approached as a relaxing time when children can listen to stories and music. We do not insist that children sleep. We do, however, ask that they rest quietly until the other children are asleep. If your child does not nap, the teachers will provide quiet activities for them to do at tables in the classroom.

In our infant rooms each child follows their own sleep schedule.

Each child is provided with a crib, cot or mat for napping. Parents will be asked to provide a blanket and a bag in which to store the blanket. As required by New York State regulations, the children use the same labeled cribs, cot or mat every day.

Positive Guidance through Conscious Discipline

PURPOSE

Conscious Discipline empowers us to be conscious of brain-body states in children and ourselves. It then provides us with the practical skills we need to manage our thoughts, feelings, and actions. When adults self-regulate, we are then able to teach children to do the same. All children's behavior has meaning, and each behavior is influenced by their individual development, environment, and the adults who care for them.

Conscious Discipline practices promote high quality early childhood education by creating opportunities to develop social-emotional learning. It is based on the following key components:

BRAIN STATE MODEL	SEVEN POWERS FOR CONSCIOUS ADULTS	CREATING THE FAMILY	SEVEN SKILLS OF DISCIPLINE
Understanding how internal emotional states dictate our behavior	Shift perception to see discipline encounters as opportunities to teach new skills	Building connections by creating a culture of compassion	Problem solving with social-emotional learning

Conscious Discipline is about transformational change. It asks adults to:

- See connection as the most powerful motivating force for achievement
- See children as capable of self-regulation instead of needing to be controlled
- See misbehavior as a call for help instead of disrespect
- See conflict as a teaching opportunity rather than a disruption to learning
- Understand that the only person we can truly make change is ourselves
- Understand that interdependence is the basis for problem-solving
- Understand that internal state dictates external behavior
- Understand that what you focus on, you get more of

Positive Guidance Approach

All staff will use a positive guidance approach. This approach models the following behaviors:

- Building and maintaining positive relationships with children
- Adapting the environment, routine, and activities to the individualized needs of the children
- Establishing and continuously reviewing consistent, reasonable, and predictable expectations

- Involving children in defining clear, simple rules for the classroom and outside play area
- Engaging in, observing, and supervising children’s activities
- Establishing and posting a predictable classroom schedule that includes pictures that children can review
- Using effective transition methods such as reminding children with environmental and verbal cues what will happen next and managing the appropriate length of transitions
- Modeling and teaching social skills, such as turn-taking, cooperation, waiting, treating others respectfully, and conflict resolution
- Modeling and teaching emotional skills, such as identifying, recognizing and expressing feelings
- Giving directions and instructions and offering replacement behaviors that tell children what they can do
- Anticipating problems and working as a team to develop plans to avoid them
- Remember: behavior that you focus on, you get more of
- Guiding a child to walk to a safe location by temporarily touching or holding
- Providing brief physical guidance, instructional prompting, physical support, and comfort

GETTING STARTED

Drop Off and Pick Up

All children must be signed in upon arrival in the building using the Procure App and signed out at the end of each day by their family member. Before leaving the classroom in the morning or at pick up, make sure that the staff member on duty is aware that you are dropping off or picking up.

Any time there is a change to your typical routine, families must notify the classroom staff and the front desk to update emergency contact forms. We cannot release your child without this authorization per OCFS regulations.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE CENTER BY 8:30 AM IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE LATE OR ABSENT. Please communicate via Procure or call your child’s classroom 607-937-5502 plus their extension.

Late pick up: Staffing patterns have been developed to respond to children’s routine departure times. If you anticipate being later than usual, please let us know. We will call family members and emergency contacts if a child has not been picked up on time and a late fee will be assessed for pick-ups after 6:00pm.

Supervising your child: It is your responsibility to supervise your child at all times when you are dropping off or picking up. Please be sure that your child and their siblings stay with you at these times and that they do not run ahead into another part of the building. OCFS requires that all children in the building have direct supervision.

Written authorization for pickup: At enrollment, or at any time there is a change, families must fill out a form specifying those people who are authorized to pick up their child. We cannot release your child without this authorization. When someone who is not familiar to our front desk staff will be picking up a child, please remember that:

- They must be authorized in the Procure system to pick up.
- They will be asked to present photo ID.

Pickup by a person who appears unwell: If a parent/authorized person appears to staff to be unwell/intoxicated when they arrive to pick up a child and staff are concerned for the safety of the child, staff will:

- Suggest that the parent/ authorized person not leave with the child
- Offer to call a cab or call another authorized contact person to assist
 - Should the unwell/intoxicated person agree to a cab when the center is closing, a leadership staff person will remain with the parent/authorized person until the cab has arrived.

