

# **Conestoga Early Education Center**

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

### About us

Conestoga Early Education Center (CEEC) is an early education-based childcare facility. We are located inside the Conestoga Elementary School. We work alongside the Conestoga School District to serve the families of Murray, Beaver Lake, and other surrounding communities. Our program provides quality care and educational services for children aged 6 weeks to 13 years of age.

Hours of Operation: Tue-Fri. 6:30 am to 6:00 pm

Center address: 104 East High Street, Murray, NE 68409, PO Box 68

Center Number: 402-235-3416

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# Center Mission Statement

Conestoga Early Education Center is committed to providing a safe and nurturing educational environment that's designed to instill a lifelong desire for learning. Our goal is to empower children with the self-confidence, self-assurance, knowledge, and moral awareness necessary to establish a strong foundation for their future.

## Center and Staff Information

The Director, Teachers, and the CEEC board look forward to partnering with you in your child's education. Our goal is to build strong family and school partnerships. Children's education is a team effort, and we think of our families as a big part of the team. Please contact our center director or school liaison if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback. You can contact us through our center app (Pro-Care), phone, or email.

- Center Director: Keri Grizzle-Evans - [kgrizzle-evans@conestogacougars.org](mailto:kgrizzle-evans@conestogacougars.org)
- Director of Billing/Subsidy: Shawna Caniglia - [scaniglia@conestogacougars.org](mailto:scaniglia@conestogacougars.org)
- School Liaison: Eric Dennis - [edennis@conestogacougars.org](mailto:edennis@conestogacougars.org)
- Certified Sixpence Teacher: Sheri Parise - [sparise@conestogacougars.org](mailto:sparise@conestogacougars.org)

## Teaching Staff

Our program meets all state licensing requirements and undergoes a thorough screening process. Each classroom has assigned teachers who will work with your children daily. Our staff members meet all state-required training and yearly continuing professional development. Each classroom will have a Lead Classroom Teacher and Primary Caregivers/Assistant Teacher. These teachers will work alongside each other to provide a safe and engaging learning environment and quality care.

## State Licensing

CEEC is licensed by the state of Nebraska to provide care to children ages 6 weeks through 13 years of age. Our licensing agency regularly monitors our center and program. Inspections are done to ensure compliance with all licensing policies and regulations. Child Care licensing information is provided in a brochure that requires a signature of receipt upon enrollment. The CEEC license is posted in the infant/toddler room. If you have any questions regarding state licensing or regulations, please reach out to the director.

## ProCare

CEEC believes in building strong partnerships with the families that we serve. A large part of building that partnership is communication. We use a childcare software program called ProCare. This Program has a downloadable app that parents and staff can use to communicate and share information. At the beginning of your enrollment, we will advise you to download the app. We will create a profile for your child/children and send you an invite via email. Once you accept the invite, you can begin adding more information to your accounts, uploading documents, and setting up your billing accounts.

On ProCare, you can:

- Sign your child/children in and out
- Edit and update your child/children's profile with your contact information, authorised pick-up persons, medication information, and allergy information.
- Add drop-off notes to keep staff informed
- See your child/children's daily learning activities and experiences
- Get daily reports on feedings, toileting/diaper changes, and naps
- Message with staff in real-time
- Upload the necessary documents
- Manage your center bill and payments
- Download tax documents
- Stay informed with the center/classroom calendars and newsletter

# Educational Programing

## Education Philosophy

At CEEC, we strongly believe that children learn best in a nurturing, child-initiated, play-based environment that fosters self-confidence, trust, creativity, autonomy, and acceptance of individual differences. Our teachers strive to establish positive personal interaction and nurture each child's growth and development. We plan for all areas of a child's development and education: cognitive, emotional, social, creative, and physical. Each classroom at the center will implement developmentally appropriate practices, achieving curriculum goals in a caring community of learners where all children can learn and grow.

## Schedules and Routines

Children like having routines. Consistency and predictability help them to feel safe and secure. Daily Schedules are established and posted in each classroom to meet the needs of the different age groups and our licensing requirements. Each classroom schedule will provide large/small group learning and interactions, independent play, and outdoor exploration opportunities.

## Literacy Rich Learning Environments

Language and Literacy are key factors in your child's education, and CEEC promotes literacy at all stages of life. We have Libraries in each learning space with an abundant selection of books that meet the children's needs, interests, and abilities. Interactive reading is a part of all age groups' daily lesson plans, and when age-appropriate, your child will be encouraged to read daily. Each

month, our students will enjoy a visit from the librarian at the Plattsmouth Public Library. She will read us stories and build our language and literacy skills by engaging the students in a variety of games and songs. Our Sixpence students are a part of the Nebraska Growing Readers program. This program sends them free books that they can take home to build their home libraries.

