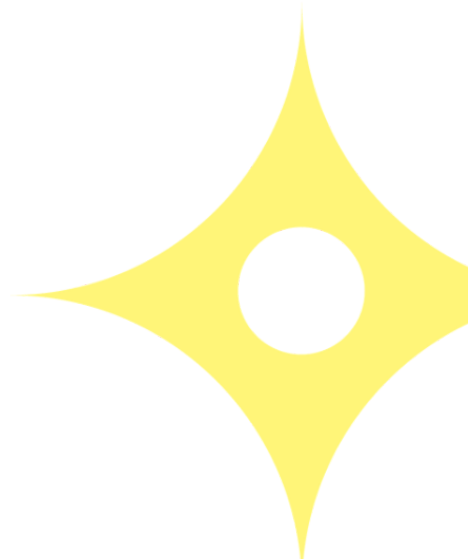




como kids camp como parent handbook

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 site with a long history of providing quality care in a happy environment.

- We offer affordable before and after school care on the COMO campus for elementary and middle school youth.
- As a part of our partnership with Stonington Public Schools, all COMO Kids are bussed to and from the COMO to either West Vine, Deans Mill, or Stonington Middle schools.
- COMO Kids receive a 10% discount for all COMO after school enrichment programs if the desired program falls on a day in which they are simultaneously enrolled in COMO Kids. We offer seamless transitions to COMO Pottery/Athletics/Arts programs, allowing your child to be a part of COMO Kids after care while pursuing their interests.
- Camp COMO is offered during the summer months.
- The COMO prides itself on providing an engaging, age appropriate curriculum, 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, and our ability to offer financial aid and scholarships for COMO programs.

Questions, Concerns, Compliments or Suggestions

The purpose of this handbook is to promote understanding of our program and its policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments you may call the Education Director. Our staff is committed to providing you and your child with the best possible experience.

Together we can ensure a safe and healthy environment for children between school and home.

Communication is critical and we need to know of any major life circumstances your child may be experiencing, as well as problems or concerns that may arise. This allows us to best understand the needs of your child and address concerns appropriately. Please keep the teachers informed and don't hesitate to bring issues forward to the Education Director for resolution. You may also contact the Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Haugen.

Contact Information

Stonington Community Center
28 Cutler Street, Stonington, CT 06378

www.thecomoo.org

Phone: 860.535.2476

Site Cell Phone: 860.287.5196

Fax: 860.535.2324

Chief Executive Officer: Matthew Haugen — m.haugen@thecomoo.org

Education Director: Olga Callahan — o.popovacallahan@thecomoo.org

Program Administrator for School Age & Adult Enrichment : Dave Carter — d.carter@thecomoo.org

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COMO Kids & Camp COMO Educational Program Plan

COMO Kids and Camp COMO provide a developmentally appropriate educational program that responds to the individual needs, interests, abilities, and experiences of the children and families we serve. Our program embraces children with diverse cultural, language, and developmental backgrounds and uses developmentally appropriate practices to support each child's growth and learning.

The program maintains a written daily schedule that is flexible and available to parents and program staff. The schedule provides a balance of active and quiet time, individual and group experiences, child-directed and teacher-guided activities, and opportunities for enrichment and recreation. Activities are not intended to duplicate the child's regular school day and are planned to reflect the interests and needs of the children enrolled.

Daily programming supports children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development and encourages creativity, personal responsibility, self-direction, higher-level thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills. The schedule may be adjusted throughout the day to respond to children's interests, needs, transitions, and individual developmental differences.

The daily program will include opportunities for free time and child-directed play, creative activities and self-expression, homework and quiet work time, nutritional snacks, indoor and outdoor physical activities, small-group activities, special events and field trips, and activities that promote positive self-concept, confidence, and independence.