If the unwell person insists on leaving the center with the child, staff cannot prevent the parent/authorized person from taking their child. In the event that safety concerns for the child are present, staff will:

- Make note of the car, license number and probable destination (when possible) and call the police
- Make a mandated report to the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register

Supplies Needed from Home

Age specific supply lists will be given to families upon enrollment. Families will also be notified when supplies need to be replaced, or new items are needed. Typical supplies needed for all students include appropriate seasonal changes of clothing for both indoors and outdoors, water bottle or infant feeding bottles, nap supplies, and diapers and diapering creams (if not potty trained).

Personal play toys from home should only be brought to help ease your child's transition into the Center and must fit inside of their cubby. Please avoid bringing toys that are valuable or irreplaceable as items can accidentally be lost or damaged while in care.

Meals

Corning Children's Center recognizes the importance of healthy eating to support the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are provided each day.

The Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsored by the New York State Department of Health. We abide by the policy of enrolling children without discrimination based on age, sex, handicap, race, religion, national origin, or color. CACFP reimburses the Center for a portion of our food costs based on the current income levels of families enrolled in the Center.

All meals at the Center are planned and prepared by a contracted catering company to meet USDA requirements for a well-balanced diet, including vegetarian options. Under current CACFP nutrition standards, meals and snacks served include a greater variety of vegetables and fruit, more whole grains, and less added sugar and saturated fat.

Menus are reviewed and approved by a registered dietician and by the NYS Department of Health. The weekly menus are posted at the front desk, in Procure and in each classroom.

Because of allergies, we do not provide any food containing nuts or nut oils, and we prohibit those foods in the Center. Please make sure the staff in your child's classroom know about any food allergies your child may have and make sure that the allergy is noted on your child's physical form and on the emergency contact card located in your child's classroom.

Families of infants should discuss the Center's ability to provide formula and baby food to infants in their first year and complete appropriate paperwork reflecting your preferences for how feeding will be handled. All decision/requests for changes to infant feeding schedules or meal components need to be documented in writing.

Food from Home

Any foods from home need to follow the same healthy guidelines set by CACFP and adhere to our Nut Free Policy. Food from home will not be shared with any other child in the class unless it is cleared as a "shared celebration" snack and approved by the classroom staff prior to being brought into the room.

If you are interested in providing food for your child or your child's classroom, please discuss this with the classroom staff ahead of time to make sure that all dietary restrictions are kept in mind and so the classroom has notice to plan for the activity.

Food and Environmental Allergies

Food allergies are the most common cause of anaphylaxis outside the hospital setting. The most common food allergies in infants and children are eggs, milk, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Other causes of anaphylaxis include allergies to insect bites, dogs, cats, medications, and latex.

Children with allergies may develop symptoms, such as hives and shortness of breath, when they encounter an allergen. An allergen is anything that can cause an allergic reaction both mild and severe.

For a child with a known allergy, accidental exposure to an allergen is a great risk. The key to preventing a potentially serious reaction in a child with a known allergy is avoiding exposure to the relevant allergen. However, there are many children, especially young children, who are not aware of an allergy until they are exposed to an allergen. Therefore, it is essential that all staff, volunteers, and family members be diligent and work together to avoid accidental exposures.

For children with a known food allergy:

- Parents and healthcare workers will work with classroom staff to develop written instructions outlining the child's allergy, the steps that must be taken to avoid the allergen, and what to do in the event the child experiences an allergic reaction. This plan will be reviewed routinely with all involved in the care of the child, and staff will be trained in the implementation of the plan.
- Known allergens will be posted on the classroom door to help families and staff know which foods need to be avoided when bringing in items from home. Should your child eat food containing an allergen before/on their way to school, please take any steps needed to try to eliminate the spread of contaminants before entering the building.

- Individual children’s food allergies will be posted in a discreet location visible to staff and volunteers involved in the care of the child.

Mealtimes:

- Tables and surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized before and after mealtimes.
- Proper handwashing with soap and water will occur before and after meals.
- Children will be supervised while eating.
- Children will be monitored while eating to try to avoid the trading or sharing of food, cups, utensils, napkins, or food containers.
- Food labels will be checked before serving new items to ensure there is no presence of allergens.
- Food with unknown ingredients will not be given.
- Food will be stored out of the reach of children.

Responding to allergy emergencies, staff will:

- Follow the steps in the child’s individual allergy plan and promptly and properly administer prescribed medications. If the child does not have a prescription or has an unknown allergy, 911 will be called immediately.
- After administering epinephrine, staff will always call 911. If staffing allows, one staff person can administer the epinephrine, while another calls 911.
- Licensed childcare providers must arrange for professional medical care/assistance even if symptoms appear to have resolved. Further treatments may be required, and therefore, observation in a hospital setting is necessary.