## Our Curriculum

We base our curriculum on the *Creative Curriculum - Teaching Strategies Gold* program and goals and objectives. This program is designed to help teachers create learning opportunities that integrate learning into every moment of the day and support the development of the whole child during these most critical and formative years. Our curriculum is designed to enhance your child's imagination, creativity, and social skills all while challenging them to build self-assurance and problem-solving skills.

## Sixpence Program

Our center has a unique opportunity to serve our youngest community members by being a part of the Nebraska Early Childhood Education program called Sixpence. The program funds grants to school districts across Nebraska to provide services for infants, toddlers, and their families who experience stressors that can put them at risk. Sixpence supports families and children to foster their healthy growth and development during their earliest years. This program builds partnerships that focus on meeting the developmental needs of very young children and supporting parents as their children's first and most important teachers. Sixpence helps to ensure their success in school and later in life. A part of this program is observations and assessments that the certified teacher will use to assess development and growth. Forms will be signed at enrollment to allow the sharing of data and information with the Nebraska Sixpence program. Parents will participate in

monthly family engagement nights and have home and center-based conferences.

### Infant Group (6 weeks to 18 months)

Our infant room is a part of our Sixpence Program. They will have a lead teacher who is a certified teacher and multiple support teaching staff who will work alongside them. Our infant routines are based on the child's and family's individual needs and routines. Upon enrollment, the infant's

Parents/Guardians will provide our teaching team with their current eating and sleep routines. We will have forms for Parents/Guardians to sign regarding individual infant schedules, which will be posted per state licensing. Infants grow and develop rapidly, and changes and adjustments may be made to individual infant plans as often as needed. Individual attention and skill-building will take place daily to encourage growth and development to help our infants meet and exceed their milestones. *Creative Curriculum* will be used in the classroom for individual lesson plans and assessments by our Sixpence Certified Teacher and the Classroom Support Teachers. Teachers will share daily reports that include toileting/diapering, meals, naps, and daily learning experiences via ProCare.

Our goal is to support our families in every stage of their parenting journeys. If you are breastfeeding, we will support that option by following the state regulations on breast milk storage and safety. We can go over those regulations with you at enrollment. We will also need to know if they are eating solids and which method you prefer, as well as which foods to offer. Your classroom teaching team will work along with you to navigate feeding routines and our menu.

## Toddlers Group (18 months - 3 years old)

The toddler's class routines are a balance of individual needs and a more clearly defined schedule. Our Teachers will encourage toddlers' emergent communication skills by engaging children in conversations and creating literacy/language-rich learning spaces. The toddlers' classroom will have a lot of focus on building social and emotional skills that will encourage positive peer interactions, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. Toddlers are quickly evolving each day; they are always learning new skills and hitting new milestones. Independent skills are fostered throughout the day with a focus on self-help skills such as potty training and self-feeding at meal times. *Creative Curriculum* will be used in the classroom for daily lesson plans and assessments by our Sixpence Certified Teacher and the Classroom Support Teachers. Teachers will share daily reports that include toileting/diapering, meals, naps, and daily learning experiences via ProCare. Teachers will provide monthly newsletters and classroom calendars via ProCare.

## Preschool Group (3 years old to Kindergarten Entry)

Our Preschool curriculum is based on the learning goals and objectives of the *Creative Curriculum* program. We have carefully designed our Preschool program to stimulate, engage, and challenge each stage of your child's development. Our experienced classroom team of early childhood professionals implements daily learning experiences that are a balance of emergent/child-led learning and structured learning. Preschool students will experience daily small and large group activities/experiences, physical activity, free play, and a lot of social and emotional skills building. Teachers will share daily reports that include toileting/diapering as needed and daily learning experiences via ProCare. Teachers will also provide monthly newsletters and classroom calendars via ProCare.

## School-Age Group (Kindergarten through 13 years of age)

CEEC offers several different enrollment options for our school-aged students. We offer before-school care from 6:30 am to 7:30 am for those who require care before school. Students will be released to the cafeteria for Breakfast, and from there, they will be sent to their designated morning meeting spaces assigned by the school. Our after-school program is from 3:45-6:00 pm. After school, students will be released to CEEC from their school teachers and checked back into our care. Students will be offered an afternoon snack after they are checked back in for the night. We will provide opportunities for free play before and after school. After school, when we have a little more time, the class will enjoy outside time and planned activities. Homework time and assistance will be available for the students who want it. During extended school breaks or early dismissal days, care is provided for those who sign up for it. During this time, the School-agers will engage in planned learning activities, arts and crafts, free play, and other learning experiences.

## Center Policies and Procedures

### Enrollment

Initial and continued enrollment will be at the discretion of CEEC based upon the child's best interest, the expectations that they will benefit from the program, and the welfare of the other children enrolled. CEEC does not discriminate based on race, creed, sex, age, religion, national origin, or disability when determining enrollment. CEEC's enrollment period is in August, before the Conestoga School District school year begins. Families will be contacted in June/July about their enrollment. Enrollment is done annually. Parents/Guardians are responsible for reading the current center

handbooks and signing contracts to continue enrollment. Failure to comply will result in unenrollment from the program.

