



doris muller preschool 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, nationally accredited site with a long history of providing quality care in a happy environment.

The COMO prides itself on providing an 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.

Contact Information

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Table of Contents

Our Philosophy.....	1
What to Bring to School.....	1
Enrollment Policies.....	1
Registration Checklist.....	1
Refund Policy.....	2
Payment.....	2
Membership Prorating and Auto-Renewal.....	3
System Credits.....	3
Childcare Schedule Changes and Withdrawals.....	3
Drop-In Days.....	3
Returned Payment Fees and Outreach.....	3
Sibling Discount – Child Care.....	3
Operating Policies.....	3
Hours of Operation/ Schedules/ Holiday/Break/Professional Development Closings.....	3
Closing Alerts Policy.....	4
Pick-Up and Drop-Off Policies.....	4
Late Fees.....	5
Parent Agreements and Responsibilities.....	5
Educational Program Plan.....	7
Curriculum.....	7
Social-Emotional Development.....	7
Daily Rhythm and Learning Environment.....	7
Technology.....	8
Child Assessment and Documentation Policy.....	9
Educator Assessment Training.....	9
Family Engagement and Classroom Participation.....	10
Sample Daily Schedule.....	10
Meals and Snacks.....	11
Birthday Snacks and Celebrations.....	12
Behavior Guidance Policy.....	12
Methods for Resolving Conflict and Guiding Behavior.....	13
Unsafe Behaviors.....	13
Prohibited Discipline and Treatment.....	13
Physical Restraint.....	14
Childcare Suspension and/or Expulsion of Children in the Program.....	14
Reasonable Accommodations.....	14
Suspension and Expulsion.....	15
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedures.....	15
Staff Responsibilities.....	16
Reporting Procedures.....	16
Supervision Policy.....	16
Playground Policy.....	17
Field Trips and Off-Site Activities.....	17

Shared Bathroom Policy.....	18
Emergency Response and Safety Plan.....	18
COMO Main Building Security Procedures.....	18
Youth Programming General Safety Procedures.....	19
Multi-hazard Emergency Procedures.....	19
Emergency Evacuation.....	19
Fire Evacuation.....	20
Lock-Down.....	20
Shelter-in-Place.....	21
Multi-Hazard Emergency Drill.....	21
Medical Emergency Procedure.....	21
Continuation of Operations.....	22
Communication and Reunification with Parents/Guardians.....	22
Coordination with Local Emergency Management.....	22
Emergency Accommodations for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Medical Conditions.....	23
Emergency Drills.....	23
Sick/Illness Policy.....	23
Administration of Medication Policy.....	24
Diabetes Care Policy.....	24
Handwashing Policy.....	25
Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting.....	25
Confidentiality Policy.....	25

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 enrolled in our full-day program, please send a lunchbox clearly labeled with your child's name. Please include an ice pack for foods that need to stay cold and a thermos for foods that need to stay warm. **COMO is a nut-free preschool.** Please do not send foods containing peanuts, tree nuts, or products made with or containing nuts, including peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, hazelnut products, or other nut-based foods. Families should check ingredient labels carefully and avoid foods that may contain nuts or have been processed in a facility that also processes nuts.
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:

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.

Registration and Activity Fees: A non-refundable \$100 registration deposit and a one-time \$35 activity fee are required to secure a space in the program.

Health Records: Each child must have a current health assessment record on file, including up-to-date immunizations. Parents must complete and sign the Self Health Assessment Form. The child's physical examination must be completed, signed, and dated by their pediatrician using the Connecticut OEC Child Health Record form. Physical examinations must be updated annually, and all health and immunization records must remain current in accordance with Connecticut requirements.

Medication Information: Any medication required during the school day must be provided to the Education Director with all required medical orders and paperwork.

Membership: Tuition-based programs are available to members. Children enrolled in a tuition-based program must maintain an active membership with 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.

Payment

Tuition is prepaid on a monthly basis. Annual tuition is divided into 10 equal monthly payments for ease of billing, so the monthly payment remains the same regardless of the number of school days in a particular month. All payments are due four days before the first of the month of service.

The same billing structure applies to monthly morning and aftercare programs. Families may also choose drop-in care as needed; however, drop-in rates are higher than the monthly rate. If a child is enrolled in a monthly before-care or aftercare program and the family chooses to disenroll during the month, the full monthly fee will still apply for that month.