While waiting for medical assistance to arrive, staff will:

- Lay the child flat, raise legs and keep warm. If breathing is difficult or they are vomiting, let them sit up or lie on their side.
- Not leave the child alone.
- If symptoms do not improve, or symptoms return, additional doses of epinephrine (if applicable) will be given about 5 minutes or more after the last dose.
- Alert emergency contacts.
- Continue to monitor the child’s symptoms and level of consciousness until help arrives.
- Prepare the child for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) transport. EMS will need the child’s current emergency contact card.

The program will immediately notify the family after 911 is contacted. Promptly following the incident, the Center will notify NYS OCFS and complete an incident report.

Holiday Celebrations

We do not celebrate holidays as a part of our curriculum at the Center. It is our philosophy that every family has its own way of celebrating holidays and that holidays are best celebrated within the family unit. It is our goal to help you have more peaceful and joyous holiday celebrations by keeping your child’s routine as familiar as possible during potentially chaotic times.

While there is no staff-initiated holiday planning, we are a community of learners and, as such, are always pleased to have Center families offer to come in and share elements of their cultural celebrations and traditions. If you would like to do so, please share your ideas with the classroom

staff and coordinate your visit so that it works into the existing classroom plans and is congruent with program policy and educational in nature.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated for children in the afternoon. Families should contact the classroom teacher with at least 24-hour notice so that they are prepared for the celebration. Celebration foods should be free of classroom allergens and nuts. Parents may instead consider gifting a book or game to the classroom on your child's behalf. If your family does not recognize these celebrations, your child will be involved in another supervised activity out of the classroom. Please make your child's teacher aware of your preference in this area.

Balloons and candles are not permitted in the Center due to the risks that are involved with them.

Transportation Policy

The Center does not provide transportation to or from the Center. Should the center choose to participate in a bus transported field trip, the following guidance would be followed:

- The program must obtain written consent from the family.
- Name-to-face head counts would be utilized to protect all children from being left behind.
- Each child will board or leave a vehicle from the curb side of the street.
- All children will be secured in child safety seats properly installed per manufacturers recommendations, or with safety belts, as appropriate for the age of the child in accordance with the requirements of the Vehicle and Traffic Law.

If your child is transported by another entity, a transportation plan must be presented in advance to the Director for approval. NYS Child Care Regulations will be used as a guide to ensure the child's safety. The approved plan will be signed by the child's parent/guardian, the Director and a representative of the entity providing the transportation.

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

Positive Separation and Attachment

Young children need support as they say goodbye to parents/family and start their day at childcare. The center will use these tips to help your child transition into the classrooms.

- Staff will work to help your child feel safe, attached and comfortable. Attachment refers to the continuing and lasting relationships that young children form with one or more adults. To help foster a secure attachment with each child, staff will:
 - Be warm, responsive, and affectionate.
 - Engage in meaningful conversational interactions.
 - Be physically and emotionally available while a child is exploring their environment.
 - Comfort children when they are distressed.
 - Be an enthusiastic learning partner.

- Let children know that you will provide safe behavior boundaries, keeping them, their peers, and their things safe.
- Provide primary caregiving.
- Review the daily schedule so your child knows what to expect.
- Help families establish a predictable goodbye routine.
- Allow your child to use tools when missing their family. (i.e. lovey, family photo, special blanket, etc.)
- Use words provided by family in the child's home language.
- Have available some of your child's favorite things to do.
- Work with families to have a predictable pick-up time and reunion ritual.

Communication

Open communication between home and the Center is important in the development of your child. Below is a list of ways you can expect the Center to communicate with you:

- Daily via the Procure app.
- Drop off times are a great way for you to communicate how your child's evening/morning went and if there is anything new you need us to be aware of.
- Pick up times are when we will share how your child's day went and any new information you may need to help your evening run smoothly.
- On Fridays, classroom staff will send you a newsletter outlining classroom staffing schedules for the upcoming week, any classroom news you need, and the lesson plan.
- Each month, the Leadership Team will send you a newsletter with any important Center information that you need to be aware of.
- Emails or Procure messaging will be used intermittently by Leadership for communications that fall outside of the typical communication patterns listed above.

If at any time you would like to check in on your child during the day, you can contact the classroom. If you would like to have a lengthier conversation, please ask your child's teacher what time of day works best for a phone call. Additionally, classroom staff are only able to check email in the morning, during nap time, and at the end of the day. A response might take up to the next business day.

Conferences

Individual family conferences are held every year with you and your child's caregiver. These meetings are a time to get better acquainted, exchange information about home and school activities, and set/review goals to support your child's development. Teachers or family may request additional meetings at any time if needed.

