



CORA Early Years Huntingdon Mills Family Handbook

**CORA Early Years Huntingdon Mills
2137 E. Huntingdon Street
Philadelphia, PA 19125
215-701-2601**

Dear Parents,

Welcome! You are now a part of CORA's Early Years family! The early years are a critical time in a child's life and CORA provides a safe and nurturing environment for your child to grow and develop. Here at CORA, children are our number one priority and each day we ensure that they are provided with a safe and nurturing environment along with a quality education. The Center offers a relaxed and open setting geared to the needs and interests of each child. We try to take into consideration individual differences and also special abilities and family cultural patterns.

In this handbook you will find some information about different policies and procedures here at CORA. It is important to us that we keep our parents informed and that you feel comfortable to talk to us about any questions or concerns you may have. We have an open door policy, so never hesitate to stop by or call if you need to speak to us. The information in this handbook is important, so we ask you to read it in its entirety. If you have any questions or concerns about the information provided please let us know.

Thank you for allowing us to join you in providing for the care, loving, and nurturing of your developing child. We look forward to getting to know you during the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Melody Connell, M.Ed.

Director

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About CORA Services:

Since 1971, CORA Services has been helping children and families in the Philadelphia region. With the support of the Good Shepherd Sisters and a small state grant, Sister Charity established CORA Services as a small family counseling agency to help children and families overcome adversities in their school, home and neighborhood. She cared deeply about helping her community, and Sister Charity's vision to help "at-risk" children has grown into a non-profit agency serving almost 16,000 children and families every year.

For schools, CORA Services provides educational support, guidance counseling, occupational therapy, speech services and psychological evaluations. For the community, CORA Services offers individual and family counseling, after school and summer programs, and pre-school education. Families today are facing problems in a complex world, and CORA Services is responding to an increased demand for our services. While CORA Services provides new and innovative programs to meet the changing needs of the Philadelphia area, the focus on prevention and intervention remains the same.

Thanks to funding from individuals, corporations, foundations and government, many of our services are free or offered at a reduced rate. CORA means Counseling or Referral Assistance, and no one is ever turned away. If CORA Services does not provide a service, we will assist people with finding the help they need. Through our referral services, we can direct those in need to the appropriate agency or resources. The dedication of our professional and caring CORA staff of teachers, counselors, psychologists, and therapists is making an impact on children's lives each and every day. We are guided daily by the theme - "Children are the Heart of the Matter." Our future community and neighborhoods depend on the success of today's youth. CORA Services has been a beacon of hope and empowerment to thousands of families in need.

Early Years at Huntingdon Mills:

CORA's Early Toddler and Prekindergarten program prepares 2-5 year olds for success in school and life. The early years are a critical time in a child's life and CORA provides a safe and nurturing environment for your child to grow and develop. CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills is state licensed, accepts ELRC funding, and participates in Keystone STARS. Knowing that a school is participating in Keystone STARS assures parents and guardians that certain standards will be followed. We take pride in providing our children with the best education and making sure that they are prepared for the future. We are a small school with a big heart, and one who cares deeply for our children and their families.

Non-Discrimination: CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills is open to all age-appropriate children regardless of race, nationality, or creed, who may benefit from our kind of program. Our Center is nonprofit and nonsectarian.

Admissions:

Children between the ages of 2 to 5 years (or the day they begin Kindergarten) may enroll in CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills

Children in the Preschool classrooms must be fully potty-trained to enroll at CORA early Years at Huntingdon Mills. If your child is not potty-trained, CORA may provide family resources to assist you.

Parents and children must visit the school prior to date of admission for an intake with the director and to become familiar with the center.

We require all children to have age appropriate inoculations and physicals prior to admission according to the department of public welfare that are current (within one year.)

Child Care hours at the center are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Failure to adjust: The center meets the needs of a child who functions according to his/her age level in terms of physical and mental health. Each child is afforded a thirty day adjustment period to determine if the child is able to adapt to the program at the center. The center will refer parents to appropriate agencies (Elwyn, DPW, Child Link, etc.) for assistance in obtaining services best suited for their child's needs. Please keep in mind that CORA also reserves the right to withdraw your child at any time if we feel your child is of harm or disruptive to themselves, other students and/or staff. You will be contacted to attend a conference with the teacher and director before any action is taken, and at that time, written records will be presented to support the cause of dismissal.

