



# the como

our community's center since 1945

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## doris muller preschool parent handbook

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stonington community center  
28 cutler street  
stonington, ct 06378



## Welcome to the COMO

Thank you for choosing the COMO and sharing your child with us. We are a state-licensed, nationally accredited site with a long history of providing quality care in a happy environment.

*The COMO prides itself on providing engaging, age appropriate curriculum, and allowing youth to pursue interests and make friends, while ensuring a safe, nurturing learning environment.*

### Donations

As a nonprofit, we greatly appreciate donations of new or gently used toys, paper, books, craft materials, and clothing.

Please consider making a monetary donation to the COMO's Annual Appeal to assist us in providing affordable programs and maintaining our facilities and equipment. When making a donation please consider any matching funds your corporation may offer. The COMO invites all children to participate regardless of ability to pay. Your donation assists us with this commitment to our youth.

### Stonington Community Center

28 Cutler Street Stonington, CT 06378

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## Doris Muller Preschool at the COMO 2025-2026 School Year Calendar

**4 Independence Day**  
No Preschool Explorers

JULY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

AUGUST 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**July 28 – Aug 22**  
August Session of  
Preschool Explorers  
Camp  
**25-29** Classroom Set-  
up  
No Programming  
**29** Open House

**1** Labor Day  
No School  
**2** Opening Day  
**18** Parent Night, 5pm  
Development Day  
No School

SEPTEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**13** Indigenous People  
Day  
No School  
**31** Trick or Treating at  
Town Hall

**11** Veterans Day  
No School  
**26** Preschool Friendship  
Feast, 11am  
**27-28** Thanksgiving Break  
No School

NOVEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

DECEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**12** Half Day, Preschool  
dismisses at 12:30pm  
**23** Preschool Holiday  
Party, 11am  
**24-26** Winter Recess  
No School  
**31** Half Day, Preschool  
dismisses at 12:30pm

**1-2** New Year's  
Day/Winter Recess  
No School  
**20-23** Family  
Conferences  
**19** Martin Luther King Jr.  
Day  
No School

JANUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

**13** Preschool Valentine  
Party, 11am  
**16** Presidents' Day  
No School

**16** COMO Professional  
Development Day  
No School

MARCH 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**2** Preschool Egg Hunt  
**3** Good Friday  
No School  
**13-17** Spring Recess  
No School

**25** Memorial Day  
No School

MAY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

JUNE 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**5** Celebration of  
Learning, 3pm  
**17** Last Day of School  
**18** Preschool  
Graduation,  
Graduates & Families  
**22-26** Family  
Conferences

	<b>No School</b>
	<b>Preschool Half Day: Full Day Preschool dismisses at 12:30pm.</b>



## our philosophy

Doris Muller Preschool at the COMO, a NAEYC–accredited program, implements a curriculum that integrates the principles of the Bank Street Approach, helping children develop age–appropriate skills through play, guided exploration, and rich, experiential learning.

We focus on a developmental framework that recognizes each stage of a child's growth—social, physical, emotional, and cognitive—as vital building blocks. By allowing children to fully engage with and master each developmental stage, we prepare them to confidently explore new skills and experiences.

We emphasize interaction as a cornerstone of learning. We create a nurturing environment that is both socially and emotionally responsive. Our teachers act as guides encouraging children to ask questions, test their theories and learn at their own pace. This kind of environment fosters a sense of belonging and supports the development of the whole child.

Our preschool is committed to cultivating positive relationships and building self–esteem. We respect and celebrate each child's individuality, creating a space where every child feels valued, supported and loved. We view families as essential members of our community and actively cultivate strong partnerships with them. Together, we create a foundation for lifelong learning and success.

*The Doris Muller Preschool has been shaping the lives of children and impacting their families since 1969. While we draw from our incredible history, we appreciate the value of evolving and adapting to individual students' needs and the changing COMO campus, which is a vital resource to our preschool environment.*

## what to bring to school

**1. Change of Clothes:** Accidents happen, please bring in a change of clothes that can be kept in your child's backpack. (Shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes.)

**2. Lunch:** If your child is staying for lunch, please bring in a lunchbox labeled with your child's name. Please pack an ice pack for items that need to be kept cold and a thermos for those that need to be kept warm. \*We are a Peanut–Free Classroom\*

**3. Water bottle**

**4. Napping Items:** If your child is still napping, please bring a blanket, sheet, and pillow for your child to rest with. We will provide each child with a cot.