Full classroom meetings will be held at least twice a year: fall and spring. These meetings are a time to meet other classroom families and discuss what changes to expect in the coming months with curriculum and developmental needs.

Transitioning to a New Group

Should your child transition to a new classroom with new caregivers, your family will be notified in advance by our Family Engagement Coordinator. Once in agreement, the current classroom staff will arrange a time for you and them to meet with the new staff to have an opportunity to introduce yourselves and to set goals for your child's transition.

Transitions typically occur when there is a parent request or when continuity of care ends and your child is transitioning to Pre-K. The transition period generally begins with staff from the new room coming into the child's existing classroom so that the child recognizes them and has spent time with them before moving into the new classroom. The next step is for the child to visit the classroom for short periods until the point that they are comfortable staying for longer stretches of time.

Family and Guest Code of Conduct

Family members and guests are expected to:

- Be kind, caring and helpful
- Communicate positively with educators
- Display respect for all people while at the Center and refrain from using raised voices or threatening language
- Communicate positively with all children
- Follow the grievance procedure when expressing concerns or complaints to educators
- Report any observed hazard in the building or playground that may cause injury
- Respect the Center's property, and other people's property, privacy, and confidentiality
- Refrain from coming to the Center under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Work as a partner with educators
- Read the family newsletters and other information sent out by the Center
- Follow the Center's absence and cancellation procedures
- Be a positive role model to children at all times when at the Center
- Recognize that the curriculum is play-based
- Respect differences in culture, needs, and personalities
- Pay accounts promptly

Participation at the Center

Volunteer work at the Center encompasses three broad categories: classroom support, fundraising, and advisory work. We encourage families to participate in one or more of the following ways.

- Room Supporter provides help and support to classroom staff in many ways, ranging from organizing social events and field trips to getting information out to families.
- Families are urged to consider ways in which they can participate in the life of the classroom by being a Classroom Volunteer. This may be as regular as volunteering to come in to read on a routine basis, or as specific as sharing a special skill with the children such as cooking, singing, playing soccer or whatever reflects your passions.

- The Board of Directors is legally and ethically responsible for all activities of the organization. They assume responsibility for ensuring that the organization fulfills its mission and aligns its work with our Center values. The directors are familiar with and provide oversight of the organization's programs, policies, and operations. The Board of Directors meets monthly and makes overall decisions governing the operation of the Center including fiscal and administrative oversight, setting policy, developing a long-range plan and approving the budget. Board membership is by nomination and parent representation is an element of our Board development plan.
- The Center has various committees. These committees are comprised of board members, Center family members, and community volunteers. Committees currently include Communications, Human Resources, Finance, Technology, Accreditation, and more. If your skills and/or interests inspire you to volunteer on one of our committees, please discuss available openings with the Executive Director.

If you are interested in helping in any of these ways, please tell the Executive Director or your child's teacher. There are also many opportunities to help with special projects throughout the year.

Family Education

We envision the Center as a community of learners which includes children, staff and families. Because children don't come with an instruction manual, we try to create opportunities for families to learn more about this important job and to offer support to one another. Please feel free to use us as resources whenever you have questions – and feel free to suggest ways that we can help you and other families during these critical early years.

Diversity

All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that enable them to achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society.

Advancing the right to equitable learning opportunities requires recognizing and dismantling the systems of bias that accord privilege to some and are unjust to others. Advancing the full inclusion of all individuals across all social identities will take sustained efforts far beyond those of early childhood educators alone. Early childhood educators, however, have a unique opportunity and obligation to advance equity. With the support of the early education system as a whole, they can create early learning environments that equitably distribute learning opportunities by helping all children experience responsive interactions that nurture their full range of social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and linguistic abilities; that reflect and model fundamental principles of fairness and justice; and that help them accomplish the goals of anti-bias education. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities; express comfort and joy with human diversity, use accurate language for human differences, and form deep, caring human connections across diverse backgrounds; increasingly recognize and have language to describe unfairness (injustice) and understand that unfairness hurts; have the will and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

Early childhood education settings—including centers, family childcare homes, and schools—are often among children's first communities beyond their families. These settings offer important contexts for children's learning. They should be environments in which children learn that they are

valued by others, learn how to treat others with fairness and respect, and learn how to embrace human differences rather than ignore or fear them.

Because this is a large task, we value the ideas and suggestions of all our families. We hope you will feel free to participate in the program by sharing your child's cultural heritage with us. This is an area in which we are constantly growing and welcome your help in doing so.

Confidentiality of Records

All information pertaining to your child's educational, health and financial records are kept in locked files. Electronic files are carefully segregated and secured. We do not release any information from our files without written parental/guardian consent.