Every effort will be made by the director and staff to assist the child and parent in a smooth transition to the program and to overcome any problems that arise. However, if for some reason the child does not adjust, he or she will be withdrawn after all reasonable accommodations are made for the family, and additional resources and supports have been offered.

Classroom Assignments and Curriculum:

Age groupings in the classrooms are generally based upon the child's age as of September 1st of each year. In the classroom, teachers provide each child with a developmentally appropriate research based curriculum along with structured lessons and center based play.

CURRICULUM

CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills Preschool and Child Care Center program includes a regular, weekly lesson format.

We follow and implement The Creative Curriculum[®], which translates research and theory from the field of early childhood education into a practical, easy-to-understand approach to working with children and their families. It is a comprehensive curriculum with a clear organizational structure and a particular focus on routines and experiences. It is aligned with CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills Preschool and Child Care Center's philosophy of a high quality day care program for the care and safety of the children of CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills Preschool and Child Care Centers and the surrounding community. The Creative Curriculum is cross walked with the PA Early Learning Standards.

Children's Goals for Development and Learning

We focus children's interests, their developmental levels, their personalities or temperaments and their individual needs to provide important information about the experiences that should be covered, both for a class or group and individually. This understanding of each child becomes the backbone of curriculum and defines the types of activities and experiences that are presented through intentional classroom planning. Child-centered learning is focused on the child's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This creates a concept of the child having their own role in the learning process. Our center gathers information from parents and also from observing children to help drive lesson planning and the curriculum. We use information from families, the children's observations and other experiences to develop individualized goals for children that include experiences and activities that are challenging, yet achievable. We crosswalk Creative Curriculum with the PA Early Learning Standards to accomplish our goals.

Experiences, Environment and Materials

We create a classroom environment that reflects the Key Learning Areas of the PA Early Learning Standards, is inviting and stimulating and keeps children involved in learning. Our center uses the philosophy from the Creative Curriculum Learning Centers to provide an environment where children can explore and learn with and without teacher facilitation. We design a classroom environment that is stimulating, yet warm and welcoming - a positive setting that will set the stage for successful learning experiences. Our environments use materials and equipment that are in good repair, are culturally, linguistically and age appropriate, and that reflect opportunities for active engagement (or hands-on learning). We follow The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) through Keystone Stars and national accreditation standards from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) which offers good insight into the key elements for high quality classroom environments.

Teaching Methods, Instructional Practices and Assessment

We use Creative Curriculum and areas of assessment below. Teachers are constantly recording child observations to make careful, intentional decisions about what children should learn, using the Learning Standards as a guide. These resources are needed to develop activities and experiences that motivate children to explore and stay actively engaged. We assess individual children, the classroom as a group, instructional practices, and the experiences that are provided to determine how children are learning or making progress in skill development. From here, we determine adaptations or revisions that may need to occur to enhance learning. Our daily schedule reflects both routines and planned experiences to build children's growth and development and learning opportunities through a balanced and varied schedule that is flexible, yet consistent.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool and Pre-K uses research in the following areas: How Children Develop and Learn, The Learning Environment, What Children Learn, The Teacher's Role and the Families Role in creating a curriculum to help children prepare for school. Its basis is on a center-based approach with observations and teacher facilitation to create a learning environment based on the children's needs. Some of the centers found are Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers and Outdoors.

Parent and Family Roles in Child's Achievement of Goals

Families' cultures and background provide valuable insight to a provider's curriculum. Every parent/guardian has hopes or aspirations for their children and their family. These goals, along with family values and customs, can influence the types of activities that are presented for children. Linguistic preferences and lifestyles are also important elements to consider. Together, they provide an important picture and element of curriculum. Again, information obtained at intake and throughout the year during surveys, updating forms and discussions with families helps us plan our curriculum appropriately. We encourage parents to have a part in program planning and decision making through surveys, a suggestion box (located with the copy box), follow-up procedures after 45 days of care and during conferences, and parent program evaluations. We welcome parent suggestions and comments as we both work together to provide a positive preschool experience for children.

Staff Roles in Child's Achievement of Goals

Teachers are facilitators of children's skill development. In addition to understanding children and their families, teachers' personal insight into their own cultural backgrounds and experiences, personality, interests and needs provide the third element that guides programs' curriculum design. Teachers who combine personal experiences with their knowledge of child development and their familiarity with their children and families build strong opportunities for learning and development. Teachers scaffold learning by building on children's prior knowledge to introduce new ideas and information.