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 changes to a child's schedule must be submitted by the 20th of the month to allow billing to be adjusted for the following month. The new schedule will take effect on the first day of the following month. A Change of Schedule Form must be completed and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and left in the office for approval by the Education Director. All schedule changes are subject to availability and must be approved by the Education Director before they can be processed. Once the change has been approved, the office will process the request and adjust the schedule and billing accordingly. Please note that childcare tuition fees are non-refundable.

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 Payment 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

Hours of Operation/ Schedules/ Holiday/Break/Professional Development Closings

The preschool program offers flexible enrollment options to meet the needs of families. Families may choose a half-day program from 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. or a full-day program from 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Before-care is

available from 7:00–9:00 a.m., and after-care is available from 4:00–6:00 p.m. Families may enroll their child for 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week based on program availability.

The preschool program will be closed for holidays, scheduled breaks, and Staff Professional Development days as reflected on the school calendar.

Scheduled Closings:

Labor Day
Columbus Day
Election Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving break: November 26 and 27
Winter Recess: December 23,24,25,31 and January 1.
Martin Luther King Day
Good Friday
Spring Recess: April 12-April 16.
Memorial Day
Juneteenth

In addition to the scheduled holidays and school breaks, the preschool program will be closed for Staff Professional Development on the following dates:

- September 25, 2026
- March 15, 2027

Professional Development days are an important part of maintaining a high-quality preschool program. These dedicated days allow teachers time to learn, collaborate, reflect on classroom practices, and plan meaningful experiences that support children's growth and development. Ongoing professional learning helps our teachers continue to grow in their practice and ensures we provide the best possible learning environment for all children.

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: 202627 (the school year). Replacements for lost cards will be \$10 and families can opt to purchase additional key cards for \$10.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to come into the classroom with their child at arrival, help them sign in, put away their belongings, and choose a center or activity to begin the day. This provides an opportunity for positive family-staff and classroom interactions and can help children feel comfortable as they transition into the school day.

We ask that families keep the morning transition to a reasonable amount of time, generally about 10 minutes, while allowing for individual needs when necessary. Once your child is settled and engaged in an activity, we encourage parents and caregivers to say goodbye and allow the teaching staff to support the remainder of the transition. Keeping goodbyes brief, positive, and consistent can help children develop confidence and independence and allows the classroom to begin the day smoothly.

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 inform 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 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.

Parent Agreements and Responsibilities

Families are asked to support the following program expectations:

- Notify COMO staff and your child's classroom teachers if your child will be absent for any reason.
- An adult must accompany your child to and from the classroom and sign your child in and out each day.
- Keep at least two labeled spare outfits in your child's cubby.
- Provide all required personal items.

- Toys from home are not permitted except for approved transitional objects that support a child's comfort and adjustment to the classroom.
- Provide labeled bedding and a snug-fitting spare sheet for your child's cot, as applicable.
- Notify the Director in writing of any changes to your address, phone number, employment, or other important contact information.
- Maintain respectful and courteous interactions with all COMO staff members. Questions, concerns, or disagreements should be addressed privately with the appropriate staff member or Director rather than in front of children or other families.
- During inclement weather, monitor COMO's designated communication channels for information regarding closures or delays.

Administrative Oversight

COMO strives to ensure that the day-to-day operation of the preschool program is aligned with current Connecticut statutes and regulations for Child Care Centers and Group Child Care Homes, COMO's policies and procedures, program philosophy, and best practices. We are committed to providing a safe, positive, and nurturing experience for children, families, and staff.

Most questions or concerns can be resolved by first discussing the matter with the classroom teacher. If additional support is needed, families may speak with the Education Director or the designated administrative leadership.

Education Director: Olga Callahan

Telephone: 860-535-2475, Extension 102

When a concern requires additional attention, a meeting may be arranged at a mutually agreed-upon time with the appropriate parties, which may include the parent/guardian, classroom teacher, Education Director, and/or COMO CEO. We value open communication and different perspectives and are committed to continuous quality improvement.

If a concern cannot be resolved through these steps, the matter may be brought to COMO's administrative leadership for further review and consideration.

COMO CEO: Matt Haugen

Telephone: 860-535-2475, Extension 101

If a concern cannot be resolved through COMO's administrative process, parents and guardians may contact the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), Division of Licensing to file a complaint or seek additional assistance. OEC may be contacted at 1-800-282-6063 or 860-500-4450, or by email at oec.licensing@ct.gov. Complaints may also be submitted through the OEC licensing system.

In the event of an emergency, COMO will notify the OEC Division of Licensing as required once the immediate emergency is under control. In situations involving suspected child abuse or neglect, or a life-threatening situation, COMO will contact 911 and/or the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) as required.

