

Cornerstone Preschool and Extended Care

a ministry of South Hills Community Church

PARENT HANDBOOK



"Building from a solid foundation"

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Welcome

Welcome to Cornerstone! I would like to take this opportunity to give you a brief introduction to our school, staff, and *Parent Handbook*.

Cornerstone is dedicated to providing quality teaching and childcare to children between the ages of three and ten years. Our teachers are committed to giving your child the opportunity to grow and learn in a safe and loving environment. All of our teachers meet or exceed the State Licensing requirements for teachers of young children.

Cornerstone is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and offers a wide variety of programs geared to meet your child's individual needs. For preschool age students, we offer full day or preschool only classes, five days, three days, or two days per week. For school age students, we offer before and after school care Monday through Friday and a 3 day Flex option. We provide a morning and afternoon snack, time for lunch, and a nap period every day depending on your child's schedule.

When space is available, it may be possible for children enrolled in the preschool program to stay beyond their scheduled hours. This drop-in care is only available by pre-arrangement for a fee -please refer to the *Fee Schedule*.

For school age children, Cornerstone will provide full day care for select SJUSD "non-student" days. These "Special Full Days" are listed on the *Master Calendar* and are available by pre-arrangement for a fee - please refer to the *Fee Schedule*.

Your *Parent Handbook* is designed as a reference tool for you to use. In it you will find all of the instructions, requirements, policies, and procedures you will need. Please read through it carefully and refer to it often. You will find the answers to most of your questions in the handbook, but feel free to approach the teachers or me at any time.

It is our goal to minister to you as well as to your child. We are a family oriented preschool. Please let us know how we can serve you.

"Building from a solid foundation",

Deborah Paselk, Director
(408) 268-7595

Philosophy

Cornerstone Preschool and Extended Care is a ministry of South Hills Community Church.

We believe that every child is unique and has individual needs. It is our desire to provide individual attention, unconditional love, and acceptance to each child.



Along with an enriched, age appropriate curriculum, we encourage the following:

- Development of a healthy self-concept
- Appropriate social interaction through play and small group activities
- Gross and fine motor skill development
- Intellectual growth and academic preparation
- Integration of biblical truths into every part of the child's learning experience

Our main objective is to build a strong foundation for your child.

Enrollment

At the time of enrollment, parents will need to complete an Admission Agreement and Tuition Contract, and pay the Registration Fee and Deposit – both are non-refundable. Please refer to the **Fee Schedule**.

Forms

The following forms are required by the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Agency, and must be completed and submitted to Cornerstone within thirty (30) days of enrollment or by the child's first day of attendance, whichever comes first.

- Identification and Emergency Information
- Consent for Medical Treatment
- Child's Pre-admission Health History – Parent's Report
- Current record of immunizations
- Physician's Report (not applicable for school age children)
- Notice of Parent's Rights
- Personal Rights

Student Withdrawal and Enrollment Termination

Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw your child prior to completion of the program, two (2) weeks written notice to the Director is requested. Two (2) weeks written notice is **required** for consideration of tuition prorating. The non-refundable Deposit will be forfeited.

Enrollment Termination

The school may terminate enrollment at will. Reasons for enrollment termination may include, but are not limited to, the following: the program does not meet the needs of the child, negligence of tuition payments, failure to abide by the policies as set forth in the Admission Agreement, Tuition Contract, and Parent Handbook.

Tuition and Payment

Your child's tuition is determined by the program schedule you select at the time of enrollment.

Tuition Policy

Annual tuition is divided into nine (9) equal payments from September through May, and a one-half payment for the month of June for Preschool, Extended Care, and School Age programs. Tuition for all students is due on the FIRST (1) of each month. ***All payments received after the SEVENTH (7) are considered late, and a \$25.00 penalty fee will automatically be assessed. Tuition cannot be prorated for extended illness, vacations, or holidays.*** A \$25.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks. Consistent late payments or returned checks may be cause for enrollment termination. The Director reserves the right to prohibit the child's attendance if tuition has not been paid.

Written Notice

Parents will be given written notice of any basic rate change at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the change.