Conferences:

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled 3 times during the year. Ongoing parent-teacher communication, however, is encouraged and expected. If you need extended time to speak with your child's teacher, please make an appointment for a mutually convenient time. Your child's teacher is the appropriate person to ask about your child's classroom experience.

The director is also available for consultation. If you have any questions or concerns about the center, please leave a note in our communication box or make a phone call to arrange an appointment.

COMMUNICATING WITH STAFF:

When you enroll your child at CORA, we share a challenging and rewarding responsibility - that of assisting your child to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, etc. In order to do this, we need to maintain open communication with you.

Because time to talk can often be limited on both sides, we do the following:

- Post a parent information board in the hallway outside/inside the classrooms with all updates and new information.
- Send home a daily information sheet with each child every day to keep you updated on eating, sleeping, and potty habits as well as any upcoming events. **(Please take the time to read these daily notes).**
- Please know that supervision of children is our first priority, therefore talking with you may not be possible at drop-off and/ or pick-up; therefore scheduling a convenient time may be necessary.
- We will telephone you if your child seems ill or if we have other concerns.
- Provides notes home if any problems arise.
- Provide a calendar and monthly letter of upcoming dates and events.
- Host regular back to school nights, open house, and parent appreciation events.

Parents and teachers must **work together as a team** in order to accomplish our common objective of giving every child the best experience possible.

Arrival, Departure, Starting the Day Procedures:

ARRIVALS

All children must arrive between 8:15 and 8:30am. The program begins promptly at 8:30 with the serving of breakfast. In order for your child to receive breakfast they must arrive by 8:30 am. Meals will not be served after 8:50am. If your child arrives after meal time it is the parent's responsibility to provide breakfast and supervise their child in the main office until they have finished and can enter the classroom. **Children will not be accepted after 9:00am** unless previous notice is provided (**There is no grace period for late arrivals**). Doctor's notes are required when arriving late due to a morning appointment (doctors notes for your child's appointment only will be accepted) but not after 11am. Frequent lateness and early departures are disruptive to the program, and to students and staff. It is our goal and hope that each child receives the full amount of daily instructional time. In the interest of safety, children must be brought to the classroom and signed in by an adult. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD AT THE FRONT DOOR TO ENTER ALONE.**

DEPARTURES

If you arrive while the teacher is involved in a structured activity, we ask that you minimize the interruption as much as possible. Children will only be released to an adult who has been given written permission or verbal consent by the child's parents. Escorts must come into the classroom, notify the staff, and sign the child out for the day. This information is used for tracking enrollment and attendance. The director or receptionist must be contacted by the child's parent if an emergency arises and the child will be picked up by someone other than the persons listed on the proper forms. The teacher or director will require a form of photo identification from the person picking the child up. Staff supervises children until your arrival.

Late Pick-up (Tardiness):

PICK UP TIME IS 2:30PM UNLESS YOUR CHILD IS RECEIVING EXTENDED CARE.

LATE FEES.....\$15.00 FOR EACH 15 MINUTE PERIOD

FOR EXAMPLE.....2:31 to 2:45 = \$15.00; 6:01 to 6:30 = \$30.00 ETC.

****Late fee must be paid that evening or the following morning CASH ONLY****

****This Policy also applies to early drop-off****

The academic program is 8:30-2:30 M-F

Starting the Day

Most children have little difficulty adjusting to school after an initial visit with their parents.

Here are a few things for you to do as you enter Early Year:

1. Make sure your child washes his or her hands.
2. Walk your child to his/her cubby to place their things inside.
3. Sign your name and arrival time by your child's name in the Sign-in book located at the front desk.
4. Walk your child into the morning room (room 1).

Emergency Closing Procedures:

In the event of an emergency closing (inclement weather) CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills will be using an alert system to notify parents of the emergency closing. All parents will be asked to provide a list of phone numbers in prior to their child starting here at CORA. If we have an emergency closing you will be notified by an emergency recording on the phone numbers you have given us. Closing information will also be on the television channels: ABC, FOX, NBC, and CBS. Our KYW radio code is 157.