To enroll at CEEC, registration forms must be completed and returned to the center management. Parents/Guardians are also responsible for the one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$50 for each child/family upon enrollment. This fee will be sent out via the ProCare app before your child's start of attendance.

Our infant/toddler program is a Sixpence Classroom with additional enrollment requirements provided separately for those who qualify and participate in the program. That said, enrollment requirements are above and beyond those listed above. If you have a newborn being enrolled but not attending until after maternity leave, you will be required to pay a 50% holding fee to secure your child's enrollment. This fee ensures that you will have a spot. You will be responsible for paying this fee starting at the beginning of our annual enrollment period (August). This fee is non-refundable.

Continued enrollment is a partnership between CEEC and Parents/Guardians. We are required to keep information in children's files current at all times. Parents/Guardians are required by law to complete and update paperwork/information furnished by CEEC as necessary. Continued enrollment is predicated on your agreement to notify the center of any changes in phone numbers, addresses, employment, emergency contact information, medical information, responsible parties, etc. To comply with state law, Parents are required to provide CEEC with immunization records no later than 30 days after enrollment and upon each additional immunization. Children's completed enrollment forms will be kept in CEEC's files for the

duration of the child's enrollment. These files are available for review and inspection by childcare licensing and Parents/Guardians at any time. All files are kept strictly confidential at all times.

## Waitlist

At CEEC, we follow strict guidelines for enrolling families into our program. Enrollment is based on availability and will be subject to our waitlist guidelines. It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to update any information provided for the waitlist. Our waitlist is also subject to change as children who are already enrolled transition to new age groups. Enrollment from the waitlist will be processed as follows:

- Infant and Toddlers - Sixpence Classroom
  - Sixpence qualifier that lives in the school district
  - Sixpence qualifier that lives outside of the school district
  - Children of Staff members
  - Date joined the CEEC waitlist
- Preschool And School-Age
  - Transition of Enrolled Children
  - Children of Staff members
  - Date joined the CEEC waitlist

## Withdrawal from Care

If you need to withdraw your child from care, a notice must be submitted to the center in writing a minimum 2 weeks before the child's anticipated withdrawal date. Full payment of tuition and any other fees is required until the designated date of withdrawal or two weeks from the date on which the notice was received, whichever is greater. If proper notice isn't provided, the Parents/Guardians are responsible for full tuition for 2 weeks after their child's last day of attendance, plus all late fees/penalties that may accrue until the payment is received in full. The Parents/Guardians will also be responsible for

any expenses incurred by CEEC in pursuit of payment. This includes but isn't limited to collections agencies and legal fees.

## Suspension of Enrollment

Our Program is based on developing partnerships and supporting families. On rare occasions, suspending enrollment and parting ways is in the best interest. We reserve the right to cancel enrollment for the following reasons:

- Non-Payment of Tuition
- Failure to adhere to policies
- The child's needs exceed the capabilities of our center
- A child or family member's behavior or actions threaten or endanger the safety and well-being of other children or staff.

## Staff and Parent Behavior Policy

CEEC and its staff members are committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment to all the children in our care. We speak to all respectfully, and we do not tolerate any form of ridicule, improper language, or corporal punishment. Drugs, alcohol, and smoke are strictly prohibited on the premises as we are a drug, alcohol, and smoke-free environment. We believe that because you, as parents/guardians, have chosen CEEC, you are also committed to the same standards of care. Therefore, we ask that you follow these same philosophies when at our center.

## Tuition

At CEEC, our tuition is not based on hours or days; it is a weekly rate. Tuition is not attendance-based; it is a weekly rate that is required to be paid to continue enrollment. Our weekly calendars follow the Conestoga Elementary School's calendar. This means that most weeks are open Tuesday-Friday, but

on occasions, we will be open Monday-Thursday. Notice of the days we are open and closed will be communicated via ProCare.

Our tuition rates are as follows:

Age Group:	Weekly Rate:
Infants: 6 weeks to 18 Months	\$165 per week Jan: \$180 Aug: \$200
Toddlers: 18 months to 3 years	\$165 per week Jan: \$180 Aug: \$200
Preschool: 3 years to Kindergarten entry	\$152 per week Jan: \$170 Aug: \$190

School Age Options:	Weekly Rate:
Before School Only 6:30-7:30	\$20 per week Jan: \$35 Aug: \$55
After School Only 3:45-6	\$40 per week Jan: \$55 Aug: \$70
Before and After School	\$60 per week Jan: \$90 Aug: \$120
Non-School Day (if school is in session, only 3 days, advance signup is required)	\$40 per day Jan: \$45 Aug: \$50
Summer and Extended Breaks (2 days or more)	\$140 per week Jan: \$150 Aug: \$170
Early Dismissal Days	\$20 per day Jan: 25 Aug: \$30

Multi-child Family discounts of 15% are available for those who qualify. Full-time enrollment is required to qualify for this discount. For school-aged children, full-time enrollment is before and after school care.