Overtime Charges

Children must be dropped off and picked up promptly, according to the schedule chosen at the time of registration. If your child is not picked up promptly at 12:15 p.m. or by 6:00 p.m., depending on their schedule, a late pick up fee will be charged. Please refer to the ***Fee Schedule***.

Arrival and Departure

Cornerstone is an educational program that also offers childcare. Our programming is specifically designed to facilitate child development and learning; therefore, our classroom schedules represent purposeful programming. Prompt arrival for class is essential for children to receive the full benefits of the curriculum.

Arrival

Preschool students may arrive in their classrooms as early as 9:00 a.m. and as late as 9:30 a.m. The arrival routine is an important part of our programming, and your child's teachers will inform you of the procedure.

Arriving after 9:30 is not recommended, as important educational programming may be missed.

If you would like help developing a successful morning routine, the Director is available. Please call or stop by the office.

Departure

Preschool students are dismissed at 12:15 p.m. If you arrive late, please collect your child in the extended care room. Late fees will be assessed for late pickup. Please refer to the ***Fee Schedule***.

Teachers are available for brief communication at drop off and pick up times; however, this is not the best time for discussing the student. If you would like to talk with the teachers, ask them to give you a call later. This will allow you to speak freely and allow them to give you their full attention.



Sign In and Sign Out

The sign in and out procedure is extremely important. It is the official transfer of responsibility for the child from the parent to the school at sign in, and back to the parent at sign out. In an emergency situation, sign in sheets may be the only record available of your child's attendance at school that day.

Sign In

Upon arrival at the classroom and completion of the illness inspection, you or your authorized representative will sign your child in on the daily sign in sheet. School age students arriving by bus will be signed in by one of our staff members each day. If you transport your child from school directly to Cornerstone, you should accompany your child to their classroom to sign in.

Sign Out

Before removing your child from the classroom, you or your authorized representative must sign out on the daily sign out sheet. If you know in advance that someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, please inform the teacher at drop off, or call the Cornerstone office, to authorize the pick up. Please instruct your authorized representative to be prepared to show picture I.D. Cornerstone **will not** release your child to anyone not on the authorized pick up list without authorization. Special arrangements must be made **in advance** through the office if your authorized representative is a minor (under 18).

Once you have signed out, you are responsible for your child's behavior. Supervision is required at all times on the school grounds. Due to various program schedules, the playground adjacent to C building is not available after school. We encourage families to get together at nearby parks for continued socialization. Children that have been signed out may not re-enter the classroom. If a child needs to use the restroom, they can use the public restrooms in the B Building (Youth Hall).

Parking

Parking is allowed in designated parking spaces in parking lots only. Parking is not permitted in the driveway. Do not park next to any painted curb. Obey all traffic laws. Parking laws will be enforced.

Drive slowly through parking areas, as children are often present. Do not leave children unattended at any time in your vehicle. Do not leave your engine running. Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Cornerstone is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We recommend that parents hold children's hands while walking in the parking areas. This is an opportune time to teach street safety. Children should never be allowed to run ahead of adults through the parking areas. You will not be able to prevent accidents if you are behind your child.

Gate Safety

All gates must be closed every time you enter or exit, no matter the length of your visit. Children should not be allowed to run ahead of you out the gate. There is vehicle traffic directly outside several of our gates. Please do not allow your child to climb on the gate to open it. Enforce the safety rule "Only parents and teachers open gates".

Sickness Policy

State Licensing regulations require that a child exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness including, but not limited to, vomiting or fever, be excluded from the classroom. Each day, upon arrival, a staff member will inspect your child for any signs or symptoms of illness. If any signs or symptoms are present, your child will not be admitted. If your child becomes ill while at Cornerstone you will be notified and expected to take your child from the school as soon as possible.

This Sickness Policy is designed to protect your child, other children, and the staff. If your child is exposed to any communicable disease, you will be notified in writing of the exposure and any signs or symptoms of which you should be aware.