Please note: Early Years will be closed when Philadelphia Public and Parochial Schools are closed due to inclement weather. Also, copay is paid for all snow days Monday through Friday.

Telephone

Teachers are available to speak on the telephone between 1:30 PM and 2:45 PM. Please use the number below when calling to inform the Center of illness or change in the person picking up your child at the end of the day.

Direct Number– 267-701-2601. If no one is available, please feel free to leave a message and we will be sure to return your call.

Health, Nutrition, and Medication:

Health

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us all. Your child's file must be complete with a health appraisal filled out by the pediatrician. **Your child's physical must be updated annually.** It is important to us that we ensure that our students and staff are provided with environment where they can stay healthy. We reserve the right to insist that you keep your child at home when he/she is not feeling well. We reserve the right to send a child home that, in our judgment, is not well and may infect the other children. In such cases, your child will be isolated from the other children and you will be notified in order to prevent the spread of common illnesses.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- Has a fever or has had a one during the night.
- Has a heavy nasal discharge.
- Has a constant cough.
- Has conjunctivitis or "Pink Eye".
- Any form of body Lice or Nits
- Has symptoms of a possibly communicable disease. (Sniffles, reddened eyes, Rash, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, fever, diarrhea, or vomiting).

Please notify the Center at once if your child has a communicable disease. Since conjunctivitis is highly contagious, children must stay at home for one day. If your child's physician is treating him/her for an infection, cold, or virus and has stated that the child may attend school, please request a physician's note, which states that recommendation.

Nutrition

Here at CORA Huntingdon Mills, every child is eligible for the CACFP food program. Each child is provided with breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. We encourage our children to have a balanced diet and make healthy eating a priority. The food programs allows each child to receive nutritious meals that meet the federal FDA requirements. We cannot accept any outside food to be brought in to the program due to allergies. We are a nut free, pork free center. In the event that your child has a medically documented food allergy, and a medically documented specialty diet, which we cannot provide adequate substitutions for, your child will be able to bring in meals, with a signed doctors note, that are shelf-stable, and do not need to be heated or cooled in order to consume. This prevents possible cross contamination.

Food form applications will periodically need to be updated to remain in compliance and remain eligible for the food program.

Medication

Please notify your child's teacher that your child is taking medication. You must also sign the medication log located in the front office so we have your written permission to dispense medicine. If medicine must be refrigerated please notify a staff member so that medication is place in the refrigerator. **No medication should be stored in your child's back pack or lunch box. Please give the medicine to a staff member. No over-the-counter medication will be given to children. Only life-saving medication such as rescue inhalers, epi-pens etc. All medication must have the pharmacy label with the child's name and correct dosage visible.**

The following procedure needs to be followed to ensure the safety of the children and is taken directly from the DPW regulations concerning the administration of medication:

- A prescription medication may be accepted only in an original container. The medication shall remain in the container in which it was received.
- A staff person shall administer a prescription medication only if written instructions are provided from the individual who prescribed the medicine. Instructions for administration contained on a prescription label are acceptable.
- The label of a medication container shall identify the name of the medication and the name of the child for whom the medication is intended.
- Medication shall be administered only to the child whose name appears on the container.
- Medication shall be stored in an area of the facility that is out of reach of children.
- Medication shall be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's or health professional's instructions on the original label.
- A parent shall provide written consent for administration.

Safety:

Please be advised that you must give us the names of authorized persons who can pick up your child. If there are changes in which you choose to authorize, you are required to notify the Center in writing. In the event that an emergency does arise and you must inform us by telephone, please be prepared to give the name and a brief description of the person who will be picking up your child. They will be asked to show photo identification before the child is released to them. The center will also provide you with a code word that you must give to the person you are authorizing to pick up your child. When the authorized person arrives, they must repeat back the code word to the staff member who is present. In order to ensure the safety of your child, we are taking additional measures to make sure every child is safe when in our care.

All registered families will receive a key fob to access the building. We ask you to please, do not open the suite door for any parents or guest you may not know. Please know that we enforce this policy because the safety and wellbeing of your child is of primary concern to us.

Parent Involvement:

Our staff and parents are working as a team for the growth and development of your child. Communication is essential if we are to develop and maintain a good working relationship. Children are unable to verbally express their feelings about life situations, which may be causing them stress. It is hoped that you will share information, which will help us to better understand your child and assist him/her during difficult times. A divorce, birth of a sibling, death of a relative or moving to a new house is stressful for children as well as adults.