Tuition fees are due weekly for the current week's billing cycle. Invoices will be sent out automatically through the ProCare app by Monday and are due Wednesday. If tuition is not paid by the end of the day on Wednesday, a late fee of \$30 will be added. This \$30 late fee will be added each week your payment is late until payments are made in full. If payments are not made by Friday, care will be suspended for the following week until payment is received in full. Suspension notices will be sent via ProCare to notify you of

delinquent payments and suspension of care. Continued non-payment will result in the discontinuation of care from CEEC. Case-by-case contracted arrangements may be made for repayment plans. These repayment plans will be at the discretion of CEEC. The Parents/Guardians will also be responsible for any expenses incurred by CEEC in pursuit of payment. This includes but isn't limited to collections agencies and legal fees.

## Contracts

Contracts between the center and families will be completed upon enrollment with the agreed-upon attendance schedule and rates. These contracts are done annually in August. To provide appropriate child supervision and to appropriately schedule staff, families are asked to follow the schedules they choose on their contracts (days and drop-offs/pick-ups). We understand that your needs may change, district calendar changes may happen, and holidays/breaks may change scheduling needs. We will provide as much notice to families of any changes via ProCare, and families are responsible for communicating to us. If a schedule change (days and/or hours) becomes necessary, a written notice is required to be turned in to the Director with two weeks' notice. This change will be added to your family's contract.

## Attendance and Closures

Due to staffing requirements and operational costs incurred based on fixed levels of enrollment that do not fluctuate when children are temporarily absent, tuition and other fees must be paid in full without deductions. Adjustments to weekly tuition rates will not be made regardless of attendance or closures. Refunds and credits will not be given for closures or cancellations. In the event of a closure for an extended time, families are responsible for paying tuition fees unless we are closed for more than 4 days.

Families are responsible for communicating with the center if they will be gone or late. Please notify the center by 9:00 am if your child/children will be absent for the day or late. If you choose not to send your child during winter or summer break, a 50% holding fee will be applied to maintain enrollment. Families must provide two weeks' notice to CEEC that they want to use the 50% holding fee, or they will be responsible for paying full tuition. This holding fee guarantees that your child will continue to have a spot in our enrollment. Failure to pay the 50% holding fee will result in your child being disenrolled from CEEC.

As a state-licensed facility, we are required to provide an environment that is safe and hazard-free to protect the health and safety of the children in our care. This means if we are experiencing an outage of power or water, we may be forced to close for the day or until it is restored. The same goes for heating and air conditioning, if we can not keep our rooms between the temperatures of 65-82 degrees, we may be forced to close until we can.

Anytime Conestoga Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, road conditions, building issues, etc. CEEC will also be closed. Any closures or early releases due to inclement weather or building issues will be shared via ProCare. You can also check local News channels for school closures.

## Arrivals and Departures

Our doors will not be opened until 6:30 am, regardless of whether staff is present or not. We can not accept children before this time due to licensing regulations. Upon arrival/departure each day, parents must sign their kids in and out via ProCare. Families can do this by downloading the ProCare app or using a center device. Children must be under direct supervision at all times

while on the premises. Parents/Guardians are responsible for children before and after they are signed in or out.

To maintain the safety and well-being of the children in our care, we require that parents physically accompany their children in and out of the center and to their classrooms or their assigned teachers. This is to ensure that staff are aware of the child's arrival and helps to encourage daily communication between staff and families. The same goes for departures, parents or approved people must come to the classrooms or up to the staff to ensure we see your child leaving.

All parties responsible for picking up your child/children must be listed in ProCare under the authorized persons section in their ProCare Profiles. Parents are responsible for communicating to the staff who will be picking up if it is not a parent/guardian. Parents/Guardians are permitted to phone in or email changes to daily pick-ups, but they are responsible for adding them to the ProCare app authorised people list. We will not release any child to anyone who is not listed in their authorised people list. Proof of identity may be required at pick-up before we release the children. We prefer that no one under the age of 18 be responsible for pick-ups or drop-offs, but we will allow approved 16-year-olds as needed. Families must add the 16-year-old to the authorised person list via ProCare and provide a written note to be kept on file.

### Late Pick-up Fees

Contracts regarding pick-up and drop-off times as well as days of attendance are completed each year upon enrollment. We understand that from time to time, things are going to happen that make late pick-ups unavoidable. Please make every effort to pick up your child/children on time or make

arrangements for another authorized person to pick them up instead. We ask that these arrangements be made if you are going to be more than 5 minutes late.

If a late pick-up is unavoidable, please contact us immediately so we can make staffing adjustments as needed. Please note that we are not authorized under any circumstances to transport your child/children. Late pick-ups will result in late pick-up fees and may even result in the termination of your enrollment. A fee of \$1 per minute per child will be added to your tuition bill for each minute your child/children are in our care after closing.