You should keep your child home if exhibiting one or more of the following symptoms:



- Fever of 102° or higher within a 24 hour period
- Vomiting or diarrhea within a 24 hour period
- Sore throat / swollen glands
- Persistent cough / bronchitis
- Nasal discharge, thick and opaque or green
- Raised bumps, rash or blotches
- Swelling / weeping and/or redness in eyes
- Excessive fatigue or listlessness
- Open sores around the nose or mouth area

Medication Policy

If prescription medication must be administered while your child is at Cornerstone, you must fill out a form giving Cornerstone written instructions and authorization. The medication must be in its **original container**. The label must be unaltered and legible, with the instructions and dosage as prescribed by a physician. The name on the prescription must match the name of the child. For safety, we require that medications be brought directly to the office and not transported via lunch box or backpack.

We do not administer non-prescription medication. If your child needs the aid of over the counter medications such as Tylenol or cough syrup, they should probably not be at school until symptoms subside. Children are more comfortable at home when they do not feel well.

If your child takes medication for a chronic illness, such as asthma or allergies, a special form must be signed by a physician giving instructions and permission for the Cornerstone staff to administer and store the medication. This form is kept in your child's file.

The school maintains a written record of the administration of all prescription medication.

Discipline Policy

It is our goal to equip children to face the challenges and obligations of living. This can be achieved by developing the Christian/social principles and personal strengths needed to meet the demands placed on them by their school, their peers, and later by adult responsibilities.

Discipline is the setting of limits and principles of classroom behavior and then enforcing those boundaries. It is essential that children be informed of acceptable behavior within the classroom and how to interact in a respectful manner with fellow students and teachers. There will be no corporal punishment used at any time for any reason at this school.

Method

1. **Set reasonable limits** – Beginning with the curriculum, and moving into all areas of the class time, limits are set that are consistent with the ability of the students: to pay attention, to sit still, to be quiet, etc.
2. **Identify rules and expectations well in advance** – Children feel secure when they know what is expected from them. Therefore, rules are clearly defined and enforced.
3. **Consistently enforce them** – Children need to know where they stand. If a behavior is unacceptable today, it will not be acceptable tomorrow.
4. **Determine what is and is not acceptable behavior** – Children make mistakes and accidents will happen. Each situation is reviewed individually to determine the best response.
5. **Show love, kindness, and understanding at all times** – Discipline is meant to develop the child, not just to make things easier in the classroom. Discipline is a gift we give to children. We communicate unconditional love and acceptance at every opportunity.

We reinforce appropriate behavior and identify unacceptable behavior. Consequences are administered when appropriate. Without humiliating the child, we gain and maintain the child's respect and always conclude a disciplinary session with love and acceptance.

Most behavior can be responded to with dialogue - gentle reminders of the rules and expectations - while other behavior is followed up with immediate and related consequences. This represents the majority of classroom discipline. If the child does not seem to be responding to regular classroom discipline the parents will be informed of the behavior and invited to work with the teachers to develop a strategy to help the child succeed.

It is hoped that all conflicts can be resolved within the classroom, but we understand that some children need more reinforcement than others. The director is always available to assist when necessary and communication with the parents will be on going.

Time Out Policy

Time out is not considered discipline. It is a gift of time given to a child whose emotions are out of control. When a child needs to take a short break to get emotions under control, he or she can sit out and take some deep breaths before continuing with the discipline dialogue. Occasionally, a child will become over- emotional and be dangerous to others. If this happens the child will be removed from the classroom until such time as the emotions are under control and the discipline dialogue can be re-entered.

School – Parent Communication

Cubby

Throughout the school term you will receive many types of correspondence regarding your child's classroom, program, progress, up-coming events, etc. You should consider your child's cubby a mailbox and check it daily for such correspondence as well as for your child's artwork and accomplishments. On Thursdays and Fridays, depending upon your child's schedule, a blue envelope will be sent home in his or her cubby (this does not apply to school age children). It will be labeled with your child's name and will include items such as artwork, notes, and other important communication. Please be sure to check the envelope carefully for timely information. Envelopes need to be returned to the classroom on Monday or Tuesday, depending on your child's schedule.