## enrollment policies

### Registration Checklist

All of the following items are due at the time of registration in order for your child to be officially enrolled in the program:

*o Current Health Assessment Record including immunizations stating that your child is in good health and free from communicable diseases. Each child entering the center must have an updated physical form signed and dated by his/her pediatrician, which includes the child's date of birth. All children must have their physicals updated annually and immunization records must be maintained per State of Connecticut requirements. This form must remain current for the school year.*

*o Completed registration information through our online registration system which MUST include authorized adults for pick-up, emergency contacts, allergy and pertinent medical information.*

*o Appropriate medication, if necessary, with required paperwork must be given to the Education Director.*

*o A **non-refundable** deposit of \$100 and a one-time activity fee of \$35 is required for registration and to secure a space in the program.*

*o Membership. Tuition-based programs are a members-only opportunity. Membership is required for participation in tuition-based programs. If your child is enrolled in a tuition-based program, he or she must be enrolled in membership auto-renewal for the duration of enrollment.*

***Please Note: Any changes in registration can only be authorized by the parent/guardian enrolling the child. The parent/guardian enrolling the child is also responsible for payment of services rendered.***

### Refund Policy

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is required for registration and to secure a space in the program. Childcare tuition fees are non-refundable. Withdrawals must be submitted by the 20th of the month prior to the effective date to adjust billing for the following month. All schedule changes are filled as availability permits.

### Payment

Tuition is prepaid on a monthly basis. All payments are due 4 days prior to the month prior to participation. Monthly payments for childcare programs are averages based upon the year's tuition. All tuition-based programs require enrollment in automatic billing. To ensure consistent, on-time tuition payments and reduce administrative costs, the COMO uses automatic bank draft (ACH) as our standard method of payment for all education and child care tuition-based programs including preschool and COMO Kids before and after school care. Upon enrollment,

each family is asked to provide valid checking or savings account information in their Daxko profile. Tuition will be debited from the authorized account on a recurring basis according to the published tuition schedule regardless of the child's attendance, holidays, or center closures except where otherwise stated in the parent handbook. Families are responsible for ensuring that sufficient funds are available in the designated account on the scheduled draft date and for promptly notifying COMO in writing of any changes to their banking information. If you are unable to maintain a bank account or require a reasonable accommodation related to the payment method, you should contact the Chief Executive Officer in writing to discuss an alternative arrangement. Alternative arrangements are granted at COMO's discretion and may require payment in full in advance. Please note: Registration is not complete until payment in full has been received for all programs. Auto-renew membership is required for participation in all tuition-based programming. Memberships will auto-renew while participants are active in tuition-based programming.

### **Membership Prorating and Auto-renewal**

Upon purchase of a membership, the member will be charged a prorated fee to immediately begin membership benefits. The full amount of the annual membership will begin on the first of the next month. COMO membership is automatically renewed a year from sign-up. Members who wish to terminate their membership or be removed from auto-renewal must contact the COMO office within 30 days of their renewal date. Auto-renew termination can be requested through a personal online account, or by contacting the COMO front office at any point after membership purchase.

### **System Credits**

COMO System Credits will be shown on your online member account and expire a year after they are issued.

### **Childcare Schedule Changes and Withdrawals**

Withdrawals and change of schedules must be submitted by the 20th of the month to adjust billing for the following month. The new schedule is effective beginning the first of the following month. Childcare tuition fees are non-refundable. All schedule changes must be approved by the Education Director to ensure space is available.

### **Drop-in Days**

Drop-in days must be approved by the Education Director to ensure space is available. Once approved, the COMO will charge the cost of the drop-in to the credit card on file.

### **Returned Credit Card Fees and Outreach**

Full service billing service will be through Daxko Full Service Billing. A \$30 return fee will be added for credit card payments that decline/return for insufficient funds and a \$20 return fee will be added for EFT payments that decline/return. Two additional attempts will be made

automatically to recover the original balance and the return fee. No additional fees will be added by the COMO to your account for additional returns on the same item.

### **Sibling Discount Child Care**

In an effort to make child care accessible to all, a 10% sibling discount is available. Contact the COMO office at 860-535-2476 for more information.

The COMO also participates in the state's Care4Kids financial aid program for income eligible families. Please call the office at 860-535-2476 for information.

## **operating policies**

### **Holiday/Break/Professional Development Closings:**

Labor Day

September Professional Development: September 15<sup>th</sup>

Columbus Day

Election Day

Veteran's Day

Thanksgiving (Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>)

Winter Recess: December 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> & December 31<sup>st</sup> (half day)-January 2<sup>nd</sup>

Martin Luther King Day

Presidents Day

Good Friday

March Professional Development: March 16<sup>th</sup>

Spring Recess: April 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

### **Closing Alerts Policy**

**School Cancellation:** In case of severe weather or other emergencies, if Stonington Public Schools cancels, Preschool is cancelled.

**Delayed Start:** Before Care for COMO Kids full-day distance learning and Preschool will be available for delayed starts of Stonington Public Schools at 8:30 am.

**Early Release:** If Stonington Public Schools calls for an early dismissal Preschool will dismiss at 11:30 am.

**After School Programs Cancellation:** Should Stonington Public Schools cancel after school programming this **does not** mean that COMO Kids and Preschool are canceled. Programming will run as planned unless it is decided that the COMO campus will be closed.

### **pick up and drop off policies**

For drop-off and pick-up, all preschool families will receive one access key card during Open House or on the first day of school, that will allow access to the COMO building through the main doors. Once in the building you will take your preschooler to their classroom where you will be able to enter the classroom by punching in the following code on the classroom door: **202425** (the school year). Replacements for lost cards will be \$10 and families can opt to purchase additional key cards for \$10.

Parents are encouraged to come into the classroom, help their child sign in, put their things away, and pick a center to start the day as a means to facilitate family-staff/classroom interactions.