Rights of Non-Custodial Parents/ Guardians

The Center encourages the active participation of all parents/ guardians in the education and care of their children. Legal custodial parents will be responsible for decisions regarding the following: mailings, family/teacher conferences, educational records, emergency contacts and authorizations used in case of accident.

It is important to understand that child custody is a legal arrangement. Any disputes regarding custody, placement and parenting time, or access to information regarding a child need to be addressed through family court. The Center's position with respect to these matters will be determined based on official court orders.

Communication is critical in these legal custody situations. Any changes in legal court documents need to be communicated and provided to the center director as soon as possible in order to implement the updates.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children participating in our programs will be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, our website, social media pages, or other publicity materials.

Permission to use photographs including your child without compensation is part of the enrollment package. We honor the requests of those who do not want us to take pictures of their child. At the time of intake, you will be asked to sign a Photo and Recordings Release form.

Reporting Concerns

If you have concerns about your child, please connect with the Lead Teacher in your child's classroom. If you are not satisfied with their response, you should follow this problem-solving sequence:

- Connect with the Education Coordinator
- Connect with the Executive Director (East) or the Assistant Director (West)

- If you are still dissatisfied, let the Executive Director know and you will be referred to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

If you have concerns about a staff member, connect with the person directly.

- If you are not satisfied with the person's response, follow the problem-solving sequence above.

Whatever the problem, please share your concerns with us so that we can work together to understand and solve the problem as a team.

HEALTH POLICIES

Health Enrollment Requirements

Prior to enrollment and yearly thereafter, each child's parent/guardian must submit:

- A Medical Report on Child in Day Care form completed by a physician.
- Written consent of emergency health care with emergency names and phone numbers on the child's OCFS Day Care Enrollment form (Blue Card).
- An official up-to-date immunization record for your child and, as your child receives additional immunizations, a written note stating the date and type of immunization.

Immunizations and physicals must remain up to date according to the NYS immunization schedule for a child's enrollment to be continued. A failure to provide these documents in a timely manner gives due cause for the Center to deny or suspend enrollment.

Daily Health Checks

Corning Children's Center staff members are all mandated by NYS law to report child abuse and neglect. Therefore, each child is evaluated daily upon arrival for any health issues. Staff will look for symptoms of illness, if the illness is considered communicable to others, as well as unusual bruising or injuries. All findings are recorded and will be brought to your attention. This process helps us determine if the child is well enough to be in care, if there are conditions we should monitor throughout the day, and if there are any signs of child abuse or neglect. If a child exhibits signs of illness which would indicate that they meet the criteria listed in the Center's Exclusion, Dismissal, Return to Care Policy, you may be asked to take the child home.

Exclusion Policies

Our goal is to keep all children in our care healthy. We are careful in our hand washing (staff and children) and attentive to disinfecting surfaces, toys and furniture. In addition to these measures, it is also important that children with potentially contagious conditions be excluded from care. A sick child recovers more quickly when given prompt attention. Therefore, we ask for your cooperation in keeping your child home if they display any symptoms from the Center's Exclusion, Dismissal, Return to Care Policy. If you keep your child home due to illness, please remember to notify the classroom and let the staff know what symptoms your child is exhibiting through the Procure App.

If your child develops symptoms while in our care, we may ask that you pick your child up early from care. There will also be times when we call about developing symptoms as a “heads up.” Unless otherwise stated, these calls are informational only with the intent to prepare you, in case symptoms worsen.

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, families should notify the classroom staff in the Procure App letting them know as soon as possible. The center will notify the other families in the room through the Procure App (without disclosing names) letting them know their child may have been exposed and when the last time of exposure was.

Medications

Medication (Over-the-Counter Topical): Over-the-counter (OTC) topical ointments may be applied to your child with your written permission on a Center approved form. OTC topical ointments must be supplied to the Center in their original container and labeled with your child’s first and last name.

Medication (Prescription): Lead Teachers, Teachers and Educational Administrative staff are trained to be certified in Medication Administration Training (MAT). If your child needs to receive prescription medication while at the Center, families must provide to a MAT trained staff member:

- A written order from the physician using the OCFS Medication Administration Form for any prescription medications, oral over-the-counter medications, medicated patches, and eye, ear, or nasal drops or sprays.
- Medication in the original container with the following information: child’s complete name, medication name, recommended dosage, time intervals for administration, method of administration, expiration date, prescriber’s name and license number and possible side effects or adverse reactions that have been noted.

Suggestion: Ask the pharmacist to divide your child’s prescription into two containers so that one can be left at the Center and one can be kept at home.

Non-patient Specific Epinephrine Auto Injector: The Center has participated in required training to be able to house and administer non-patient specific epinephrine should an unexpected anaphylaxis emergency occur for individuals within the Center. Should such an emergency occur, the Center would follow the steps listed in the allergy section above.