Progress Reports

Your child's teacher will communicate with you through notes and progress reports and will either place them in the cubby or give them to you personally. If you wish to discuss your child's progress or any specific needs, please talk to your child's teacher. Assistant teachers, volunteers, or even other classroom teachers will be unable to give you complete details of your child's progress. Your child's teacher invests time and energy in your child and will know the answers to your questions or will strive to obtain them. You and your child's teacher need to maintain good communication to provide the best program for your child. The Director is also available to help you, but will consult your child's teacher for any information needed.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences will be scheduled as needed. The teacher will contact you to arrange a time that is convenient for you to attend. You may call and request a parent conference if you have questions or issues to discuss with the teacher. You may call and request a conference with the director if you desire.

Drop off and pick up times are not conducive to effective communication. Teachers are responsible for several children and cannot give parents their full attention at that time. The teacher will be happy to call you or schedule a time to meet when children are not present.

Absences

Parents are asked to contact the school if their child is absent due to a communicable disease, or for more than one day.

Reporting Changes

Parents are responsible for reporting any changes in child custody, or any changes in the information on the forms in the child's file.

We encourage and welcome home / school communication. Communication is an important factor in providing the best possible program for your child.

Parent Involvement

Parent visits are welcome and encouraged. Parents have the right to visit the school at any time while their child is attending without advance notice. Special observation windows have been installed in each classroom to enable parents to observe the classroom without interrupting it.

Cornerstone would also like to encourage parents to be involved in the classroom. In order to maintain the continuity of the program, we request that you prearrange your visit with the teacher when you wish to help. The teacher will give you a job to do and your participation will give you a feel for how the class operates. Your child will enjoy sharing their classroom with you and the class will benefit from your contribution to it.

Parents may also have opportunities to chaperone field trips.

We also encourage your involvement through attendance at parent workshops, special programs, and classroom sponsored activities. These will provide you with opportunities to learn and grow with your child. We strongly encourage you to attend as many as possible. They will be quality programs you won't want to miss.

Responsibility

The Cornerstone staff is responsible for all children once they are signed in by their parents; therefore parents are under the direct supervision and authority of the teacher at all times while visiting the classroom or on field trips. Parents will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Cornerstone's educational philosophy and discipline policy. It is not appropriate for any parent to discipline any child but their own.

Dress Code

We do not require that your child wear a uniform or dress in conformance with any specific standard; however we do believe that clothing can influence children's behavior.

The following is a list of guidelines to help you dress your child for success at Cornerstone:

- 1 Clothing should fit and provide freedom of movement. Please choose clothing that is conducive to running, jumping, crawling, tumbling, etc.
- 2 Learning is often messy. Send your child in clothing that will not prohibit full exploration of materials; such as paint, glue, play dough, goop, sand/dirt and water. School age students wearing elementary school uniforms will be allowed to change into alternative clothing.
- 3 Dresses can get in the way of many activities and create safety hazards on playground equipment. Little girls wearing dresses must also wear shorts underneath for modesty on the playground.
- 4 We would prefer that children not wear camouflage or war type clothing to school. Such clothing often encourages role-playing of a violent or aggressive nature.
- 5 Shoes must fit properly, be appropriate to allow for exercise, and protect your child's feet both in and out of the classroom. For your child's safety, please choose footwear with adequate traction for running and climbing. Cowboy boots, dress shoes with slippery soles, and "flip flops" will not be allowed. We recommend flexible, rubber-soled shoes such as sneakers or tennis shoes.

In our current society, children are strongly influenced by media and commercial marketing. We hope to provide an environment that encourages children to learn about and express **themselves**. It would be helpful to that process to avoid clothing that represents TV or cartoon characters, styles that mimic celebrities, or highly commercial brands of clothing and shoes. There are so many outside influences trying to tell us who to be and how to act. We can work together to free our children from those influences while at school.



Items From Home

Every item brought to school should be **clearly labeled with your child's name**. Cornerstone cannot be responsible for lost or damaged articles.