Learning and Enrichment Opportunities

COMO Kids and Camp COMO participants have access to the COMO campus, providing a variety of educational, creative, and recreational experiences. Depending on the program and children's interests, opportunities may include:

- Creating and exploring in the COMO pottery studio
- Exploring nature in the Children's Learning Garden and Outdoor Classroom
- Participating in gym games and physical activities
- Being active on the COMO tennis and paddle tennis courts
- Expressing creativity and confidence on the COMO stage
- Learn about cooking, basic food preparation, and proper nutrition in the kitchen
- Participating in activities that encourage cooperation, communication, and problem-solving
- Building friendships and positive relationships with peers and teachers
- Participating in walking trips and other field trips into the Borough, including duBois Beach during the summer months

Teachers observe children's interests, abilities, and needs throughout the day and use this information to adapt activities and experiences. Our goal is to provide a balanced, engaging, and inclusive environment where every child can participate, develop new skills, build relationships, and experience success.

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:

- 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.
- Registration and Enrollment Information: Registration must be completed through our online registration system and include authorized adults for pick-up, emergency contacts, allergies, and other pertinent medical information. At least one authorized adult must be someone other than a parent or guardian. Parents must also complete and sign the required enrollment and medical care forms in hard copy for their child's file.
- Appropriate medication, if necessary, with required paperwork must be given to the Education Director.
- A non-refundable deposit is required for registration and to secure a space in the program.
- 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.

Payment and Refund Policy: COMO Kids

Tuition is prepaid on a monthly basis. All payments are due 4 days prior to participation. Monthly payments for child care 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.

A non-refundable deposit of the first month's tuition is required for registration and to secure a space in the program. Childcare tuition fees are non-refundable.

Payment and Refund Policy: Camp COMO

When registering for camp, only a non-refundable deposit of \$50 is due at the time of registration. The remainder of the balance will be scheduled using the billing method you have chosen on file (credit card or EFT) 14 days before the start of the camp week. Camp payments are non-transferable and cannot be transferred to another week of camp.

Additional payments (paying in full) are non-refundable and cannot be used as credit toward other weeks or programming. Schedule changes are filled as availability permits.

Schedule Changes and Withdrawals: COMO Kids

Withdrawals and change of schedules must be submitted to the Program Administrator for School-Age and Adult Enrichment 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.

Schedule Changes and Withdrawals: Camp COMO

When registering for camp, only a non-refundable deposit of \$50 is due at the time of registration. The remainder of the balance will be scheduled using the billing method you have chosen on file (credit card or EFT) 14 days before the start of the camp week. Withdrawals and change of schedules must be submitted Program Administrator for School-Age and Adult Enrichment at least five days prior to the scheduled payment date to avoid being charged the balance due. Camp payments are non-transferable and cannot be transferred to another week of camp. Additional payments (paying in full) are non-refundable and cannot be used as credit toward other weeks or programming. Schedule changes are filled as availability permits.

Drop-in Days

Drop-in days must be approved by the Education Director to ensure space is available. Once approved, parents/guardians may purchase drop-in days online via their online portal.

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.

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.

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.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Policy

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.

Late Fees

Children must be picked up promptly from childcare to avoid a late fee. A penalty of \$10 for the first 10 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.

Dependent Care Forms and Tax Information

Tax information for all child care payments will be available in participants' online member portals Jan 1 and will remain accessible for one year. Please notify the front office if you are requesting tax information for child care prior to September 1, 2025.

Operating Policies

Holiday Closings

Note, childcare is not available on the following days: Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4th, and two Professional Development Days (dates for these are added to the COMO Kids calendar).

Closing Alerts Policy

School Cancellation: In case of severe weather or other emergencies, if Stonington Public Schools calls a school closure, COMO Kids before and after care is cancelled.

Delayed Start: Before Care for COMO Kids 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, COMO Kids after-care will be canceled. All COMO Kids after care participants will either be bussed home or a parent pick up from school according to the Early Dismissal Forms filled out upon registration.

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.

Sick Child 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 Form

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.