If you are continually late picking up your child, the COMO reserves the right to request that another person on the pick-up list pick up your child.

Parents must call or e-mail the COMO in advance if someone on the pick-up list other than a parent is picking up their child. **Only persons listed on your child's pick-up list will be allowed to remove your child from the program.** Staff will request a form of photo identification from persons they are unfamiliar with. COMO employees are not allowed to be on any child's pick-up list. All authorized pick-ups must be added or deleted directly to/from your account profile, before the child can be released from care. Parents must alert COMO to any additions or deletions.

If a child has not been picked up within fifteen (15) minutes of our closing time, a staff person will attempt to call the child's parents at all available numbers. If they cannot be reached, the staff person will attempt to call the emergency and alternate people listed on the emergency cards. The police will be called after one hour if parents or other adults specified on the permission to release forms cannot be reached. At that time the child may be released to the police. Two staff members at least 18 years of age or older will remain with the child at all times. Additional charges will accrue for late pickup.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Stonington Community Center staff are not responsible for policing custodial disputes.

## Late Fees

Children must be picked up promptly from childcare to avoid a late fee. A penalty of \$5 for the first 5 minutes and \$1 for each additional minute by the school clock will be added to your bill if a child is picked up late from the program. The appropriate fee will be assessed and charged to the credit card on file. You may not drop off for before care childcare earlier than 7 am. If you are dropping off for the day any earlier than 9 am it will be assumed that your child is attending before care, in which case the appropriate fee will be assessed and charged to the payment method on file.

## behavior guidance policy

The program strives to create a loving and secure atmosphere that provides each child with the tools necessary to grow and develop socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. We believe that every child deserves to feel safe and comfortable in their place of learning. The Behavior Guidance Policy lends itself to supporting the development of a child's ability to resolve conflicts and exhibit developmentally appropriate behaviors as a response to conflict through the use of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. The Pyramid Model is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework used to promote social and emotional development while preventing and addressing challenging behaviors through the use of evidence-based practices that:

- Build positive relationships
- Develop supportive and nurturing environments
- Provide individualized supports to address persistent challenging behavior when needed

When disputes arise among children or between a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage a talking out process among those involved. The goal of this talking out process will be to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using children's ideas whenever possible.

Methods for resolving conflicts are:

- Positive guidance
- Setting clear limits
- Redirection

A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control.

Staff will continuously supervise children during behavior guidance.

In accordance with federal and state civil rights laws, staff shall not be abusive, neglectful, or use physical, corporal, humiliating, psychological, threatening or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child, another child, or an adult. Staff should never withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

### **childcare suspension and/or expulsion of children in the program**

The COMO reserves the right to suspend a child's participation in the program temporarily or permanently. Intentionally causing injury to another child or leaving the staff's supervision will result in temporary suspension. COMO reserves the right to expel a child if all other possible interventions have been exhausted or based upon the seriousness of the child's actions. If your child's participation is temporarily suspended, you will continue to be responsible for payment for the originally scheduled days.

Suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures will only be used if there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications. Before a determination is made the child's education team (Education Director, teachers, and assistant teachers), the Executive Director, the parents or guardians, and consultants will be engaged to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

The COMO will address challenging behaviors through the Pyramid Model's tiered approach beginning with implementing high quality supportive environments and nurturing, responsive relationships followed by targeted social/emotional supports. If the challenging behavior continues then intensive intervention, in the form of a behavior support plan, will be implanted. The program will collect data through the use of Behavior Incident Reports to help identify the function of the behavior as a means to develop an individualized behavior support plan. The child's education team (Education Director, teachers, and assistant teachers), the Executive Director, the parents or guardians, consultants and local school systems must also be engaged for the development of the individual behavior support plan.

The Education Director will reach out to partners at the local public school systems and the Office of Early Childhood in an effort to address consistent challenging behaviors and support the success of the child in the program. If need be, the COMO will also offer assistance to families to access other services and possible alternative placement.

When staff suspect that a child has a developmental delay or other special needs staff will take the following steps:

- Present documentation, data and an explanation for the concern to the parent(s),
- The Education Director will work with partners at local school systems and the Office of Early Childhood to suggest next steps to parents which could include referral to screenings and meeting to develop an individualized behavior support plan,
- Provide families with information regarding diagnostic evaluation

## child abuse and neglect policy and procedures

All of our staff has a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center.

Child Abuse is defined as a child who has had:

- non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her
- injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment

Child Neglect is defined as:

A child who has been:

- abandoned
- denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his /her wellbeing (CT GS 46b-120)

### Staff Responsibilities

As child care providers we are mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm of any child.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

- Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24hrs/ day) at 1-800-842-2288.
- Call the Department of Public Health at 1-800-282-6063 or 860-509-8045.
- The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential.
- Information Needed:
  - Name of child
  - Address of child
  - Phone number of child
  - Name of parents/ guardians

- Address of parents/ guardians
  - Phone number of parents/guardians
  - Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicator, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
  - Exact description of what the reporter has observed
  - Time and date of incident
  - Information about previous injuries, if any
  - Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
  - Name of any person suspected of causing injury
  - Any information reporter believes would be helpful
  - Any action taken to help or treat the child
- Seek medical attention for the child– if needed

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF.