Health Care Consultant

The Center works with a Health Care Consultant to review the Center’s Health Plan, train staff as needed and oversee our health practices. A Health Care Consultant must have a valid NYS license to practice as a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse.

Emergency Procedures

We have made every attempt to provide your child with an outside and inside environment which is stimulating, attractive and safe. Staff members have first aid kits available at all times and will treat minor injuries such as bumps and scrapes. We offer Child and Adult CPR and First Aid Training to all staff members.

It is imperative that you keep all emergency contact information current, including your whereabouts and phone numbers, additional contact names and phone numbers, etc.

The Center utilizes a code system to represent procedures that will be followed for various emergencies. Procedures include what staff will do during:

- A fire alarm
- An accident, injury or illness
- A lockdown
- A severe weather watch or warning
- A bomb threat
- A missing or lost child event

Emergency procedures can be found by asking a member of the staff.

New York State Licensing

The Center follows all regulations as listed in the New York State Department of Social Services (DSS) Day Care Regulations. A copy of these regulations can be found in the lobby, you may request a copy from the Executive Director/Assistant Director, or you can access them online at the OCFS website listed below. The Center's license number is 42396 (East) or 911439 (West).

Families have the right to report any licensing regulation violation to the Regional Licensing Division of DSS (585-238-8531) or to a NYS "warm line" for parents at 800-732-5207. They will investigate the claim and take action if warranted.

Their website is: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/looking.asp>

Electronic access to the regulations can be found at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/regulations/>

Parking Lot Safety

Our parking lot:

- Has a 5 mile per hour speed limit
- State Law requires vehicles be turned off while unattended
- State Law prohibits leaving children unattended in vehicles
- Has one way traffic

Security

We know that families are better able to go about their days knowing that their child is being cared for in a safe and secure place. Security is fundamental to the care we offer.

The Center is tied to Eastern Security which means that a quick phone call immediately activates their response system in the event of medical or building emergencies. Eastern Security immediately is notified once a red (fire) or blue (medical) pull station is activated.

We are also tied to Corning Incorporated (CI) Security in the event of alarm trouble within the building. CI Security is trained to respond quickly and appropriately to these alarms

All doors into the building are locked and can only be accessed using electronic fobs or by calling into the building to access entrance.

All guests are asked to sign in at the Front Desk and those who are unknown to us will be escorted to their destination. Anyone unknown to staff on duty will be asked to show approved photo identification.

Evacuations and Sheltering in Place

Evacuation drills are conducted on a monthly basis. We make every effort to vary the time and type of drill so that we have experience evacuating under all possible circumstances. All drills are unannounced. Two times per year, full evacuation drills will be practiced, evacuating to our secondary site. (Stay Bridge Hotel-East, Health Works-West)

If you are ever at the Center during an evacuation drill, please stay with your child and evacuate as directed by the classroom staff. This will eliminate confusion and ensure a safe evacuation.

Shelter in Place drills are done at least twice a year. Per licensing requirements, families will be notified before each drill is conducted.

In the event of an emergency, the Center will notify families using the Procure app. This notification will contain instructions on when and where to pick up your child.

Injuries

If your child is injured while at the Center, the teachers will complete an incident report which describes how the injury happened and what action was taken. All incident reports need to be signed by the parent/guardian. Incident reports are monitored by the appropriate leadership team members to identify any trends and take action to reduce any identified risks.

Some incidents require immediate family notification. The intent of the call is to give information to the family so that they can decide if they want to take further action. For minor incidents, families will be notified at pick up time.

In the event of an injury that warrants further medical attention, we follow this established emergency procedure:

- The staff directly involved will call 911.
- The receptionist will send help to the room and assist as needed.

- Every effort to contact a parent, guardian or authorized emergency contact will be made.
- Until the arrival of medical assistance, the Executive Director/Assistant Director or designated person in charge will make all decisions about the care of the child.

Child Abuse Reporting

In accordance with provisions of Section 432 of New York State Social Services law, all day care center staff members are mandated reporters to the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register. Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, a report must be made.

Teachers and childcare administrators are not required to discuss their suspicions with family members prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report.

Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. This responsibility is taken very seriously, and we will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. No one, including Center management and/or a child's parents/guardians, can interfere with this reporting requirement. As mandated reporters, the staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

If you suspect a child has been abused or neglected while in our care, report your suspicions to the New York State hotline for parents: 800-342-3720.

FINANCES

Tuition

Tuition is charged on a weekly basis (including when the Center is closed for holidays, staff development, unexpected closings or weather closings) as agreed upon at enrollment.

Fees are determined according to a sliding fee scale which is based on family size, income and the age of the child. All financial information is kept confidential. Families have the option to decline providing financial information. If financials are not provided billing will default to the highest level on the sliding scale.