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). 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.thecomo.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
- Notation whether the medication is a control

Diabetes Care Policy

The Doris Muller Preschool and COMO Kids/Camp COMO are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for children with diabetes. A child will not be denied enrollment or participation solely because of a diabetes diagnosis.

Before attending the program, families must provide the required medical care plan, health care provider orders, parent/guardian authorization, and emergency contact information.

Staff responsible for the child's care will receive required OEC training and will follow the child's individual medical care plan for blood glucose monitoring, medication, nutrition, and emergency care.

All diabetes medications and supplies will be stored safely and remain accessible to trained staff. Staff will communicate with families regarding the child's care and any significant concerns.

In the event of a diabetes-related emergency, staff will follow the child's medical plan and contact emergency medical services when necessary. Parents or guardians will be notified promptly.

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

The COMO is committed to maintaining a clean, healthy, and safe environment for children and staff. Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting practices will follow applicable Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) requirements and NAEYC health and safety practices. Staff will be trained on these procedures and will use products according to manufacturer instructions.

Classrooms, toys, equipment, and frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized or disinfected as appropriate throughout the day and whenever visibly soiled or contaminated. Toys and materials that

are mouthed will be removed from use and properly cleaned and sanitized before being returned to children.

Food preparation and eating surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized before and after use. Bathrooms, toilets, and other surfaces requiring disinfection will be disinfected regularly and whenever contaminated. Staff will follow appropriate procedures when cleaning bodily fluids and use protective measures as needed.

Cleaning and disinfecting products will be safely stored out of children's reach and will never be mixed. Staff will follow required contact times and dilution instructions to ensure products are used safely and effectively.

Behavior Guidance Policy

Our program strives to create a loving, secure, and developmentally appropriate atmosphere that provides each child with the tools necessary to grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. We believe every child deserves to feel safe, respected, and supported in their learning environment.

Our Behavior Guidance Policy is designed to support each child's social-emotional development and help children learn the skills they need to navigate relationships, manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and participate successfully in the classroom.

We understand that learning social skills, regulating emotions, communicating needs, and solving conflicts are developmental processes that take time, practice, and support. Children are at different stages of development and may need repeated opportunities to learn and practice these skills. Our approach is grounded in patience, understanding, consistency, and the belief that challenging behaviors are opportunities for teaching and learning.

Teachers use the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children to guide their approach to behavior and social-emotional development.

The Pyramid Model emphasizes:

- Building positive relationships
- Creating supportive and nurturing environments
- Teaching social and emotional skills, as well as conflict-resolution skills
- Providing individualized supports when needed

When conflicts or challenging interactions arise, staff use an empathetic and supportive approach. Teachers acknowledge and validate the feelings of everyone involved while helping children use developmentally appropriate calming strategies to regulate their emotions.

Once children are calm and ready to engage, teachers support them in communicating their feelings and needs, listening to others, and participating in finding solutions. The goal is to help children develop the skills to work through challenging situations safely and respectfully rather than simply resolving the situation for them.

Methods for resolving conflict and guiding behavior include:

- Positive guidance
- Clear and consistent limits
- Redirection
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Teaching calming strategies
- Helping children use words to solve problems
- Reinforcing positive choices

Unsafe behaviors requiring immediate staff intervention include, but are not limited to:

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Kicking
- Biting
- Pushing
- Pinching
- Scratching
- Spitting
- Throwing toys, furniture, or objects
- Intentional destruction of materials
- Running from supervision / elopement
- Threatening or aggressive behavior toward others

If unsafe behavior occurs, staff may:

- Immediately intervene to ensure safety
- Redirect the child to another activity or area
- Support the child in calming and regaining control
- Re-teach expected behavior
- Document incidents when appropriate
- Communicate concerns with parents/guardians
- Develop an individualized support plan when behaviors persist

A child who is repeatedly aggressive or destructive may be temporarily removed from an activity and supported in making a safe alternative choice.

Staff will continuously supervise children during behavior guidance.