Information regarding COMO's licensing inspections and corrective action plans is available for review as permitted by OEC requirements. Parents and guardians may request to review applicable records at the program or access public licensing information through the State of Connecticut's online licensing system.

Educational Program Plan

At Stonington COMO Preschool, our program is grounded in the Bank Street Developmental-Interaction approach. We see children as active participants in their own learning and recognize that development happens across the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual domains. These areas are closely connected, and we consider the whole child in everything we do.

Our classrooms are built around strong relationships, meaningful experiences, play, exploration, and connection to the world around children. Teachers get to know each child, observe their interests and development, and use those observations to shape the classroom environment and curriculum. Children are encouraged to ask questions, share ideas, make choices, solve problems, and explore their own interests.

Curriculum

Our curriculum follows the seasons, children's experiences, and their interests and questions. Teachers introduce topics and experiences that invite children to investigate and discover, while allowing children's ideas to help guide where the learning goes.

Academic learning is woven naturally into these experiences rather than taught in isolation. Children develop early literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies concepts through play, conversation, stories, building, art, music, cooking, nature exploration, projects, and daily routines.

For example, a child's interest in building may lead to exploring shapes, measurement, balance, drawing plans, reading books about buildings, and working together to construct something. In this way, academic learning becomes meaningful because it grows from children's experiences.

Social-Emotional Development

Relationships are central to our program. Teachers create a warm and responsive classroom community where children feel known, respected, and valued.

Children are supported in developing:

- Confidence and a positive sense of self
- Friendships and meaningful relationships
- Communication and language
- Cooperation and problem-solving
- Independence and responsibility
- Emotional awareness and self-regulation

When conflicts or challenges arise, teachers help children understand their feelings, listen to others, and work toward solutions rather than simply providing the answer.

Daily Rhythm and Learning Environment

Children follow a flexible daily rhythm that provides both consistency and room to respond to children's needs and interests. Classrooms will have a visual schedule to help children understand what comes next and feel secure throughout the day.

The required components of the daily program include:

- **The use of indoor and outdoor physical environments based on children's interests, individual needs, and learning to be addressed.** Children will have opportunities to develop fine- and gross-motor skills through active play, exploration, and hands-on experiences.
- **A flexible schedule** that provides consistency while allowing teachers to respond to children's individual needs, interests, and emerging learning opportunities.
- **Learning experiences relevant to the children's lives and cultural context.** Teachers incorporate children's families, cultures, languages, experiences, and interests into the classroom environment and curriculum.
- **A balance of child-initiated and staff-initiated activities.** Children have opportunities to choose and lead their own learning while teachers intentionally introduce experiences and extend children's thinking.
- **Exploration and discovery.** Children are encouraged to investigate, ask questions, experiment, observe, problem-solve, and develop their own ideas.
- **Varied choices for children in materials and equipment that promote skills and support active engagement.** Classrooms provide open-ended and developmentally appropriate materials that encourage creativity, problem-solving, communication, movement, and independence.
- **Rest, sleep, or quiet activity.** Children will have opportunities for rest and quiet activities based on their individual needs.
- **Nutritious snacks and meals.** Mealtimes provide opportunities for children to develop healthy habits, independence, communication, and social skills.
- **Toileting and clean-up.** Daily routines are viewed as opportunities for children to develop independence, responsibility, self-help skills, communication, and cooperation.
- **Individual and small-group activities.** Teachers provide opportunities for individual learning and small-group experiences based on children's interests, developmental needs, and learning goals.
- **Moderate and vigorous physical outdoor activities for children 3 years and old, unless the child has a disability or developmental delay.** Outdoor experiences provide opportunities for active movement, gross-motor development, exploration, and connection with the natural environment, while considering each child's individual abilities and needs.
- **Developmentally appropriate practice.** Teachers plan experiences and environments that are appropriate for each child's age, developmental level, individual needs, interests, abilities, culture, and experiences.

Children will have extended opportunities for open-ended play and exploration, both indoors and outdoors. Teachers will observe, participate in children's play, ask questions, introduce materials, and extend children's thinking without taking over the experience.

The environment will include opportunities for dramatic play, blocks and building, art, sensory exploration, books and storytelling, science and nature, music and movement, and other hands-on experiences.

Daily routines such as meals, toileting, clean-up, and transitions are also viewed as opportunities for learning, independence, communication, and building community.