If your child/children are not picked up after the normal closing time and you have not contacted the center:

- We will attempt to contact you or another authorized person to pick up your child
- If we can not reach you or another authorized person within 30 minutes after closing, the Center Director will determine whether or when Child Protective Services or the appropriate authorities should be contacted based on local childcare licensing regulations.
- If appropriate authorities are contacted, a note in a sealed envelope will be posted on the center door with specific information regarding your child/children's whereabouts, including the name and phone number of the agency or person to contact. We will also contact you with the same information via ProCare.

## Custody and Visitation

Some families have legal custodial orders that address who is permitted to pick up or visit a child. If there are custody orders related to your child/children, a copy must be provided to CEEC and will be stored in your child's files. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child/children. We will follow all custody agreements and arrangements that we are provided. Families are responsible for and must update CEEC when custody orders change or expire. CEEC employees cannot

be responsible for supervising parenting time (visitations), and, as a result, visitation of non-custodial parents is not permitted in our Center. If an individual has court-ordered legal custody, employees must release the child to that legal custodian regardless of visitation schedules. Please discuss questions about custody arrangements with our Director.

## Sharing Information and Confidentiality Policy

CEEC is committed to confidentiality. Being located in and sharing students with the Conestoga Elementary School creates a unique opportunity to share information regarding the children in our care and also those currently or planning to attend Conestoga. We ask that parents complete the release to share information form at enrollment. This form gives permission for the center and school staff to share information about your child/children. Our setup allows us the unique opportunity to provide early interventions and aid to students of all abilities and needs.

## Photo/Video/Media Release Policy

Photos, videos, and social media posts of the children participating in our program can be taken and shared from time to time. They are used in CEEC publications, promotional materials, Conestoga School District sites/media, and electronically for many purposes. Photos are shared often on ProCare in your account and may be shared in group settings. Because these photos or videos may contain children other than your own, a release is also required for any photos to be taken and shared. This form will be included in your enrollment paperwork.

## Potty Training Policy

At CEEC, we believe that it takes a partnership between staff, parents/guardians, and the child to have a successful, positive potty-training

experience. Families can meet with their classroom lead teacher when they are ready to begin potty training. Together, we will create individual plans for each child and their family. Patience and positive support will be given to the children and parents as we go through this learning experience together. During potty training, we ask that several sets of clothes, including shirts, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes, be provided. If no spare clothes are available after an accident, pull-ups will be used.

### Personal Belongings Policy

We ask that children not bring toys from home. Parents are responsible for assisting children with this policy. On special show and share days, children may be permitted to bring in items, but this will be communicated with Parents via ProCare, and this will be set up with classroom Teachers. If your child has a blanket and soft toy they want to use during rest time for comfort, they may bring them and will be allowed to have them at designated times. It is important to mark all belongings with your child's name or initials to avoid confusion when children bring similar items. CEEC does not assume responsibility for any items bought from home. Electronic devices are not permitted at CEEC unless it has been approved by the classroom teachers. This is a privilege for only the School-Ager Group, and no other age group will be allowed to bring anything at all. We believe older children are mature enough to understand what is expected of them with devices and what kind of content is appropriate. Devices must be charged at home, and they will not be connected to the school's/center's wifi.

### Rest Time Policy

Opportunities for rest are important for young children. Children in the infant class will rest according to their schedules. Children in our Toddler class will have rest time from approximately 12:15-2 pm daily. Children in our Preschool

class will have rest time from approximately 1-2:30 pm daily. Children who do not nap will be encouraged to rest and be allowed to read quietly or do other quiet activities while their peers nap. Students may bring a blanket and a small soft toy to snuggle with during rest times. Please be mindful of sizes, we do not have the storage space to store big stuffed animals or oversized blankets. Their blankets and soft toys can be left here, and we will wash them each week along with our laundry.

## Discipline Policy

Children learn how to get along and develop self-control and confidence through the use of positive discipline. CEEC believes in positive reinforcement of socially acceptable behavior. As such, we strive to provide a loving, supportive environment that is conducive to positive behavior and situations where children can learn to problem solve amongst their peers. If situations occur that require staff intervention, we will use a variety of techniques. Redirection, verbal instruction, and logical/natural consequences are the most common methods. If these methods are ineffective, the teacher will guide the child away from the group to give them time to calm down and assist them in regulating their emotions. We will use the time away from the group to assist the child in sorting out their emotions and help them come up with appropriate solutions/reactions. Physical discipline, corporal punishment, and yelling are not permitted at CEEC.

## Parking

Parking at CEEC is very limited and can go very fast. We have multiple parking spots in front of our main entrance, which are dedicated to our families to use for pick-ups and drop-offs. These parking spaces are not spots for people to park in all day or for long periods. Do not park in these spots if

you plan to be here for more than 30 minutes. You may park in the front school parking lot as needed.

## Parents' Right To Access

Parents/Guardians are permitted access to the center at all times during our business hours. Appointments are not needed; however, we do ask for your cooperation in not disrupting the routines and instruction within our program.

## Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

Our center maintains strict health and safety practices based on State Regulations, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the CDC. Our policies are created to keep the children in our care safe, healthy, and happy.

## Class Ratios

At CEEC, we maintain the state-required ratios at all times in our classrooms. These ratios allow us to provide the best quality of care possible.

Age of Children:	Minimum staff-to-child ratio
6 weeks - 18 months	1 staff to 4 children
18 months - 3 years	1 staff to 6 children
3 years - 4 years	1 staff to 10 children
4 years - Kindergarten entry	1 staff to 12 children
Kindergarten - 13 years	1 staff to 15 children

## Staff Training

Our teachers meet all state licensing requirements and undergo a thorough screening and hiring process. Our teachers must maintain continued

education hours annually. These Professional Development opportunities allow our teachers to learn the latest in early childhood education and give your child/children the best quality of care every day. They will attend training on a wide range of topics. One of these trainings is CPR/First Aid. We will have a CPR/First Aid Certified staff member on-site at all times, and there will always be a CPR/First Aid Certified staff member in the Infant room.

## Nutrition

At CEEC, we believe that healthy nutrition is a big part of having a healthy body. We provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack daily. Our menu is based on the USDA recommendations and is prepared by the school food service workers. Each meal and snack meets the nutritional requirements for their age groups. Our menus follow very closely with the school's menu, minus a few substitutions as needed. You can find these menus on the school website <https://www.conestogacougars.org/Page/2868>.

Our meal times are as follows:

Breakfast:	Lunch:	PM Snack:
School-Agers 7:30 am	School-Agers - at school or 11:00-11:45 am, if with us for the day	School-Agers - 4-4:15 pm
Infant/Toddlers - 8-8:30 am	Infant/Toddlers - 11-11:45 am	Infant/Toddler - 3:30-3:45 pm
Preschool - 8-8:30 am	Preschool - 11-11:45 am	Preschool - 3:30-3:45 pm

\*Food will not be saved from meals/snacks unless arrangements are made in advance.

## Allergies, Dietary Restrictions, and Outside Foods

CEEC serves many children with different dietary needs and must also meet the nutritional requirements set for us by state licensing. Our goal is to provide nutritious meals for all our students and create a safe environment for

any child with dietary restrictions/allergies. The best way we can do this is to control what foods we allow in the program. CEEC will not allow any outside foods to be brought into the facility unless it is for allergy or medical reasons. Students should not bring in any food without approval. We do not allow students to bring in their meals or snacks. If you have a child/children who have an allergy or dietary restriction, please speak to the Director to make the appropriate arrangements. Allergy/nutritional restrictions that require food to be sent in will require documentation from a physician.

Due to severe peanut and tree nut allergies, CEEC is a nut-free center. This means we do not allow products containing nuts or products manufactured in facilities that process nuts. Any foods that are brought into the facility will need to be nut-free, and they must have a label that states that.

Parents are permitted to bring in treats for special occasions such as birthdays and holidays. These foods must be approved first, and they must have a label on them that states they are nut-free/processed in a nut-free facility. Food brought in must be in the original packaging with all ingredients and allergy information stated on it, or it will be sent back home and not served. Homemade treats will not be accepted. These special treats/foods will not be served in place of meals or snacks that we are required to provide to meet our nutritional guidelines. We do encourage families to bring in non-food items as special treats, as this is a much easier and inclusive option. If you have any questions on what will work for your child's/children's classroom, we are happy to assist.

## Illness Policy

For the health and safety of all the children and our staff, it is mandatory that sick children are not brought to the Center. It is our responsibility to keep

everyone in our care as healthy as possible. We will send children home and exclude them from returning as needed.

If your child has any of the following symptoms, they will not be permitted to be in our care.

Symptoms:	When can they return:
Fever greater than 100 degrees	Fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
Vomiting	24 hours after the last incident, they ate/drank without episode
Diarrhea: watery stools or decreased form of stool not associated with changes in diet; stools not contained in the diaper; child is unable to reach the toilet above what is normal for them.	24 hours after the last incident, they ate/drank without episode
Strep Throat	24 hours after the initial medication treatment has started
Unidentified Mouth Sores	It will need to be cleared by a doctor before we can continue care. If they do have a diagnosis of a communicable disease, we will follow the recommended incubation period
Unidentified Skin sores that are weeping fluid and on an exposed area that cannot be covered	It will need to be cleared by a doctor before we can continue care. If they do have a diagnosis of a communicable disease, we will follow the recommended incubation period
Pink eye with drainage	24 hours after initial medication treatment has started, or with a doctor's note saying they were seen and are cleared to return
Excessive coughing with congestion	When it improves, you can participate in daily activities without difficulties.
Excessive nasal drainage with congestion	When it improves, the child can participate in daily activities without difficulties.
Communicable diseases (chicken pox, measles, mumps)	When appropriate for each incubation, a doctor's note may be required to return
Head Lice	No live bugs, been treated and will need to retreat in 7-10 days
Unidentified Rash or skin condition	It will need to be cleared by a doctor before we can continue care. If they do have a diagnosis of a communicable disease, we will follow the recommended incubation period

Students may also be excluded from care if they are unable to participate comfortably, if any illness they have requires more care than we can safely provide without compromising the needs of the other children in our care, or

if keeping them in our care poses an additional risk to the child, other children, or staff the child may come in contact with.