In accordance with federal and state civil rights laws, staff shall not use physical punishment, corporal punishment, humiliation, ridicule, threats, frightening techniques, neglectful responses, or withholding of food as discipline.

No child shall be physically restrained unless necessary to protect the immediate safety and health of the child or others, and only until the risk has passed.

Childcare Suspension and/or Expulsion of Children in the Program

COMO is committed to supporting children through developmentally appropriate guidance and the Pyramid Model's tiered approach. Our goal is to understand the needs underlying challenging behaviors and provide appropriate support before considering exclusionary measures.

The process begins with high-quality, supportive environments and nurturing, responsive relationships, followed by targeted social-emotional supports based on the individual needs of the child. If challenging behavior continues, COMO may develop an individualized Behavior Support Plan to provide more intensive intervention. Behavior Incident Reports and other relevant observations may be used to identify patterns and better understand the possible function or underlying need associated with the behavior.

When a Behavior Support Plan is needed, the child's education team—including the Education Director, teachers, and assistant teachers—will collaborate with the Chief Executive Officer, parents or guardians, consultants, and, when appropriate, the local school system. The team will establish appropriate supports, monitor the child's progress, and make adjustments as needed. The Education Director may also work with the local public school system and the Office of Early Childhood to identify additional resources and services. COMO may assist families in accessing appropriate community resources or, when necessary, exploring alternative placement options.

Reasonable Accommodations

COMO partners with families and, when appropriate, Health, Social Services, and Office of Early Childhood (OEC) consultants to identify and support each child's individual needs. This may include developing and implementing an individualized Behavior Support Plan, coordinating medication administration in accordance with program policies and applicable regulations, and considering reasonable accommodations that allow a child to safely and meaningfully participate in the program.

When persistent behaviors or individual needs significantly affect the safety, supervision, staffing, or effective operation of the program, COMO will communicate with the child's parent/guardian and work collaboratively to implement and evaluate appropriate individualized supports and reasonable accommodations. When appropriate, COMO may also consult with relevant professionals and community resources.

If, after this individualized process, the child's needs cannot be safely and appropriately met without fundamentally altering the nature of the program, COMO will work with the family to determine appropriate next steps. These may include modifications to the child's schedule, additional outside supports, or immediate transition to a setting better equipped to meet the child's needs.

Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures will only be considered when a serious safety threat has been identified and all reasonable modifications and available supports have been implemented without successfully reducing or eliminating the concern. Before such a determination is made, COMO will engage the child's education team, Executive Director, parents or guardians, and appropriate consultants to consider the circumstances and determine whether any reasonable alternatives or additional supports are available.

COMO reserves the right to temporarily suspend or permanently end a child's participation in the program based on the seriousness of the behavior or when there is an ongoing safety concern. Examples of

behavior that may result in temporary suspension include intentionally causing injury to another child or leaving the supervision of staff.

If a child's participation is temporarily suspended, families remain responsible for payment for the originally scheduled days during the suspension period.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedures

All staff members share responsibility for protecting children from abuse, neglect, and harm. All employees of the Stonington Community Center education department are mandated reporters under Connecticut law.

Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse includes a child who has:

Non-accidental physical injury inflicted upon them

Injuries inconsistent with the history provided

A condition resulting from maltreatment including, but not limited to:

- emotional maltreatment
- cruel punishment
- sexual abuse or sexual exploitation
- deprivation of necessities
- severe neglect

Been placed at imminent risk of serious harm through acts or omissions of a caregiver

Definition of Child Neglect

Child neglect includes a child who has been:

- Abandoned
- Denied proper physical, educational, emotional, or moral care and attention
- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions, or associations injurious to their well-being
- Denied necessary supervision, medical care, nutrition, shelter, or protection

Staff Responsibilities

As mandated reporters, staff are legally required to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or imminent risk of serious harm.