Change of clothing

Each child will have a complete change of clothing stored at school in case of need. When used, we will send them home to be laundered and replaced. If needed, Cornerstone will supply extra clothing and your account will be charged the appropriate fee. See fee schedule.

Toys

We do not allow children to bring toys to school.

Toys brought to preschool will be confiscated and returned upon sign out. If there is something special that your child wants to show a teacher it can be shown at drop off and taken by mom or dad back to the car.

Toys brought to School Age Extended Care will be confiscated and forfeited. This includes, but is not limited to: collectible trading cards, handheld video games (Game Boys), and stuffed animals. The rules regarding toys will be taught at the beginning of the term, and we believe that our school age students are old enough to understand and accept the consequences of their choices.

Show and Tell

Opportunities for Show and Tell will be provided in the preschool classrooms on a regular basis. The purpose of Show and Tell is language development. We encourage parents to help children think of items that will be easy to talk about or have some special value to them.

Nap Items

State Licensing requires that napping children have something such as a sheet to lie on and a cover. We have found that a crib sheet and small blanket work well and store easily in our containers with the lid closed. Sleeping bags and pillows are too bulky for our limited storage. Licensing regulations require that nap items be laundered weekly. Nap items should go home on Thursday or Friday and be returned on Monday or Tuesday, depending on your child's program schedule.

Backpacks

School age children may use backpacks for transporting belongings from school to Cornerstone. Preschool students may not bring backpacks. We understand that these are desirable to the students; however, we have found them to be a problem in the classroom.

Lunch

Full day students are required to bring a lunch daily. Lunches should contain healthy, easily managed food in appropriate portions for young children. We are unable to heat up or refrigerate lunch items. Please provide any necessary utensils. If you would like some help with food item suggestions, a list is available.

Bathroom Safety Policy

Preschool:

All students accepted for enrollment must be fully toilet trained. Students must be able to determine when they need to use the toilet without reminders. Students must be able to manage their own clothing with minimal assistance and be able to clean themselves.

Bathroom safety rules help to protect students from inappropriate physical exploration, limit staff contact with student's bodies, and limit contact with body fluids. Bathroom doors will remain open when two or more students are inside. Staff members will never be alone with a student and the door will remain open while additional staff members monitor the situation. In the event of a toileting accident, the staff will assist with clothing and help the student to clean up. We are unable to fully clean a child for safety reasons, but we can help to clean exposed surfaces. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home. Staff will not rinse or clean soiled clothing.

Preschool bathrooms are coed. It is understood that children will talk about their bodies and look at each other. This is considered age appropriate and contributes to a healthy self-concept. Students who are personally aware of a need for privacy may close the door if they are alone.

School Age:

School age students use bathrooms equipped with privacy stalls. Only one student will be allowed in any stall at one time. Bathrooms not equipped with stalls have doors that close. Only one student will be allowed in such bathrooms at a time.

Occasionally a school age student will have a toileting accident. Staff will provide instructions and encouragement. Students will be talked through the cleaning / changing process if needed; however staff will not physically assist a school age student with clothing or cleaning. If more assistance is needed the parents will be called.

The School age program has access to several types of bathrooms; single use bathrooms, gender specific bathrooms with stalls, and one non-gender specific bathroom with privacy stalls (The stalls provide sufficient privacy and student behavior is closely monitored). The non-gender specific bathroom with privacy stalls is located in the Kindergarten classroom. If a student does not wish to use this bathroom when the other stall is being used we will accommodate that student's desire for more privacy.

Extra Clothing:

All Cornerstone students (preschool and school age) are required to have a set of extra clothing available at school in case they are needed. Students will be allowed to change their clothing in the event of a toileting accident, a spill, or a mishap involving water, paint, or other messy materials. If the clothing is used you will be expected to replace them the next day of attendance.

We look forward to working closely with you in developing a program for your child.

Please feel free to participate often and make suggestions for our growth. You are the key factor in your child's personality, growth and development; and we need to know you in order to understand your child.

"Building from a solid foundation"

*Cornerstone Preschool and Extended Care
Director and Staff*