If your child has an IEP the parent is required to provide a copy to the director which will be shared with the classroom staff. Early Years will make reasonable accommodations for each child. It is our belief that children need the love and involvement of both parents, particularly in a family where a divorce has taken place. Both parents have the right to be informed of the progress of their child and Center activities. We accept responsibility for the safety of children entrusted to our care at Early Years. We therefore reserve the right to refuse to release a child to a parent or guardian who in our judgment appears to be under the influence of a chemical substance. In case of an accidental injury we will make an immediate attempt to contact the parent. If we cannot reach you we will try to contact the persons on the emergency contact form. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the Center up to date on phone numbers and emergency numbers.

A first-aid kit is in all classrooms. In the event of an emergency, the following procedure will be followed:

- Administer first-aid if minor cut.
- Contact parent immediately and explain situation.
- Call an ambulance if child needs to be taken to the hospital.
- Staff member/Director remains with child until parent assumes responsibility.
- Staff member/Director completes Accident Report immediately upon return to CORA.

Parent Cell Phone Use:

Here at CORA, we will now be enforcing a **No Cell Phone policy for our parents**. We kindly ask that you refrain from being on your cell phone when you drop off your child in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. Teachers sometimes need to speak with parents about their child and it is hard to do so if a parent is on the phone. Not only will this allow teachers to speak with parents, but it will ensure that your child is safe and ready to start their day.

Copay for Private Pay/Extended Care:

All parents will be given an **individual parent fee agreement** to sign and the director or Assistant Director will review it with you so all parties are clear on how much payments will be for your child's care. Cash and Checks are the two acceptable ways to make payments for copay. (If paying by check please allow 2-3 weeks for checks to clear to avoid any bounced checks). If bounced checks become an ongoing issue, you will be given written notice that you are no longer able to pay by check for copay. All copay is billed weekly. Each week when a payment is made the balance will continue to decrease.

Emergency Contact Information and Financial Agreement Updates:

CORA is requiring you to review and update both the emergency contact information and financial agreement for your child/children. In accordance with the Department of Human Services, you will be required to update these forms every 6 months or as change occurs. These updates are scheduled to occur every fall and spring. **If your information changes at any time throughout the year, you must complete a new form.**

Supervision and discipline policies:

Supervision

Please be advised that your child/children is/are under constant supervision while at CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills. In the morning when delivered, children are accompanied either to the opening classroom, gross motor room, or their classroom, where a staff person is on hand. At least one staff member is available to monitor children. Health breaks (toileting) are scheduled several times daily, however, the child is permitted to be excused whenever needed. Children are supervised during this time. Supervision of children to and from school is the responsibility of the parents or guardian.

Discipline Policy

The methods of guidance and discipline used shall be positive and consistent with the developmental age of the children and applied with full knowledge and understanding of the parent (s). There shall be no use of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, or harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect or exploitation. Discipline shall not be associated with the behavior of children in regard to rest, toilet training or food. Discipline shall not be associated with the withholding of emotional responses or stimulation and shall not require the child to remain silent for long periods of time. Children shall not be isolated without supervision.

Discipline and Guidance

At CORA, the term guidance is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working WITH the child to develop internal control of his/her behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, and responsible and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices.

Guidance takes several forms:

1. **Environment:** A place designed for children. The furniture is child-sized with lots of hands-on activities.
2. **Logical Rules:** Such as keeping our hands to ourselves and taking care of the learning environment. These are discussed with the children, as well as why such rules are needed.
3. **Curriculum:** Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interest and level of readiness.
4. **Positive Behavior:** We reinforce the behaviors we encourage. Catch them being "Good!"
5. **Redirection:** Often interesting a child in another activity can eliminate a potential difficulty. We might ask a child to help us or send them to a different play area.
6. **Positive Reminder:** Telling the child what we want them to do, rather than using "no" or "don't."
7. **Renewal Time:** Occasionally a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time allowing them to consider alternate behavior.

Any on-going situations will be discussed with the parents to ensure a cooperative approach. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns. Reasonable accommodations will be made to assist all children and families.

NOTE: No corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.) No unusual punishment will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.