Reporting Procedures

Staff shall immediately report concerns to the appropriate authorities:

Connecticut Department of Children and Families
1-800-842-2288 (24 hours)

Mandated reporters must:

- Make an oral report within 12 hours of suspicion
- Submit a written report (DCF-136) within 48 hours

Staff acting in good faith are protected by law from retaliation.

All phone calls and written reports shall be documented and maintained in a confidential file.

The management of this program maintains zero tolerance for abuse or neglect. Any allegation involving an employee, volunteer, or contractor will result in immediate protective action, which may include reassignment, suspension, or removal from duties pending investigation.

All new staff members receive mandated reporter training prior to working with children. Annual staff training on abuse and neglect reporting procedures is also required.

When an allegation involving a staff member is made, administration will cooperate fully with investigating authorities and follow all required notification procedures, including immediately informing parents/guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to speak to a child's parent to assess the cause of the child's injuries and offer guidance and support

Supervision Policy

At NO time shall a child be left unsupervised.

1. A staff to child ratio of no more than 15 children to one teacher (COMO Kids) and the maximum group size should not exceed 30 children. 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. Teachers must always count the children when entering or leaving any area, including the classroom, bathroom, playground, or other shared spaces, and remain aware of the total number of children in their care at all times.
4. Children are closely supervised at all times while playing outdoors. Staff position themselves throughout the playground, with some teachers stationed near playground equipment and others actively moving between play areas to maintain clear visibility and supervision. When a child needs to go inside to use the restroom, a designated staff member will accompany the child. Children are never permitted to travel between the outdoor and indoor areas without staff supervision. 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.
5. 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.

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.

Field Trips and Off-Site Activities

COMO maintains active supervision of children at all times and maintains required staff-to-child ratios during all activities, including those away from the main building.

Field trips and walking trips are an extension of the curriculum and provide opportunities for exploration, hands-on learning, community connection, and enrichment. Parents/guardians are required to provide written permission for their child to participate in activities or use property that is not directly licensed by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC). An annual permission form may be used for routine walking trips and recurring activities identified by COMO. Additional written permission will be obtained for activities not covered by the annual form.

During off-site activities, staff will carry emergency contact and medical information, first-aid supplies, and a means of communication. Children without the required written permission will remain at the main building with appropriate staff supervision.

Shared Bathroom Policy

The safety, privacy, and well-being of children are our priority. When children use a restroom shared with adults, staff will provide appropriate supervision while respecting children's privacy.

Staff will supervise children from the bathroom doorway while maintaining required staff-to-child ratios.

An adult will never be alone with a child behind a closed restroom door.

If a child needs assistance with toileting or clothing, staff will provide appropriate support while maintaining the child's privacy and safety.

Adults will not use the shared restroom while a child is using it. The restroom door will remain closed and a sign will indicate that the restroom is in use. Adults will wait until the child has finished before entering.

Staff will manage restroom visits to prevent overcrowding and maintain appropriate supervision.

Children and adults will wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after using the restroom or assisting with toileting.

Cameras and video recording devices are not permitted in restrooms or changing areas.

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.

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. Side doors and back entry doors may only be used for events or programming and must be used 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.

Youth Programming General Safety Procedures

All youth participants must have a completed registration form with authorized pick-up persons, emergency contacts, allergy, and pertinent medical information. This information is confidential and will be maintained securely.

Staff, contractors, and volunteers are responsible for verifying the identity and authorization of any adult picking up a child. Children remain in the care of COMO staff until released to an authorized adult.

Late pick-ups will be handled according to COMO's Late Pick-Up Policy.

All staff, contractors, and volunteers must have reliable means of communication with parents/guardians, COMO administration, and emergency personnel. Background checks are required for all individuals with direct access to children.

Staff, contractors, and volunteers may not transport children in personal vehicles for COMO business except in an emergency situation.

Multi-hazard Emergency Procedures

Emergency Evacuation

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.