It is the family's responsibility to inform the Center when there is a change in income or family size. If your gross income were to increase or decrease by more than 10%, you should notify the Center Finance Director of the change so that tuition can be recalculated. Each year the Center will request proof of each family's income which will be reviewed to keep tuition current with the sliding fee scale.

We reserve the right to change tuition fees at any time with a minimum of six (6) weeks' notice. Tuition increases or changes in the scale typically occur in July at the start of our fiscal year. Increases are determined as part of the Center's annual budget process.

Methods of Payment

You may pay by the following methods:

- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) through Tuition Express
- Check or money order
- Cash

Tuition Express is the most efficient and safest way childcare payments can be made. Electronic fund transfers make payments convenient for parents, and on-time and integrated for providers. Tuition Express payments are processed on Mondays, we do not have control over when the payments will be withdrawn from your bank account.

The Front Desk staff will provide a receipt for payments upon request. All cash payments will be given a receipt.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Corning Children's Center closes at 6:00pm. Families who arrive for pickup after 6:00pm will be charged a late fee according to our late fee schedule as follows (assessed per child):

Between the time the Center closes to 15 minutes after the Center has closed is \$25
15 minutes after the Center closes, we access another \$25 fee for a total of \$50
30 minutes after the Center closes, we access another \$25 fee for a total of \$75.00
Then another additional \$25 every half an hour after that

The following late fees apply for UPK children only.

Enrolled in UPK Hours Only - UPK hours are 8:15am-2:30, which includes a 15-minute window before/after class hours)

Fees in the amount of \$25 will be charged for each 15-minute interval for early drop-off.
Drop off between 8:00am-8:15am =\$25.00 total
Drop off between 7:45am-8:00 am = \$50.00 total
With an additional \$25 for any additional fifteen (15) minute intervals before 7:45am.

Fees in the amount of \$25 will be charged for late pick-up after the 2:30pm scheduled UPK hours in (15) minute intervals, with an additional \$25 for each additional fifteen (15) minute interval

Between the time the UPK Program ends to 15 minutes after the UPK Program ends is \$25
15 minutes after the UPK Program ends, we access another \$25 fee for a total of \$50.00
30 minutes after the UPK Program ends, we access another \$25 fee for a total of \$75.00
Then another additional \$25 every half an hour after that

Enrolled in UPK with Wrap Around Care - The following is for Non-UPK care

Between the time the Center closes to 15 minutes after the Center has closed is \$25
15 minutes after the Center closes, we access another \$25 fee for a total of \$50.00
30 minutes after the Center closes, we access another \$25 fee for a total of \$75.00
Then another additional \$25 every half an hour after that

Financial Policies

In order to continue to offer the high-quality care we strive for; it is important that we operate as a fiscally responsible business.

The Center is audited each year by an independent auditor for compliance with financial reporting standards and business procedures. In order to meet audit requirements for a formal procedure for the collection of tuition, the following fee collection process has been established:

- Tuition payments made with cash, money order or check are made one week in advance and are due in full no later than 6:00 pm on the last day of the current week of service.
- Payments should be left in the payment box at the Front Desk or given to the Front Desk staff and a receipt is generated for each payment. Prepayment of tuition is encouraged.
- Payment is recorded by the Front Desk daily and passed on to the Finance Office at the end of each day. Payments are posted by the Finance Director no later than the end of day each Thursday.
- Tuition Express payments are processed on Mondays, we do not have control over when the payments will be withdrawn from your bank account.
- Payment records and receipts are available to each client through your ProCare page at myprocare.com. You are urged to review your account routinely and promptly address any discrepancies with the Finance Director.

Past Due Payment Policy

Many of the families at the Corning Children's Center pay their tuition on time or early; this helps us continue to offer exceptional quality of care.

Notification and Initial Steps for Past Due Payments

7 Days or more Past Due:

- A letter will be sent to notify the client of their past due status.

No Payment by the End of the Week that the Notification was Sent:

- Finance Director will call to discuss an agreement and arrange payment.
- If unreachable, an email and certified letter will be sent regarding the past due status. The client is then expected to call to discuss an agreement and arrange payment.

Further Actions:

Non-Payment After Agreement (or after further attempt to reach client):

- A letter explaining termination procedures will be issued.
- Failure to pay after this will result in the forfeiture of the child(ren)'s enrollment.
- Outstanding amounts due upon termination must be paid in full or the Center will pursue further collection actions.

Additional Charges for Returned Checks/EFT:

- A \$35.00 service fee applies.
- The account is considered overdue, and standard procedures apply.
- Repeated issues may require future payments in cash, cashier's check, or money order.
- We reserve the right to charge a 1.5% penalty for past due balances.