Technology

Technology will be used only when it has a clear educational purpose and adds value to children's learning. It will not replace hands-on experiences, play, relationships, conversation, or exploration. Teachers will select and use technology in developmentally appropriate ways that support, rather than replace, children's active engagement and interactions.

Child Assessment and Documentation Policy

Assessment is an ongoing part of teaching and helps us understand each child's development, interests, strengths, and individual needs. Teachers use observations, documentation, conversations, work samples, and children's participation in everyday classroom experiences and play. Assessment does not rely on formal testing or require children to demonstrate skills on demand.

Teachers use assessment information to:

- Plan meaningful, developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
- Identify strengths, interests, and areas where additional support may be helpful.
- Individualize curriculum and teaching approaches.
- Monitor progress over time.
- Communicate with families about children's development and learning.

Assessment respects each child's developmental level, culture, language, background, and individual differences. Families are encouraged to share information about their child's development, interests, and experiences at home. Assessment information is kept confidential and used to support learning and inform classroom planning.

When staff have concerns about a child's development or suspect a developmental delay or other special need, concerns will be shared with the family in a supportive, sensitive, and confidential manner. Staff will use observations, assessment information, and specific examples to explain the concern and provide relevant documentation. Together with the family, staff will identify appropriate next steps and provide information about available resources and services.

When appropriate, this may include a referral to Stonington Public Schools' Project PAD (Preschool Assessment of Development) for developmental screening. Project PAD is part of the school district's Child Find responsibilities to locate, identify, and evaluate children from birth through age 21 who may require special education services.

COMO will support families throughout this process and, with parent/guardian consent, collaborate with appropriate community or school-based professionals to help ensure children receive the support and services they need.

Educator Assessment Training

Teachers receive ongoing professional development and formal training opportunities, including training provided in partnership with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. This includes comprehensive training on child assessment practices and the appropriate use of assessment information to support children's learning and development.

This training builds upon the education, experience, and qualifications teachers bring to their positions and the professional requirements established by the program. Training in child assessment is also an integral part of each teacher's onboarding process to ensure that all educators understand and consistently follow COMO's assessment practices.

Family Engagement and Classroom Participation

COMO warmly welcomes families and values the knowledge, experiences, and expertise they bring to our preschool community. We believe that strong family-school partnerships enrich children's learning and help build a connected classroom community.

Two family information events will be held throughout the school year: an Open House prior to the start of the school year and Curriculum Night early in the school year. These events provide opportunities to learn about our curriculum, policies, and procedures while building connections with families and learning about the diverse backgrounds, interests, and experiences they bring to our community.

Families are also welcome to share their talents, knowledge, and expertise in the classroom. Parents and guardians may schedule a classroom visit to read a book, share a cultural tradition, demonstrate a skill, or introduce children to an area of interest or expertise. Classroom visits should be arranged in advance with the teaching staff to ensure they fit naturally into the children's daily routine and learning experience.

Volunteers for field trips are welcome and encouraged. All volunteers will follow COMO's policies and supervision requirements, and volunteer responsibilities will be determined by COMO staff based on the needs of the program and children.

Sample Daily Schedule

Activity	Experience	Developmental-Interaction Focus
Arrival & Learning Centers	Children wash hands, write their name and transition into the classroom. Children choose from open-ended experiences such as dramatic play, blocks, sensory materials, science, and art. Teachers observe, join children's play, ask questions, introduce new ideas, and extend children's thinking.	Supports choice, independence, relationships, social development, problem-solving, creativity, and active exploration. Teachers use children's interests and observations to guide interactions and curriculum planning.
Snack	Children use the bathroom, wash hands, and gather for snack. Teachers encourage conversation and independence while children eat together.	Builds community, language, social relationships, independence, and self-help skills.
Morning Group Meeting	Children and teachers come together for conversation, storytelling, music, movement, discussion, and shared experiences. Topics emerge from children's interests, curriculum explorations, and the world around them.	Creates a sense of community and belonging while supporting language, communication, listening, self-expression, and understanding of others.
Outdoor Exploration	Children explore the playground and natural environment through climbing, running, digging, building, sensory exploration, and imaginative play. Teachers actively participate, observe, and extend children's exploration.	Supports whole-child development, including physical development, cooperation, problem-solving, confidence, sensory exploration, and connection with the natural world.