Chronic Disruptive Disorder

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in child care. We are here to serve and protect all of our children. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior, which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of another child, may require the following actions. Staff & director should follow the following procedures:

Documentation

The staff shall record all observed behavior deemed problematic. As much detail as possible shall be included: time, date, environment and what occurred, with the exception of the name of any other child.

Initial Consultation

The staff member will use all means of communication to inform parent of observed behavior. Staff will discuss with parents necessary tactics to assist child in improving.

Second Consultation

If the behavior persists the staff member will arrange for conference with parent to discuss relevant information. Goals will be established and the parent will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem.

Third Consultation

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent(s) will be required to meet with the staff and director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

Suspension

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from the childcare center indefinitely. The preschool director may immediately suspend a child at any time he/she exhibits a behavior, which is harmful to him/ herself or to others. A parent may be called from work at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the childcare staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the preschool program may vary from a few hours to indefinitely.

HIPAA

The center keeps certain information on file regarding children and families, which may be considered personal in nature. Staff is expected to maintain this information in confidence and not discuss it or release it to persons outside the Daycare Center unless prior written permission has been obtained from the parties involved. Staff will also refrain from discussing confidential information concerning staff, the center or its families among themselves or with parents. Staff shall refrain from derogatory comments pertaining to the center, staff, children, or parents. Any staff found violating anyone's confidentiality would be disciplined. Information that has direct bearing on the welfare of any child shall be brought to the Directors attention immediately.

Child Abuse

Per state regulations, all staff is mandated reporters. This means, that in the event any staff person suspects child abuse by a parent, guardian, or another staff member, immediate action should take place. Staff should implement agency procedures, which coincide with state regulations, for reporting child abuse. The health and safety of each child is the center's priority. If a parent suspects child abuse they should notify the Director immediately

Client Grievance Procedures

Parents are encouraged to problem solve grievances in an informal fashion with the source of conflict while maintaining a respectful manner at all times. Parents should schedule an appointment with the staff person with whom there is conflict and discuss issues and concerns immediately. Each person should have the opportunity to discuss and problem solve during this time. If a parent is still unhappy with the attempts of problem solving then the Director will have a meeting with all parties involved and offer a resolution. If resolution cannot be met with the Director then the Administrator will be contacted to mediate.

Discharge Policy

CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any child if deemed necessary. They can include but are not limited to the following:

- Excessive absence or lateness
- Excessive late pick-ups and/or non-payment of late pick up fee
- Child is unable to adjust to program
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent/guardian/family member or child
- Not adhering to center policies and/or procedures as outlined in parent handbook

Addressing questions or concerns to Director or Assistant Director:

We are aware that at the end of the day, many parents have questions or concerns they would like to share with the director or the Assistant Director. Even though the director or Assistant Director may not be on site, please know that your questions and concerns are important to us. In order to help us better communicate with our parents and families, we utilize a communication/suggestion box.

Messages for the director and Assistant Director can be left in the communication box. Each morning, the box will be checked by both the Director and Assistant Director. This will ensure that we will be able to follow up with you in a timely manner. Any notes or messages for the teachers may also be left in the communication box. In the morning, your message will be given to your child's teacher upon their arrival.

****PLEASE NOTE: Unless it is an emergency or pertaining to the teacher and their classroom, please refrain from addressing concerns to the closing teachers at the end of the day. Any major school issues such as copay or lateness can only be handled by the director or the Assistant Director. This is why we will be implementing a message box. If this issue is urgent, please note that on your message and you will be contacted immediately the following morning.**

Absenteeism:

Daily attendance at school is important to make sure each child's academic needs are being met. It is our duty to make sure students are fully equipped with the academic and life skills they need to enter into kindergarten. We cannot ensure those needs are met if your child is not at school regularly. Please keep in mind that for any child who is receiving copay assistance from ELRC, your child is only allotted 25 absences from July 1st to June 30th of each year (no exceptions if your child goes on vacation). **It is important to also remember that if you miss five days in a row, this will also put you at risk for losing your ELRC copay assistance.** If you exceed this allotted number of absences, your ELRC funding will be cut off and you will have to privately pay for your child's copay. If you exceed your allotted number of absences, you may also lose your child's PKC slot.