Policy Purpose:

- To ensure prompt payment.
- Reduce the risk of bad debts which would have to be passed on to all families in the form of higher fees.
- Serves to clearly define each family's responsibilities with respect to payment for services.

Contact Information:

- If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Finance Director or the Executive Director.

Temporary Part Time

It is important to young children that consistency be maintained as much as possible during times of change at home. To help families through disruptions in normal routine due to maternity leaves, temporary job lay-offs or extended illnesses, Corning Children's Center allows a family to temporarily reduce enrollment to part-time without the risk of losing the child's enrollment spot.

- Families who have been enrolled full-time for at least six weeks prior to the change may reduce their schedule to two days for up to eight weeks or three days for up to ten weeks. Clients enrolled for three days a week can reduce to two days per week for no more than eight weeks.
- Days in attendance during the Temporary Part Time period will need to be approved by the Family Engagement Coordinator and will be assessed according to impact on group size and ratio in the classroom.
- Families may access this privilege only under unusual circumstances such as an extended medical condition, job layoff, changes in work schedule, extended illness or extended international travel for at least four weeks.
- Families may access this privilege only once in a twelve-month period beginning with the first use of this privilege.
- If families decide to remain at the part time enrollment following the approved temporary part time period, a 2-week notice is required.
- A written application needs to be submitted at least one week in advance and approved by the Executive Director. A response to all requests will be made within one week of receipt. Applications are available at the front desk.
- A client enrolled full time who utilizes this Temporary Part Time option may switch days so long as a completed Application for Switching Days form is turned in and approved one week prior to the switch date requested.

Switching or Adding Days

Part-time families have the opportunity to apply for special consideration of switching or adding days to accommodate an unusual need and will be approved based on enrollment and staffing availability.

Families may access this privilege only under unusual circumstances. Examples might include:

- A doctor's appointment and are unable to take your child(ren).
- Your work schedule changed, and care is needed on a day you typically have off.

- Days of work missed due to extended illness that requires a parent /guardian to go to work on an unscheduled day.
- Short term changes in a work schedule.
- Center field trip is being offered on a day that your child is not in attendance.
- Pre-scheduled Center closure days as noted on the Center Closure Calendar.

A written application to add days or switch days must be submitted at least one week in advance and approved by the Family Engagement Coordinator. A response to all requests will be made within one week of receipt to the family by the Family Engagement Coordinator.

If adding days, fees will be assessed accordingly.

Families utilizing Temporary Part Time care should refer to the Temporary Part-Time policy for guidance on switching days.

Applications are available at the front desk.

Withdrawal from the Center

If a family decides to withdraw its child from the Center, a minimum of two weeks written notice is required and needs to be submitted to the Family Engagement Coordinator. If a child is withdrawn without adequate notice, two weeks tuition beyond the date that we received notification will be required.

Clients who leave the program with a tuition balance owed will need to make payment in full within 7 days of their last scheduled day in care or the Center will pursue further collection actions.

Our Operating Budget

The Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization whose primary sources of income are tuition, grants, CACFP reimbursements and fundraising. We receive a significant operating grant from Corning Incorporated which allows us to offer a higher quality of care than reliance solely on family fees would allow. That grant also allows us to offer infant and toddler care to the community – levels of care that are typically prohibitively expensive. We also receive occasional special project grants.

We set aggressive fund development goals each year to keep tuition as low as possible. We hope you will support our fundraising efforts in the ways that best reflect your ability and enthusiasm.

The Board of Directors is actively engaged in budget development and oversight of the annual budget and assists with fundraising.

Why do we Fundraise?

We know the cost of early childhood care and education can be one of the most significant expenses in a family's budget. That is why we work so hard to make care accessible to families across the socio-economic spectrum and utilize a sliding fee scale.

There are many opportunities to participate in fundraising throughout the year. Tuition only covers 65% of the costs associated with care, and we need to find the remaining 35% through donations, grants, and fundraising events. Funds raised during the year are used to keep tuition rates more affordable and afford us the ability to provide programming and enrichment opportunities that are beneficial to our Center children in their early years of development.

Building relationships with donors and supporters is important to the everyday operations of the Corning Children's Center. We hope you will support our fundraising efforts in the ways that best reflect your ability and enthusiasm.

Key Contacts

Executive Director: Paula Detar

- 607-937-5502 x 113, pdetar@corningchildrenscenter.com

Assistant Director (West): Shanna VanPatten

- 607-937-5502 x 130, svanpatten@corningchildrenscenter.com

Finance Director: Velma Andrews

- 607-937-5502 x 112, finance@corningchildrenscenter.com

Family Engagement Coordinator: Laura Fish

- 607-937-5502 x116, lfish@corningchildrenscenter.com