Lunch	Children use the bathroom, wash hands, and gather for lunch. Teachers support independence and encourage conversation and social interaction.	Promotes independence, self-help skills, social relationships, communication, and community.
Rest and Quiet Exploration	Children have an opportunity to rest and relax. Children who do not sleep may engage in quiet, developmentally appropriate activities.	Respects individual needs and differences while providing opportunities for rest, self-regulation, and independent exploration.
Afternoon Snack	Children wake or transition from quiet activities, use the bathroom, wash hands, and gather for snack.	Supports independence, communication, social interaction, and classroom community.
Afternoon Outdoor Exploration	Children have additional opportunities for active play, exploration, imaginative play, and investigation of the outdoor environment. Teachers observe children's interests and facilitate deeper exploration.	Provides opportunities for physical development, social learning, problem-solving, creativity, and discovery.
Closing Circle and Saying Goodbye	Children come together for a closing circle, sharing songs, stories, reflections, or a brief conversation about the day. Children then engage in quiet activities while waiting for their families. Teachers connect with families at pick-up and share important experiences from the child's day.	Supports independence, relationships, continuity between home and school, and meaningful transitions.

Meals and Snacks

The Doris Muller Preschool is a nut-free facility and is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children.

Parents and guardians are responsible for providing their child's lunch each day. Lunch boxes should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Please provide an ice pack for any perishable food.

The program provides two nutritious snacks each day, with each snack including at least two food groups. Families may send an alternative snack from home.

Snack menus are posted on the Family Information Board one week in advance.

Fruits and vegetables will be thoroughly washed before serving. Expired food will be discarded.

Food brought from home that is labeled as "manufactured in a facility that also processes nuts" will not be served.

Children and staff will wash their hands before eating, and staff will wash their hands and wear gloves when handling food.

For children under three, the program will not serve foods that pose a choking risk, including whole grapes, popcorn, hot dogs, hard pretzels, raw carrots, raw peas, or large chunks of meat.

Families should inform the program of any food allergies, dietary restrictions, or special feeding needs. For children with special feeding needs, staff will maintain a daily record of food consumed and share this information with families.

Birthday Snacks and Celebrations

Families are welcome to send in a birthday treat for children to share with their classmates. All birthday treats must be nut-free. Please check with your child's teacher before sending in a birthday treat to make sure it is appropriate for the classroom and that all children can safely participate.

If your child has dietary restrictions or allergies, or if you prefer that your child not have sugary treats, processed sugar, or artificial food dyes, please let your child's teacher know. In this case, please provide an alternative birthday treat for your child. We can store refrigerated or frozen treats for your child until the celebration.

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

Methods for resolving conflict and guiding behavior include:

- Positive guidance
- Redirection to appropriate activities or choices
- Setting clear, consistent, and developmentally appropriate limits
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Teaching calming strategies
- Helping children use words to solve problems
- Reinforcing positive choices

Unsafe Behaviors

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
- 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.

Program staff will provide continuous supervision of children during all behavior guidance and any disciplinary action.

Prohibited Discipline and Treatment

Staff shall not use abusive, neglectful, physical, corporal, humiliating, or frightening treatment or punishment as a means of discipline.

Spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, striking, or otherwise physically harming a child is strictly prohibited.

Staff shall not use physical punishment, corporal punishment, humiliation, ridicule, threats, frightening techniques, neglectful responses, or withholding of food as discipline.

Children shall never be subjected to discipline or treatment that is abusive, degrading, humiliating, frightening, or intended to cause physical or emotional harm.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is prohibited except when such restraint is necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the child or others. Any permitted physical restraint shall be used only for the minimum amount of time necessary to address the immediate safety risk and shall end as soon as the risk has passed.

Staff will continuously supervise children during behavior guidance and will use positive, developmentally appropriate strategies whenever possible.

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, Chief Executive Officer, 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 preschool program 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

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 NO time should a staff person be alone with one child - two staff or two children must be present.

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.

The class size shall not exceed twenty preschoolers.

Teachers must always count the children when they leave and enter an area (classroom, bathroom, playground, etc.)

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 outdoors, a staff member is designated to accompany him/her. Children are never allowed to travel from the outside to inside by themselves.

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.

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. When G1 and G2 groups are combined at the end of the day, teachers update attendance on the master sign-in and out sheet. All sign-in/sign-out sheets must show the correct number of children present.

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.

Children must use both hands when climbing and may not carry toys or other objects while using climbing equipment. 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 preschool.

Field trips and walking trips are an extension of the preschool 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 preschool 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

Town of Stonington Emergency Management

152 Elm Street

Stonington, CT 06378

Emergency Management Contact: Captain Bryan Schneider, Tactical Operations Director

Phone: 860-599-4411

Emergency: 911

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): 860-599-7585

COMO will follow directions provided by emergency responders and local emergency management officials during an emergency.