When a student develops an illness at CEEC, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately to arrange a pickup. If we are unable to contact parents/guardians, the listed emergency contacts will be contacted until a pickup is arranged. Pickup arrangements need to be made as soon as possible. We ask that arrangements be made to pick up within the hour after notification. The final decision on whether to exclude a child from the CEEC due to illness will be made by the CEEC.

## Medication Policy

Only doctors can make a medical diagnosis. On occasion, those diagnoses may require occasional or everyday medication administration. Medication may be administered during care when medically necessary. All medication must be handed directly to a staff member and may not be left in diaper bags, backpacks, or cubbies. All medication, including prescription and over-the-counter, ointments, lotions, lip balms, and homeopathic products, must be given to staff for proper storage. Parents/guardians must sign the appropriate authorization forms for any medication or ointment before we will allow the children to have it. We ask that all new medications and ointments/products be first administered at home so parents can observe for any side effects or allergic reactions.

For a prescribed medication to be administered at CEEC:

- Medicines must be in the original prescription containers
- Medications must be current and not expired
- We must have a doctor's prescription that states:
  - the child's name, the name of the medication, the route of administration, the correct dosage, and what time it must be administered

- Parents/Guardians must fill out the proper CEEC paperwork permitting us to administer the medication

For over-the-counter medications to be administered at CEEC:

- We must have a doctor's note that includes:
  - the child's name, the name of the medication, the route of administration, and the correct dosage.
- Medication must be in the original packaging/boxes
- Medications must be current and not expired
- Times may say "as needed" (in which case parents must document the earliest time it may be given) or Parents can fill in the times in the medication log for the day.

All medications will be properly stored in the classrooms where the children are daily. Each classroom has a lock box that is dedicated to medication storage. Life-saving medications will be stored separately in easily accessible locations that are out of the reach of children. These locations will be labeled and easily accessible to the staff as needed.

Children with chronic illnesses such as severe allergies or asthma, or children with a medical disorder, must have on file a current health action plan. This plan must be completed and signed by their medical provider and their parent/guardian. Health Plans must be updated annually and must be updated if anything changes. See the director if you have any questions on health action plans.

## Injury and Accident Policy

In the event of an injury/accident, your child will be our first priority. Minor injuries/accidents will be treated by our staff who are trained in First Aid. An incident report will be filed via ProCare and sent to your account. If the injury/accident requires further attention, the child's needs will be met to the

best of our ability by trained staff members, and families will be notified via phone call. For all emergencies that require EMS services, a call will first be made to EMS, and then we will notify parents via phone. If EMS transportation is required, a staff member will travel with your child whenever possible and will remain with them until a parent or guardian arrives.

## Center Biting Policy

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants, toddlers, and even sometimes in Preschool. It is not something to blame on children, families, or the teachers, and almost all young children will go through brief stages of biting. Still, when it happens, it's scary, frustrating, and stressful for everyone involved. Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:

- Oral exploration
- Teething
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that it hurts
- Frustration, anxiety, or stress
- Inability to express feelings or needs
- Mimicking behaviour
- Inexperienced peer interactions
- Showing affection
- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- Excitement
- overstimulation

Our teachers make every effort to avoid situations where biting may occur. Children who are teething will be provided with teething toys/tools to soothe their gums as needed. State licensing will not allow us to permit the children in our care to use teething necklaces and jewelry.

If your child is bitten, we will make an incident report via ProCare. If ever a bite were to break the skin, an incident report will be made via ProCare, and a phone call will be made to parents/guardians. In all instances, staff will

comfort your child, treat the injury, and take the appropriate steps to help prevent future biting.

If a child is biting frequently, staff will begin to put in place a biting action plan. This plan will start with staff observing the child and tracking activity patterns. This will help to identify triggers. Our focus will not be on punishment but rather on effective techniques that address the reasons behind the biting. Staff and families will meet together to develop a strategy to correct the behavior. CEEC does reserve the right to send a child home for consecutive/frequent biting incidents.

### Dress Code Policy

Children at CEEC will be very busy each day exploring their learning environments and engaging in a variety of activities. We ask that students be dressed appropriately each day in clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for the day's weather. This includes their footwear; shoes should be functional and appropriate for physical activity. We ask that sandals not be worn. We also ask that each student have at least one extra set of clothing in case of a spill or an accident. Accidents happen at all ages, so please be sure to pack these in backpacks or store them in cubbies. Be mindful of changes to the seasons and your child/children's growth and change these out as needed.