Staff is protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm (CT GS, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action (suspension, reassignment of job duties, etc.) should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child in accordance with protecting the rights of both the accused staff and the children in our program.

Staff will be required to attend an annual staff meeting, held in January, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents/guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

### **supervision policy**

At NO time shall a child be left unsupervised

1. A staff to child ratio of no more than ten children to one teacher shall be maintained at all times (this includes indoor, outdoor, gym time, field trips & naptime). At least two teachers will be staffed at all times. At NO time should a staff person be alone with one child – two staff or two children must be present.
2. Teachers will supervise the class primarily by sight. Teachers may only rely on sound for short intervals. When this is the case, teachers will check frequently on the child(ren) out of sight. Teachers **MUST** be aware of where the children are at all times.
3. The class size shall not exceed twenty preschoolers.
4. Teachers must always count the children when they leave and enter an area (classroom, bathroom, playground, etc.)
5. Children are carefully watched while outside at play. Teachers are divided up when outside; some teachers are stationary at the playground equipment while others rotate among the play areas. When a child goes inside to use the restrooms from outdoors, a staff member is designated to accompany him/her. Children are never allowed to travel from the outside to inside by themselves.
6. Any staff member not considered part of the teaching staff as well as volunteers do not work alone with children. They must be with, and supervised by, regularly scheduled educators at all times.
7. All children must be signed in and out (by the parent or caregiver) daily onto the master sign-in/out sheet (M) to maintain a record of when each child is physically in our care. When the classroom is divided into two groups (G1 and G2), each teacher must carry a separate list with the names of the children in their assigned group. Children arriving or leaving after the groups have been separated must be signed in and out by a parent or caregiver with the designated group teacher using the G1 or G2 sign-in/sign-out sheets. All sign-in/sign-out sheets must show the correct number of children present.
8. All Preschool students will be back in their designated classrooms no later than 3:30pm in preparation for dismissal.

### **PLAYGROUND POLICY**

Children must be supervised at all times.

Children must sit on their bottoms on the swings. **NO JUMPING OFF**

Children must be closely supervised when using monkey bars.

The area in front of and in back of the swings must remain clear of objects and children when in use.

Wood chips are to stay on the ground, and should not be used by the children in the sand box. Matting is to stay underneath the wood chips.

Children need to use two hands when climbing.

Slide rules: UP the stairs DOWN the slide

Balls are played within designated areas. Balls that go outside designated areas must be retrieved by a staff person. Equipment must be returned to the proper storage areas.

Children should go outside to play each day. Outdoor air quality will be monitored daily. In cases when children cannot play outside, physical activity/gross motor practice will occur in the gymnasium or the auditorium. Parents should dress their child in clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.

On hot days, children are provided with opportunities to play in the shade. Written parental permission is required to apply sunscreen or sunblock. When in the sun, children should wear sun-protective clothing, sunscreen/sunblock, or both.

The program will maintain outside space for the children that is the equivalent to, or greater than, 75 square feet for each child. This is per CT State Regulations and NAEYC Standards. The total amount of required play space is based on a maximum of one-third of the center enrollment.

### **emergency response and safety plan**

The COMO is committed to providing a safe environment to all who work, learn and play in our programs and on our campus. The purpose of this Emergency Response & Safety Plan is to assist employees in maintaining a safe environment as well as responding quickly and effectively to various emergency situations that may arise. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but instead provided to assist in promoting a safe and responsive environment for staff, participants and customers of the COMO.

#### **Youth Programming General Safety Procedures**

All youth participants in COMO programming MUST have a completed registration form which includes a complete list of authorized adults for pick-up, emergency contacts, allergy and pertinent medical information as provided by parent/guardian upon program registration.

All COMO staff/contractors are to have a copy of this registration form on site during programming. Such information is confidential and will be managed as such. The original form will remain housed at the COMO for administrative reference in the event of an emergency. COMO staff will make arrangements for program volunteers charged with the sole care of youth in programming to have this contact information when staff/contractors are not present.

Staff/contractors/volunteers are to ensure they have reliable capabilities to communicate with parents, COMO administration or emergency personnel when outside or off-site. Such means would be a personal cell phone or a COMO cell phone. All childcare programming occurring off-site will have a designated cell phone.

Staff/contractors/volunteers are required to verify the authority and identity of the adult picking up a child from programming.

Children remain in the care of COMO staff/contractor/volunteer until an authorized adult arrives to pick up the child. After 15 minutes, the parent/guardian and then emergency contacts are to be notified until an authorized individual responds to pick up the child. After one hour, the police are to be notified. The COMO administration is to be notified of all late pick-ups.

Background checks are conducted on all staff/contractors/volunteers before being allowed direct access to children.

COMO staff/contractors/volunteers are not authorized to transport youth in their own vehicles, in the course of COMO business, unless an emergency situation arises to warrant such.