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.

Medical Emergency Procedure

In the event of a medical emergency, COMO will follow its established emergency medical procedures and the child's individual health or medical plan, when applicable. At all times while the program is operating, a staff member with current CPR certification appropriate to the children served will be present and will respond to medical emergencies. A staff member with current first aid certification appropriate to the children served will also be present and will respond to situations requiring first aid.

Staff will assess the situation and provide appropriate first aid or emergency care within the scope of their training. For a serious or life-threatening medical emergency, 911 will be called immediately. Emergency medical personnel will determine the appropriate treatment and transportation. If an ambulance is needed, the child will be transported to the nearest appropriate hospital or emergency medical facility, and a COMO staff member will accompany the child.

COMO has designated a licensed physician and/or hospital emergency service to be available for medical emergencies. When appropriate and feasible, staff may consult with the child's physician or COMO's medical consultant regarding the child's care.

The child's emergency contact and medical information will be available to staff and provided to emergency personnel as needed. Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible following a medical emergency. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the designated emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form will be contacted.

If a child is transported by ambulance or other emergency medical services to a hospital or medical facility, a COMO staff member will accompany the child and remain with the child until the parent or guardian or other appropriate authorized adult arrives, as circumstances allow. The child's emergency permission form and available medical information will be provided to emergency personnel.

Additional staff will be arranged as necessary to maintain required staff-to-child ratios while a child is receiving emergency care.

COMO will document medical emergencies, injuries, illnesses, and accidents in accordance with OEC requirements, including the nature of the incident, the date, time, location, responsive action taken, and whether the child was transported to a hospital emergency room, physician's office, or other medical facility.

Designated Hospital Emergency Service

Westerly Hospital -Yale New Haven Health 401-596-6000 Emergency Services
25 Wells St.
Westerly, RI 02891

Continuation of Operations

The program maintains plans for the **continuation of operations** during and following an emergency whenever it is safe and feasible to do so. The program will assess the situation, communicate with families and staff, and determine whether the program can safely continue operations, relocate, or temporarily close.

Communication and Reunification with Parents/Guardians

The program maintains procedures for **communication with parents/guardians and reunification with children** following an emergency.

Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as reasonably possible using the contact information provided to the program. Staff will provide families with information regarding the location and status of the program and any procedures for picking up their children.

Children will only be released to an authorized parent/guardian or other individual listed by the parent/guardian in accordance with the program's authorized pick-up procedures. Staff will maintain appropriate documentation of children's release and reunification.

Coordination with Local Emergency Management

The program will maintain contact with the local emergency management director and other appropriate emergency response agencies as needed. Emergency procedures will be reviewed and updated based on guidance from local emergency management officials and other applicable authorities.

Emergency Accommodations for Children with Disabilities and Chronic Medical Conditions

COMO Preschool will make appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities, special health care needs, and chronic medical conditions during emergencies and drills. Parents/guardians will be consulted when developing accommodations for their child, including needs related to evacuation, sheltering, lockdown, transportation, medication, medical equipment, communication, supervision, and reunification.

Staff will be familiar with the child's health care plan and emergency needs and will provide necessary assistance and medications or medical equipment when safe to do so. Emergency accommodations will be reviewed and updated with parents/guardians as the child's needs change.

Emergency accommodations will be reviewed and updated as children's needs change.

Emergency Drills

MULTI-HAZARD EMERGENCY DRILL: A multi-hazard emergency will be practiced at least annually which includes the demonstration of all staff, program staff, and children sheltering, locking down and evacuating the facility.

Emergency drills will be conducted in a developmentally appropriate manner while maintaining the safety and emotional well-being of the children. Staff will be prepared to assist children who may require additional support during an emergency or drill.

The program will document emergency drills, including the date, type of drill, participants, and any observations or follow-up actions needed.

The multi-hazard emergency plan will be reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect changes in the program, facility, staffing, children's needs, emergency procedures, and applicable requirements.

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.

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-O, 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. 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

Diabetes Care Policy

The Doris Muller Preschool is 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.

Clean and Odor-Free Personal Items

All clothing, blankets, and other personal items brought from home must be clean and free of strong odors, including fragrances, fabric softeners, smoke, or pet scents. Items that do not meet these standards will be communicated to caregivers, and may be asked to be picked up, returned home, and rewashed before use. This policy helps ensure a healthy and inclusive environment for all children and staff.

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