### Emergency and Disaster Planning

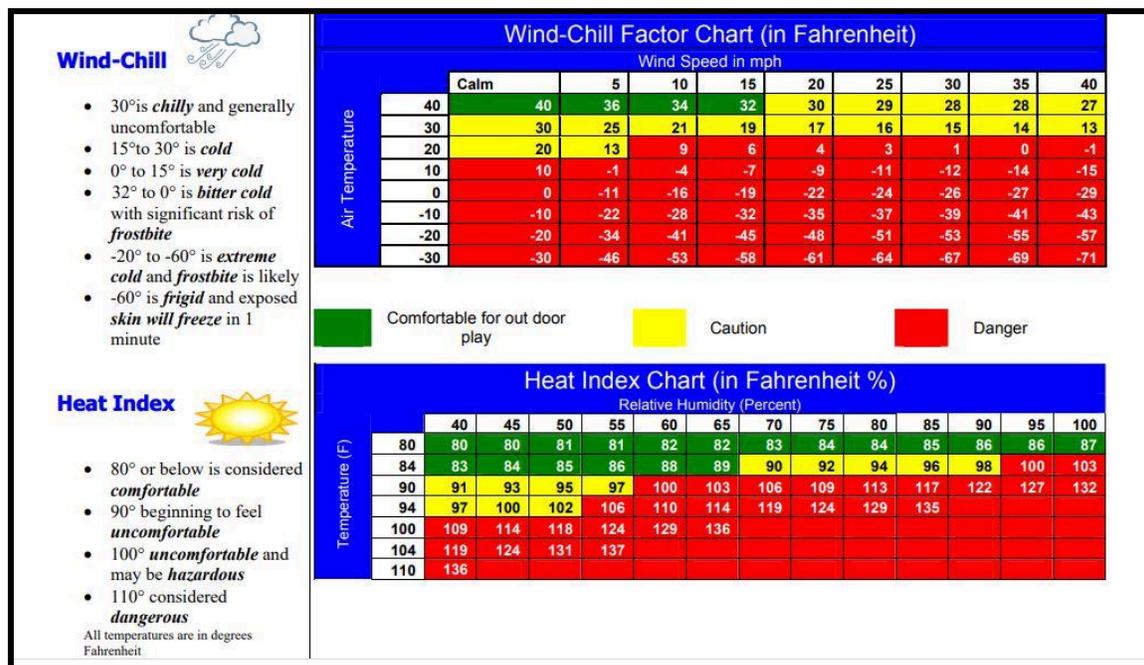
We make every attempt to be prepared for emergencies as they arise. Emergency plans with detailed instructions are posted in each classroom. We conduct monthly fire drills, seasonal tornado drills, and evacuation drills so the students and staff are prepared for what to expect in the event of an emergency. Each classroom has an emergency bag that is filled with first-aid

supplies, emergency contact information, and supplies that may be needed in the event of an emergency.

If we have an emergency evacuation, students will be transported immediately to the Murray Christian Church. Parents will be notified as soon as the students and staff are safely situated. We will send pick-up instructions via ProCare or by Phone if ProCare is not available.

## Weather Policy

Being located in the Midwest, CEEC stays prepared to handle any weather that we may encounter. During the winter months, we follow the District. If they are closed due to severe weather, so are we. The same goes for closing early or starting late. We ask that parents send the proper outside gear needed for each season so we can still enjoy the fresh air. We refer to the following chart as a guideline for our outside times. If it is in the green, we will go outside as usual; if it is in the yellow, we will likely go for a short walk or play for a very short time; if it is in the red, we will not go outside.



In the event of severe weather, such as Storms, we will be prepared by having our weather radios on to help us know exactly what needs to be done. If we are in a Tornado watch, we will prepare to leave the room as needed, but continue to listen to the weather forecast and advisories. If a watch turns into a warning, we will take action, starting by evacuating our classrooms and going into our designated tornado shelters. During this time, we will not release any children to their families as it is unsafe to leave our designated shelter spaces. We will not have access to the doors or phone, so we will be unable to answer them. Once we are in our shelter, we will use ProCare for all communication. Parents are welcome to stay in the shelter with us, but again, we can not release anyone until the tornado warning is over. We will take the portable weather radio with us to keep us informed.

### Mandatory Reporting

CEEC teachers are mandated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse, exploitation, neglect, or deprivation of any child in our care. Persons who fail to report according to state regulations can be held accountable by the law. All staff receive training and information on identifying and reporting suspected abuse and neglect. Our staff is responsible for making the reports, and child protective service agencies will determine the appropriate actions and may conduct an investigation. CEEC will cooperate fully with all appropriate authorities and will maintain confidentiality. Our foremost concern will always be the protection of the child.

# Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding of the Conestoga Early Childhood Center Handbook

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Parent/Guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_, have received the CEEC  
Handbook, reviewed, understood, and agree to all information contained  
herein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date