

Curriculum

The Cornerstone Curriculum is based on the latest research in the field of early childhood education. It is designed to challenge all children and prepare them for kindergarten by promoting oral language and emergent literacy skills, developing social skills, creativity, curiosity, responsibility, and a love of learning.

We use developmentally appropriate practices to nurture and teach the *whole* child. Weekly themes stimulate the child's curiosity and hands-on activities are planned around those themes that are both age-appropriate and fun. The "letter of the week" as well as a variety of math, science, social studies, music, art, and many early language and literacy experiences are woven into the daily routine. There is no television viewing or video game play at Cornerstone; educational or theme-related videos or DVDs are viewed only occasionally. All media, including CDs, computer games, and movies must be age-appropriate and educational.

Parent Involvement & Communication

On the first day, the Director will meet with new students and parents for an orientation to our school, policies, and procedures.

Teachers are usually available to speak with you briefly at drop-off and pick-up time, but please be aware that they are also supervising their class. If you need to speak with the teacher for more than a few minutes, please arrange a time for that with the Director.

Research shows that parent involvement is the single-most important factor in

a child's success in school. At the preschool level, regular communication between home and school helps us set goals and problem solve. Your involvement may include talking to your child about his/her artwork, what they played with at school that day, or planning what to bring for Show-and-Tell days. Some parents have a special talent they may wish to share with the class. Volunteers are welcome (must be arranged in advance with the Director) and we have an "open door" policy: parents are welcome visitors any hours the school is open; however, we ask that you not interrupt an activity (especially story times) or the classroom routine. You will also be invited to join us for special events like our annual Mother's Day and Father's Day Coffees.

Guidance & Discipline Policy

Under no circumstances will undesirable behavior result in physical punishment or reprimand in a negative way. All discipline will be conducted in an age-appropriate, constructive manner, and will never be tied to food, rest or toileting. We believe best results are achieved through *redirection, positive guidance, choices and consequences*. We encourage and model respect, good manners, and the importance of being helpful and kind to others.

We strongly hope that each child's experience at Cornerstone will be a positive one. When a problem arises, we conference with the parents and try to problem solve together using all available resources. If we are not effectively solving a problem after a reasonable amount of time, we reserve the right to dismiss.

Health Policies

For your child's comfort and the health of others, please do not bring your child to school if he/she is not feeling well. Children who become ill at school will be isolated from the other children and a parent will be called to pick

the child up. Your child must be free from symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

Medications: We do not administer medications of any kind and they are not allowed to be sent into school. This includes aspirin, vitamins, cough drops, lotions, hand sanitizer, inhalers, lip balm, etc. However, parents may visit anytime during the day to administer medication to their child if necessary. Your child may still come to school if they are taking medicine, but you must inform the Director about the type of medication, possible side effects, and what symptoms your child has. Sunscreen and/or lip balm should be applied before coming to school and left at home.

Any child who appears to have a contagious illness (impetigo, ringworm, pink eye, strep throat, rash, etc.) will not be allowed in school until they have been examined by a doctor and declared "not contagious" in writing.

Cornerstone has a "nit free" lice policy. Any child with nits or live lice will be isolated and must be picked up immediately. Proof of treatment for head lice will be required in order to return to school.

Parents - Please be aware that smoking on school property is prohibited by law.

Lunches & Snacks

Children should eat breakfast *before* arriving at school. Cornerstone provides a morning and afternoon snack each day consisting of two food groups each. The snack menu is posted in the hallway. Please inform the Director in writing if your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs. If you would like to send in something for your child's birthday, please see the Director first as we are required to follow Health Department regulations.

Parents should send in a nutritious lunch each day consisting of three food groups and milk. If you do not want your child to drink milk at

lunch, please write a note to that effect. Remember to use a frozen ice pack and insulated lunchbox as we do not have a refrigerator for children's lunches. Also include spoons or forks as needed (no knives, please) and a napkin. Soda, glass containers, and sippy cups are not allowed. We ask that you limit candy and desserts so that we can encourage healthy eating habits. Remember, we cannot heat up any food as we do not have a kitchen in the school.

What to Wear to School

Please dress your child in play clothes that they can manage themselves (no belts, complicated buttons, etc.) and closed-toed rubber-soled shoes with socks. For safety reasons, children may not wear flip-flops, cowboy boots, sandals, crocs, or party shoes to school. Jewelry is not allowed (except stud-type earrings for pierced ears). Please remove the drawstring around the neck of any item of clothing that has one.

What to Bring to School

Our classrooms are equipped with a variety of safe, age-appropriate supplies. Items from home are distracting and may pose a safety hazard; therefore, we ask that children only bring in items from home on Show-and-Tell days.