Transfers and Withdrawals:

Each parent/guardian has the responsibility to inform the director in writing that your child will not be continuing at CORA Early Years Huntingdon Mills. The exact last day of attendance is needed in your letter. Please have all of your financial matters in order. **We request that you provide two weeks' notice.** Please keep in mind that your child's copay must be paid and current before they leave.

When your child transfers to another educational setting, you will receive their records on the last day the child attends Early Years. Child records will be transferred at the request of a parent or guardian, and written consent must be given to administration before any information is released.

Transportation:

CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills does not provide daily transportation to and from the Center. Field Trips are the only time the center will provide transportation through CORA bus services.

Dress Code:

Clothing for toddlers and preschoolers should be appropriate for school and encourage independence. The clothing should be easy to manipulate by the child, simple, comfortable, appropriately sized, washable, and weather friendly. Elastic waist pants or shorts with no belts are easy for children to get off and use in the bathroom.

Keep it plain and simple. Children fiddle with excess decorations like ribbons, zippers, or snaps and then need them tied, zipped, or snapped back into place further disrupting classroom instruction. Jewelry, Hair Beads, and tattoos can be distracting and causes all sorts of problems and safety being one.

Please save the expensive or precious apparel to wear elsewhere. Comfortable, appropriately sized, and washable clothing should be worn daily. Many times, in an effort to be independent, we are unintentionally messy. If children worry that their parents will be upset if paint or marker gets on their clothing, they are reluctant to participate in the activity.

Weather appropriate clothing, jackets, or coats with zippers and hoods are the best. Umbrellas are considered a hazard and are not allowed. The hoods keep their heads covered and their hats from getting lost in the building. Hats and mittens are needed during colder weather. Hats stay on their heads while running and playing, and mittens can be put on independently.

During the summer months we ask for your support with the following concerns regarding dress:

- **Children are not allowed to wear flip flops to school.** If a child comes to school with flip flops, parents will be contacted and will have to come to the school to provide appropriate footwear for the children. **Students are not allowed to wear sandals, or any open-toed or loosely fitted shoe.**
- **Shorts-** please make sure shorts are an appropriate size and are not “too short”
- **Skirts and dresses-** Please make sure that skirts are an appropriate length and that shorts or leggings are worn underneath skirts.
- **Tops and blouses-** Please make sure they fit the child properly and that they are not too small or too big

Supplies

Your child will need 2 complete changes of clothing, in a backpack. Each article of clothing should be clearly marked with the child's first and last names. Please label jackets, sweaters, hats, gloves, and any other belongings. Children are asked to bring a picture of their family. Children staying for extended day care hours are required to bring a small pillow and blanket, preferably a small blanket, which also needs to be marked with your child's name. These items need to be taken home every Friday for laundering. You may send them to school with a small size appropriate bag or backpack to bring art and other learning materials/school information home.

Extra-Curricular activities:

Throughout the year, CORA will be hosting different events and activities for the children. Events that we will be hosting include:

Valentine's Day Party

Winter Holiday Celebrations

Thanksgiving Feast

Family Festival at Main

Week of the Young Child

Field Trips

Easter and Spring

Fundraisers

Autumn/Fall Activities

In-house guests

AND MUCH MORE!

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I have received my copy of the CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills's parent and student handbook which outlines the policies, procedures, and rules that are required of parents and students:

- About CORA Services
- Early Year at Huntingdon Mills
 - Non-discrimination
 - Admissions
 - Classroom Assignment and Curriculum
- Conferences and Communicating with Staff
- Arrival, Departure, and Starting Day Procedures
- Emergency Closing Procedures
 - Telephone
 - Health, Nutrition, and Medication
 - Safety
- Parent Involvement
- Parent Cell Phone Use
- Copay, Emergency Contact Information and Payment agreements
- Supervision and Discipline Policies
- Addressing Questions and Concerns
 - Absenteeism
- Transfers and Withdrawals
 - Transportation
- Dress Code and supplies
- Vacations and Extra-curricular activities

I will familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook. I understand that it constitutes the policies of the Center. I also understand that CORA Early Years at Huntingdon Mills reserves the right to make changes at any time to its policies.

I understand that the information in this handbook is to maintain a healthy learning environment for the children. I know that if I have any questions or concerns in regards to this handbook, I can contact the director or administrative staff at any time to answer any questions. I fully understand that information and expectations stated in this handbook.

Parent Name

Child/Children Name(s)

Parent Signature

Date