### **COMO Main Building Security Procedures**

All visitors and participants are to enter and exit through the front main doors in view of the Reception Desk, unless national, State, or local guidelines advise otherwise (i.e. to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19). Neither entry nor exit is allowed through any other side or back entry doors unless related to events/programming and must be done so under the supervision of COMO staff.

All side and back doors are to remain locked prohibiting entry but available for emergency egress. The garage doors are to remain shut and secured unless staff is actively working in the area within immediate access

The Front Desk, Office area and classrooms are equipped with silent panic alarms which immediately signal the alarm monitoring company to send police personnel. The panic alarm for Preschool 1 is located in the furthest left overhead cabinet on the left side. The panic button for Preschool 2, 3 and COMO Kids is located in the COMO Kids cabinet in the auditorium, on top and to the left. The panic button also activates a silent strobe light at the COMO Front Desk. In the event of an intruder, staff are to immediately push this alarm and follow protocols as outlined below regarding Suspicious Person Procedures.

### **Medical Emergency Procedure**

In a medical emergency please follow these steps:

Remain calm. Medical emergencies can occur, but there are emergency responders specifically trained to assist who will respond within minutes. Call 911 immediately if it is a medical situation beyond our abilities. If this is an incident which requires CPR, direct another adult to call 911 while you begin CPR protocols. In all cases, if at all possible keep the individual lying down until emergency responders arrive to assess the situation. The police dispatcher will walk you or the caller through questions and steps specific to the emergency. The dispatcher will send a police officer as well as an ambulance if warranted.

Notify the COMO Administration so they may respond to assist in quickly reaching emergency contacts or providing additional staff to secure the safety of other youth who may be present during the incident while staff attention is directed to the crisis.

In the event the incident involves a child(ren), contact parents/guardians as noted on the youth registration form. Begin with parent/guardian cell, home and work numbers, if unable to make a personal connection, leave voice messages and proceed down the emergency contact list until you make personal contact with an authorized responder. If the incident involves an alert adult, obtain their name and the name of an emergency contact to notify.

Provide the responding police officer with all incident details as well as information from the youth registration form in the event a youth is involved. Provide the same to responding ambulance personnel, in particular allergy or medical information as provided on the youth registration form.

If youth parents/guardians are not present at the scene and the youth is to be transported by ambulance, a COMO staff or administrator is to accompany the youth in the ambulance. Administration would have already been notified per item #1 and responded with additional support if needed for this purpose.

Emergency Contacts for Administrative notification of incident and staff support if required are provided to site supervisors and supporting staff. This includes immediately notifying a supervisor and/or Executive Director.

### **Designated Hospital Emergency Service**

Westerly Hospital – Yale New Haven Health 401-596-6000

Emergency Services

25 Wells St.

Westerly, RI 02891

### **Calling 911**

Identify yourself, speak slowly and calmly, and provide the specific location of the emergency

Relate what happened – be concise and factual

Provide the description of those you know or suspect to have injuries

Do NOT hang up unless directed as additional information or instruction may be needed. You may be placed on hold while the dispatcher sends a police response

### **Fire Emergency Procedure**

Basic Protocol:

Familiarize yourself with all main and alternate exits from your location.

Be familiar with the designated safe gathering place outside the building for staff and youth.

Follow protocols as established through practice fire drills scheduled by the Education Director or Head Teacher.

The last person out of the classroom (or office) should close the door as a means to minimize the spread of fire and smoke throughout the building.

Everyone, youth and adults, must exit the building when the fire alarm sounds.

#### Emergency Egress with Youth:

Children form a line at the sound of the alarm. Staff will take student files, attendance check lists, portable first aid kits and cell phone communication and ensure that all students exit the building from the closest or safest route. For instance:

Preschool 1 exits out of the classroom door that leads to the outside of the building if safe.

Preschool 2 and 3 exit out of the door on the south side of the COMO building closest to the classrooms.

COMO Kids exits out of the door on the south side of the COMO building next to the kitchen if safe.

Proceed to:

Preschool & COMO Kids: grassy area in front of the Community Center away from traffic.

Alternate route: grassy area behind the center away from playground

Makerspace and COMO Thrift: field in front of building

Pottery Studio: grassy area in front of the Community Center away from traffic.

Alternate route: grassy area behind the center away from the playground.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

In the event of an immediate evacuation due to a natural disaster, technological disaster or an imminent safety hazard staff and students will follow the fire evacuation procedures.

If Emergency Shelter is needed for one or more sites, then all students, staff, emergency contact files, attendance check lists and portable first aid kits with medication will be transported to a location determined by emergency service personnel. Mass transportation will also be coordinated through emergency service personnel.

**EMERGENCY SHELTER:** Stonington High School, 176 South Broad St., Pawcatuck, has been designated as the official shelter by the Civil Preparedness Director. In the case of an emergency, and if children need to be transported, COMO vehicles would be used, and all staff would accompany children to the shelter.

Should any national or severe emergency occur that involves a situation in which all town buildings are equally at risk then students will remain inside the building until parent/guardian pick up. In such an emergency the Town Emergency Management Team will coordinate

town services following the Town Emergency Plan. If evacuating the premises is not possible or poses further risk then youth and adults will move to a designated safe area:

The COMO site will congregate in the back hallway near the kitchen area with all student files, attendance check lists, portable first aid kits and cell phone communication.