Cots and clean sheets are provided by the school for rest time. Parents should send in a small, cot-sized blanket or bath towel (it must fit into one small lower section of the cubbies). Please do not send in pillows or stuffed animals. Backpacks or duffle bags are also not allowed.

Please keep an extra set of clean clothes in your child's cubbie, including underwear. We will send home soiled items in a plastic bag and you should replenish the supply as needed. Remember to label all of your

child's belongings and take your child's blanket home to wash when necessary, preferably weekly.

Holidays

Cornerstone will be closed on the following holidays: MLK Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, two days at Christmas, and two days at New Year's. We will also be closed one Monday in August for staff training and room preparation for the new school year. Please refer to the monthly newsletter and calendar for exact closing dates each year. The school year calendar may also be viewed on the Parent Info page of our website.

Tuition

Tuition is based on your child's program, not the number of days attended. Therefore, full tuition is due even when your child is absent, during holiday weeks, and emergency closings. The only exception to full tuition is during a "Vacation Week" (see below). Tuition is due the first day that your child attends each week (usually Monday). A late fee of \$10 will be charged if tuition is not paid by Wednesday. All balances must be paid in full by Friday of each week in order to continue attending school.

Vacation Policy: Four weeks each school year are designated as "Vacation weeks" (Thanksgiving week, two weeks for winter break, and one week in the spring). If your child attends school during a vacation week, full tuition is due. If your child is absent for an entire school vacation week (or during the summer months), you may reduce your weekly tuition payment by

half. An amount equal to two full weeks of tuition is required to hold your child's slot for summer vacations of four weeks or more.

Please notify us of vacations and pay in advance to ensure that your child's slot will be held for his/her return.

Absences

Please notify us whenever your child will be absent or late so that we can inform his/her teacher. If your child is absent due to illness, please inform the Director. Regular attendance is required and monitored in the VPK program.

Arrival & Pick Up

School hours are 7:30AM to 6:00PM. Children should arrive *by 8:50AM* so that they are in their classroom when planned learning activities begin at 9:00. Arrivals after 9AM should be the exception as they are disruptive to the scheduled activities and classroom routines.

Drop-off: You must sign your child in at drop-off each day. Please help your child wash his/her hands and then and bring them to a staff member (do not leave them in the front hallway).

Pick-up: You must sign your child out and notify a staff member when you pick up at the end of the day. We will release your child only to the person(s) listed on your enrollment form. If an exception must be made, we require prior notification in writing. Anyone picking up your child should be prepared to produce a picture ID. Cornerstone will not release a child to anyone who appears intoxicated or impaired, regardless of whether or not that person is on the authorized pick-up list. We also reserve the right not to release a child to an adult who does not provide a car seat/booster seat according to the law.

The school closes at 6:00PM. A \$10 fee will be charged for late pick-ups* for the first ten minutes (or part thereof), plus another \$10 for

each additional ten minutes (or part thereof). This late fee will be strictly enforced. Repeated late pick ups may result in dismissal.

*after 12NOON for half-day students

Storms/Emergency Closing

Cornerstone will be closed if Pinellas County offices or schools are closed due to emergencies, or if we are under a tropical storm warning. Please call in to check our voice message for updates. Be sure that we have current phone numbers on file for parents and all other emergency contacts in case we need to contact you during the day. Emergency evacuation info is posted in the school and on our website.

Withdrawal/Changes to Program

There is no penalty for withdrawing your child or changing your program; however, we do request at least two (2) weeks notice. Outstanding balances must be paid in full.

Our insurance company does not allow employees to have personal relationships with or baby-sit for families enrolled in our school. We ask that parents please respect this policy.

Please let the Director/owners know if you ever have questions or concerns about your child, our policies, the curriculum, or our school. We look forward to a happy, positive preschool experience with you and your child!

Cornerstone Preschool
2671 Sunset Point Road
Clearwater, Florida 33759

(727) 791-3333

www.cornerstonepreschool.info
cornerstonepreschool@hotmail.com

Parent Handbook



APPLE Accredited/Gold Seal Preschool
Founded 1985, Accredited since 1988
License # C860613

Mission Statement

The mission of Cornerstone Preschool is to provide a foundation of age-appropriate early learning experiences which challenge and nurture the whole child (socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically) in a safe, family-friendly environment.

Cornerstone Preschool is licensed by the Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers. We are a member of the Florida Association of Child Care Management and accredited by APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment). Our school has been awarded the Gold Seal of Excellence from the Florida Department of Children and Families. We are proud to provide quality care and education that nurtures and inspires each child to reach his/her fullest potential.

Cornerstone Preschool has no religious affiliation and does not discriminate based on age, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, national origin, ethnicity, marital status, disabilities, or military status.