Fire Evacuation

In the event of a fire or other emergency requiring evacuation, COMO staff and children will immediately evacuate the building using the closest safe fire exit. Staff are responsible for supervising the children in their care and ensuring that children remain together throughout the evacuation.

Once outside, children and staff will proceed to the designated emergency assembly area, located on the grassy area near the red picnic tables in front of the COMO main entrance. Alternative emergency assembly area will be COMO Garden. Staff will conduct a name-to-face attendance check to account for every child. Teachers in charge will take the sign-in/sign-out records, portable first-aid kit, cell phone, and emergency files to the evacuation location.

Required staff-to-child ratios will be maintained throughout the evacuation and while children are at the designated location. At least two COMO staff members who are 18 years of age or older will remain with the children until all children have been safely picked up or an alternate arrangement has been authorized.

Parents and guardians will be notified as soon as possible and provided with instructions regarding the location and procedure for picking up their child. Parents and guardians should proceed directly to the designated evacuation or alternate shelter location and follow staff instructions. Children will only be released to an authorized adult listed on the child's registration information, and staff will verify the adult's identity before release.

Parents and guardians should not return to the building or attempt to enter the facility during an emergency. Staff will remain with the children and maintain required supervision and ratios until every child has been safely reunited with an authorized adult.

Lock-Down

In the event of an emergency or threat involving potential violence in or around the facility that requires everyone to remain in place, the Director or person in charge will notify staff to begin lockdown procedures using the facility's established communication system. 911 will be called, and the Director or person in charge will remain in communication with emergency personnel throughout the incident.

Each staff member is responsible for the children in their care. Staff will gather children in the safest area of the classroom, away from windows and doors. Doors and windows will be locked, lights will be turned off, and curtains, shades, and blinds will be closed to prevent visibility into the classroom. Staff will remain calm, reassure the children, and help them stay quiet. Attendance will be taken periodically to account for all children.

Parents and guardians are not permitted to enter the facility or access their children during a lockdown. Staff will not release children or allow anyone to enter the building until emergency personnel have determined that it is safe to do so.

The Director or person in charge will make every reasonable effort to notify parents and guardians during the emergency; however, circumstances may prevent communication until the situation has been resolved. Parents and guardians should not come to the facility during the lockdown and should wait for official communication from COMO.

The lockdown will remain in effect until the all-clear is given by emergency personnel. Once the all-clear has been received, the Director or person in charge will communicate it to staff and children and provide instructions for resuming normal operations or reunification. Parents and guardians will be notified after the all-clear has been given and will receive instructions regarding next steps for picking up their children.

Shelter-in-Place

In the event of severe weather or another unsafe situation where evacuation is not possible, COMO staff and children will remain inside the building in a designated safe area away from windows and doors. Staff will follow emergency instructions and move children to the safest available interior location based on the nature of the emergency.

Staff will have appropriate supplies available to support the comfort and needs of the children during the shelter-in-place period. First-aid supplies will be available, and trained staff will provide first aid as needed until emergency personnel are able to respond.

Children will remain under the supervision of COMO staff until the immediate danger has passed and it is determined that it is safe to resume normal activities or release children to authorized adults.

Parents and guardians will be notified as soon as reasonably possible after the immediate danger has passed and will receive instructions regarding any changes to normal dismissal or pick-up procedures.

Multi-Hazard Emergency Drill

COMO will conduct a Multi-Hazard Emergency Drill at least annually. The drill will include the demonstration and practice of emergency procedures for sheltering in place, lockdown, and evacuation. All staff, program staff, and children will participate as appropriate to their age and developmental level.

We recognize that emergency drills can feel scary or confusing for young children. Drills will be conducted in a calm, reassuring, and developmentally appropriate manner. Staff will use simple, non-threatening language to explain what is happening and what children should do. Teachers will reassure children, provide comfort, and help them feel safe throughout the drill.

The purpose of these drills is to help staff and children become familiar with safety procedures and practice responding calmly and safely in an emergency.

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, COMO Kids and Camp COMO 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