The Thrift Shop will congregate in the back sorting room away from windows.

### **Suspicious Intruder or Active Shooter Procedure**

If a suspicious person enters the building, who appears to pose a threat to safety due to erratic or evasive behaviors, staff are to contact 911 immediately and not challenge the individual. Panic buttons located within the Front Desk, Office and classroom areas are also available to be pushed discreetly so as not to agitate the individual. Classroom protocols follow the same guidelines as below for an active shooter outside your building.

If an active shooter is outside your building

- Proceed to a room that can be locked then close and lock all the windows and doors.
- DO NOT attempt to exit the building unless directed by emergency personnel to do so.
- Turn off all lights and get adults/youth down on the floor and make sure that no one is visible from outside the room.
- One person in the room should call 911, advise the dispatcher of what is taking place, and inform him/her of your location.
- Remain calm and keep children in your care calm and quiet assuring them that the police are on their way
- DO NOT leave the room even if voice commands indicate it is safe for you to do so. Only emergency personnel will provide this command and will do so in person within your vision. Such commands may be the shooter attempting to lure victims from their safe space; do not respond to any voice commands until you can verify with certainty that they are being issued by an emergency responder.

If an active shooter is in the same building as you

- First determine if the room you are in can be locked and if so, follow the same procedures described above.
- If your room can't be locked, either barricade the door or assess if there is an opportunity through a close exit for ALL youth in your care to leave the building safely.

- If it is best to flee from your current location which can't be secured, before moving make sure you have a specific escape route planned.
- Do not attempt to carry anything while fleeing; move quickly, and have all keep their hands visible.
- Follow all police instructions

### **Notification of Parent/Guardian in the Case of an Emergency**

Phone the parents/guardians at work and/or home. All numbers are located on the individual child's registration forms. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. These numbers are located on the individual child's registration form.

ALL EMERGENCIES: CALL 911

### **Alternate Staff Coverage**

If additional staff is required to accompany a child in an emergency, the Education Director should be notified for coverage to maintain CT state-mandated ratios.

### **sick/illness policy**

When determining your child's overall well-being, ask yourself: *Can your child participate with reasonable comfort and receive adequate, appropriate care without interfering with the care of, or posing a threat to, the other children?*

Children and staff must stay home...

- If they have a fever of 100.8 degrees auxiliary (arm pit) or 99.8 degrees orally. The child or staff needs to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- If a child or staff member has diarrhea he/she needs to stay home. If a child has two loose bowel movements at school or is frequenting the bathroom more than twice each hour you will be notified. The child or staff needs to be diarrhea free for twenty four hours prior to returning to our program.
- If a child or staff has vomited then they need to stay home. If a child or staff vomits during the program they will need to go home and must be vomit free for twenty four hours.
- If a child or staff has had an antibiotic prescribed and it has been administered for less than 24 hours.
- If a child has any unidentified rash: In this instance a doctor's note will be required prior to the child being allowed back in the program.

Should a child be under-immunized because of a medical condition or the family's beliefs, staff will promptly exclude the child from the program/program activities if a vaccine-

preventable disease occurs in the program. A staff member will remain with the child until his/her parents can pick up.

**PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD HAS A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.**

Illnesses such as chicken pox, pertussis, measles, etc. are all reportable diseases in accordance with the Department of Public Health.

### **Emergency Medical Care**

COMO staff will attend to minor cuts and bruises. If emergency medical care is needed, 911 will be called and a parent or emergency contact will be called immediately. If the staff is unable to reach a parent or emergency contact, the designated physician will be notified. Emergency contacts will be considered as part of the child's pick up list.

### **Administration of Medication Policy**

It is advised that parents arrange for their child to be given medication at home or by the school nurse prior to attending COMO programs. Parents of children who require administration of medication more than twice a day need to give the medication to the Education Director in the original container with the prescription and the paperwork required by the CT Office of Early Childhood. All medication will remain locked in the designated space in the Director's office.

The COMO will administer emergency medications which include prescribed inhalers and premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e. Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), nonprescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl). These WILL NOT be locked up but accessible to trained staff in a location that is also inaccessible to children. The COMO will not administer ear drops, nose drops/sprays, or eye drops however, parents/guardians are welcome to administer at the COMO.

Parental responsibilities include providing the center the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the COMO or online at [www.thecomoo.org](http://www.thecomoo.org). The medication authorization form must include information, such as:

- The child's name, address, and birthdate
- The date the medication order was written
- Medication name, dose and method of administration
- Time to be administered and dates to start and end the medication
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur

## handwashing policy

Both staff members and children will be taught hand-washing procedures and practice them on a regular basis. Hand-washing is required of all when there is a likelihood of reducing the risk of transmission of infectious diseases.

Staff will assist children with hand-washing as needed.

Children and staff should wash hands; upon arriving at the program, after using the bathroom, after handling bodily fluids, before meals and snacks, before and after playing in water/sensory table.

Adults should always wash hands; before and after administering medication, after assisting with toileting, after handling garbage, and after cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures include; rubbing hands for 20 seconds, rinsing well, drying hands, and turning the faucet off with the paper towel to avoid touching the faucet with just-washed hands.

Hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol can be used as an alternative to traditional hand-washing when visible soiling is not present.

## cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting

**Cleaning:** Physically removing all dirt and contamination, oftentimes using soap and water. The friction of cleaning removes most germs and exposes any remaining germs to the effects of a sanitizer or disinfectant used later.

**Sanitizing:** Reducing germs on inanimate surfaces to levels considered safe by public health codes or regulations. Sanitizing may be appropriate for food service tables, high chairs, toys, and pacifiers.

**Disinfecting:** Destroying or inactivating most germs on any inanimate object, but not bacterial spores. Disinfecting may be appropriate for diaper tables, door and cabinet handles, toilets, and other bathroom surfaces.

**Germs:** Microscopic living things (such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi) that causes disease.

Definitions adapted from American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2011. Caring for Our Children: National health and safety performance standards; Guidelines for early care and education programs. 3rd edition. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association. See <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/WebFiles/AppendicesUpload/AppendixJ.pdf> for additional details.

Fragrance-free and least-toxic cleaning products are used in the program facility.

The program will follow the frequency of the cleaning and sanitizing of all surfaces as is indicated in the NAEYC's Sanitation Frequency Table.

The following checklist will be used by staff after each task has been completed according to the NAEYC'S Sanitation Frequency Table:

**Weekly Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Check List (modeled after the NAEYC's Frequency Table)**

\*Please refer to NAEYC's Frequency Table for the definitions of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.

**Week Of:**

C - Cleaning  
S - Sanitizing  
D - Disinfecting

Daily - Please mark with a check for the corresponding day to note that cleaning, sanitizing, and/or disinfecting has occurred

Area	Method	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Notes
Food Preparation Surfaces	C&S before and after each use						
Tables	C&S before and after each use						
Counter Tops	C&S						
Food Preparation Appliances - Microwave	C&S						
Hand Washing Sinks/ Faucets	C&D						
Toilets	C&D						
Floors	C&D - Mopped or Vacuumed						
Door and Cabinet Handles	C&D						
Carpets and Area Rugs	C - Vacuumed						
Toys that have been placed in the mouth of a child	C&S + air dry before returning the toy to class.						
Drinking Fountain	C&D						

Weekly - Please mark with a check for the corresponding week to note that cleaning, sanitizing, and/or disinfecting has occurred. Fridays at the end of the day.

Area	Method	Friday	Notes
Machine Washable Cloth Toys	C- Launder		
Dress up Clothes	C- Launder		
Play Activity Centers	C		
Bed Sheets & Pillows	C- Launder (Parents Takes Home)		
Cots	C- Clean before use by another child		

Monthly - Please mark with a check to note that cleaning, sanitizing, and/or disinfecting has occurred if this is the last week of the month.

Area	Method	End of the Month	Notes
Blankets	C- Launder		
Refrigerator	C		

## **meals and snacks**

Parents are responsible for supplying their child's lunch.

The program will provide two healthy snacks served at regularly established times and will be at least two hours apart and no more than three hours apart. Parents are welcome to pack an alternative snack from home.

Children must wash their hands before they eat. Teachers and staff must wash their hands before handling food.

All fruits and vegetables must be washed thoroughly by staff before eating.

Any food with expired dates will be discarded.

If the health consultant or local health inspector makes any recommendations regarding applicable food safety standards, the program will document compliance and any corrections that have been made.

If the program has any children in attendance with special feeding needs, program staff will keep a daily record that documents the type and quantity of food so that the family can be provided with that information.

Staff should never use plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam™) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages.

Staff will not offer children under three years old the following foods; hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, peanut butter, raw carrots, or chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole. This includes foods that are brought into the program from home.

## **parent involvement**

Two open houses for all parents/families will be held twice throughout the school year. Once prior to the start of school and again in the middle of the school year. Policies and procedures will be addressed with the goal of building a connection between all families and gaining an awareness and understanding of their diverse backgrounds as a means to create the best possible learning experience for their preschoolers.

Parents are encouraged to work with teachers and administration as partners in their child's preschool experience. If difficulties and/or differences arise between parents and teachers, teachers should set up a meeting with the parents to strategize solutions to the conflict. Teachers will notify the Education Director of the meeting and, if a resolution is not made, the Education Director will step in to facilitate an additional meeting to support conflict resolution.

## **confidentiality policy**

The Stonington Community Center Employee Handbook states, “Confidentiality: Information concerning the Stonington Community Center, its employees, its members and its Board of Governors is to be treated with utmost confidentiality.”

The Doris Muller Preschool at the Stonington Community Center takes this policy very seriously with regards to the children and families in our program and follows the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct that states the program “shall treat child assessment information confidentially and share this information only when there is a legitimate need for it.” Furthermore, the content of each child’s health and safety file is confidential but is immediately available upon request to:

- Administrators and educators who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records
- The child’s parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

## **child assessment policy and implementation plan**

### **Purpose and Philosophy:**

The Doris Muller Preschool at the COMO believes that having multiple forms of assessment, including observations and individually administered “tests,” is critical to the teacher’s ability to provide experiences and activities that will promote the success of the individual child and ultimately achieve the program’s overall mission. Assessment methods will allow for the program to remain sensitive to, and informed by, cultures, experiences, a child’s ability or disability, and home language.

The program believes that sharing the information obtained from assessments with families is a critical component of the child’s success in preschool. We truly believe that parents/families are our partners and most valuable asset in our ability to teach their children effectively. To ensure communication preschool teachers will; hold parent/teacher conferences, provide parents with a written report, work with parents to develop goals for school and home and allow them an opportunity to raise questions or concerns about how the assessment methods will meet their child’s needs. Conferences will occur two times per school year. In addition to formally sharing assessment information, teachers will, at minimum, verbally communicate each child’s progress in development and learning two additional times per school year. Though a minimum is set, teachers are expected to stay in contact with families regarding their child especially in regards to developmental concerns.

### **Procedures:**

Classroom observations as a Form of assessment:

Teaching staff will document relevant observations on each child's Informal Observation Form (these forms are located in each individual's file). Observations will be documented at least once every month, at the end of the month for each child. Any relevant observations at any time can be documented on these forms as well.

Observations recorded on the Informal Observation Form are made during the preschool day. Each child is observed as they play, interact, learn, transition, etc.

#### **Individual Child Files:**

Teachers will maintain a file for each individual preschool student. The files will include Informal Observation Forms, periodically collected samples/examples of each child's work, each child's individual profile sheet based on the CT Assessment Framework and its performance standards and benchmarks, and parent/teacher developed goals for each child. All files will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for confidentiality purposes.

#### **Educator Assessment Training:**

Teachers are provided formal training opportunities, in partnership with the State of CT Office of Early Childhood, which include detailed trainings on how to conduct child assessments—this is in addition to the training and background teachers bring with them upon hire and per teacher educational requirements outlined by the NAEYC. Assessment is a component of all teachers' on-boarding process.

#### **Work Samples as a Form of Assessment:**

Samples and examples of each child's work will be randomly pull throughout the school year. Each samples will be dated and teachers can make notes on the samples. Notes can include; progress made in the corresponding Domain of Development, goals that have been achieved, skills that require work, curriculum ideas to help the build on skills that need work.

Three times per school year (September, December, May) each child will draw a picture of a person. This allows teachers to gather conclusions about certain benchmarks in the Domains of Development as outlined by the CT Assessment Framework. These benchmarks include; shows special awareness, uses small muscles, compares and orders, and draws and paints. Each drawing is dated and teachers may add notes about observations.

#### **Individually Administered "Tests" as a Form of Assessment:**

Each child will be one-on-one with a classroom teacher or assistant teacher at the time the assessment is administered. The same assessment will be administered three times during the school year to track progress in the Domains of Development; once in October, once in January, and once in May.

The assessment includes: letter/sound recognition; number recognition/counting/one-to-one correspondence; shape recognition; and color recognition.

#### **Child Profile Formal Assessments:**

Twice per school year, a Child Profile will be completed by a classroom teacher. The Child Profile is a one-page graph of the child's performance on all 30 performance standards outlined in the CT Preschool Assessment Framework. In order to complete this form the teacher will use all assessment materials gathered and organized in the individual child's file (observations, samples, etc.). The 30 performance standards are broken down into four Domains of Development intended to assess all areas of a child's development and learning, including; cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health, physical development, and self-help skills.

The CT Preschool Assessment Framework (page 1) states, "These assessment frameworks provide a system for using standards in both planning curriculum and assessing children's progress. They enable teachers to plan and implement curriculum that addresses specific learning standards and to observe and assess children's progress in achieving these standards. This system focuses curriculum planning on standards, or learning outcomes, rather than primarily on activities." The Doris Muller Preschool at the Stonington Community Center holds this statement to be true as it is reflective of the program's overall philosophies and mission.

The first Child Profile will be completed in the beginning of January and the second will be completed at the end of June. Upon completion, the classroom teacher will meet with each individual child's parent/guardian to discuss. Parents/guardians will be informed of the conference dates prior to the first day of school – the dates for both scheduled conferences will be outlined on the programs school year calendar.

#### **Purposes and Uses of Assessment Results:**

- Referral for developmental screening and/or diagnostic assessment.
  - When program staff suspect a developmental delay or other special needs, program staff will report this to families in a way that is supportive, sensitive, and confidential. Staff will use evidence and examples gathered through assessment to explain the cause for concern. Staff will provide the documentation to families. Staff will suggest next steps and provide resources and information to families. Next steps will include referral to the Stonington Public School's Project PAD (Preschool Assessment of Development) screening, under the Child Find policy requiring the school district to locate, identify, and evaluate all children from birth to age 21 who require special education services.
- Identifying the child's interests and needs
- Designing goals for the individual child
- Showing the progress and learning of a child
- Formative Assessment – improving/enhancing the curriculum, adapting teaching practices and the environment, planning program improvement
- Communicating with families
- Providing background to the child's upcoming teachers