



# Family Guide



Ohio

## Welcome to COA

Congratulations for choosing Children of America as your early childhood learning program for your child. We appreciate the confidence you place in us to provide a caring, dynamic environment in which your child will grow and develop skills for a lifetime of learning.

Our commitment to you is to give your child challenging and fun learning experiences every day. Our staff is dedicated to ensuring that your child receives opportunities to explore, investigate and discover new and exciting concepts about the world. We provide developmentally appropriate activities through our proprietary curriculum for each stage of learning. The curriculum focuses on activities that will build your child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth and developmental abilities.

This guide will acquaint you with pertinent information, school policies and specific ways we will partner with you during the important early childhood years.

We look forward to sharing your child's experiences with you each and every day.

About your school	
<b>Administrators</b>	_____
<b>Address</b>	_____ _____
<b>Phone Number</b>	_____
<b>Days/Hours of Operation</b>	_____
<b>Child's Teachers</b>	_____

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## **Mission Statement**

Children of America is committed to providing a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for infants through elementary school-aged children. Our objective is to provide a stimulating and educational experience that promotes every child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. We deliver educational programs that foster self-esteem, encourage curiosity and inspire children to become lifelong learners.

## **Admissions**

Children of America obtains all state required information to provide the best possible care for the child both on a regular basis and in emergencies. In admitting a child, we require all information listed in 470 IAC 3-4.7-36, 37, 38 Children's Medical and Enrollment Records for Licensed Child Care Centers. All this provided information is made part of the child's record. A child is considered enrolled in the school only after the registration fee has been received, the administrator confirms the availability of space and the required paperwork is received. A medical form signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of admission. This medical form must be updated every 12 months.

## **Educational Philosophy**

At COA, we are committed to continuously developing new and innovative programing so that every child has access to the most current and relevant curriculum available. Our primary mission is to add healthy doses of love and understanding as we prepare the young children in our care for higher learning.

While our curriculum is structured, its flexible framework encourages children to make choices, and our teachers support the learning created by those choices. This approach allows children to develop confidence and a sense of security, while experimenting with new ideas.

Through exploration and discovery, each child receives ample opportunity to develop his or her natural curiosity and creativity. With the guidance of caring teachers, these "learning" moments help cultivate lasting understanding and are key to transforming discoveries into a lifelong love of learning and academic success.

## Active Learning—The Central Element

Our High Scope-influenced curriculum emphasizes “active learning.” This means children engage in hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. They make choices according to their interests, and teachers support these choices.

Knowledge is constructed through interactions with the world and the people around them. At COA, children take the first step on their knowledge path by making choices and then following through on their plans and decisions.

Using the Plan, Do, Review approach, our teachers offer physical, emotional and academic support in an active environment. They use open-ended questions to expand thinking and create an atmosphere that is both exciting and secure. The process focuses on creative problem solving and strong verbal communication.

The power of this approach becomes clear as children learn to problem solve through experiences, using higher-level thought processing and critical thinking skills.

Children of America believes that a high-quality early childhood program encompasses an appreciation for childhood as a unique and valuable stage of development. To this commitment, we also support a close partnership with parents in the context of families, culture and society. We believe in respecting the dignity and worth of every individual within each family and value every child as unique.

## Program Goals

Our first program goal is to recognize that children’s ways of learning are categorized by distinctive learning styles. Many children are visual learners. They perceive a sense of the objective by seeing the teacher demonstrate a lesson or showing objects to be used in a game. Some children are auditory learners. The concept or information presented is channeled through hearing the information, then acting upon it. Still, other children’s learning takes place through kinesthetic or tactile (hands-on) learning. These children learn through hands-on manipulation of objects or learning materials and only after sensory stimulation of the lesson or game does the objective become apparent. Our learning plans target these different approaches. Please review your child’s learning plan found on the family board outside each classroom.

### ***We also address the foundational areas of growth as children develop:***

Social-Emotional Growth: We support children in this area by nurturing their sense of trust and belonging. We provide opportunities to build self-confidence as they build their self-concept. Children engage in social experiences through play, group activities and partnering with other children as they pretend, discover and investigate their learning environment.

Intellectual Growth: We foster children’s abilities to ask questions and describe their feelings and thoughts. The curriculum offers experiences that encourage problem solving, decision making and challenges through activities that promote emerging literacy.

Physical Growth: We promote strengthening and refining of the body through eye/hand coordination, eye tracking, coordination of movements, spatial relationships and crossing the midline, which leads to emerging reading and writing skills.

## Classroom Design

COA classrooms are specially designed to respond to the age level, needs and abilities of every child, ensuring books, learning materials, accessories and games are accessible to all.

As children transition to each classroom, the learning areas increase. Interest areas in the preschool classrooms include art, blocks, computers, language acquisition, math and small manipulative, music and movement, sensory and science areas. Each of these areas promotes concept and skill building as children choose activities that interest them.

## Staff-to-Child Ratios and Maximum Group Size

Age of Children	Staff/Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Infant A: Birth to 6 months	1:5	12
Infant B: 6 months to 12 months	1:6	12
Toddlers: 12 months and under 2½ years	1:7	14
Preschool I: 2½ years and under 3 years	1:8	16
Preschool II: Three years	1:12	24
Preschool III: Four and five years	1:14	28
School age: Kindergarten to 11	1:18	36

Ratios for toddlers and preschoolers may be doubled for two hours at nap time as long as all children are resting quietly on their cots and enough staff is in the building to meet the regular required staff/child ratio if there is an emergency. Maximum group size is defined by the number of children in one group who may be cared for at any time. Limitations include nap and lunch times, outdoor play or special activities.

## Communication, Classroom Assignments and Transitions

At the time of enrollment your child is assigned to a classroom based on chronological age in relation to eligibility to begin public school. As your child progresses in abilities and age, we transition him or her to the next learning environment based on teacher and administration recommendation. You are kept informed of your child's progress through daily email reports. As your child gets older, you are notified of potential classroom transitions with an "I Am Growing" letter from administration. We follow a transition schedule to acquaint your child with a new classroom and achieve a level of comfort.

Children arrive at different times during the morning, so there may be occasions when we combine children in a transition room until all children and staff have arrived. We also may combine in the evening according to parent pickup times and staff schedules.

## Supervision

For the safety of the children, no child is ever left alone or unsupervised. This means that your child is within sight and hearing of childcare staff members at all times. We do not use mechanical devices such as baby monitors or walkie-talkies.

## **Behavior Expectations**

At Children of America we promote self-esteem building by helping your child develop self-control and responsibility for actions. Expected behavior is based on your child's developmental level. Appropriate guidance techniques used by our teachers include redirection, diversion and substitution. We never advocate the use of punishment, neither verbal nor physical, as a means of correcting inappropriate behaviors. We turn incidents into learning situations, according to the ability of the children involved, to help them understand the consequences of their actions. Children of preschool age are encouraged to use words to resolve conflicts. We look for acceptable behavior rather than dwell on negative behavior. By providing a positive role model for children, we manage the classroom using positive words, encouraging actions and focusing on each child's ability to make the right decisions.

## **Outdoor Experiences**

Our outdoor playgrounds are designed to stimulate physical fitness and social interactions. Our teachers participate with the children by providing games and activities that increase him or her physical abilities. Balls, beanbags, hoops and other materials are available to build coordination, strength and agility development. Your child should come to school in clothes that allow him/her to move freely. Sneakers or other closed-toe shoes are the best choice for safety when playing outdoors. Our outside play areas use a rubberized surface or soft synthetic turf instead of wood chips, sand or gravel. All perimeter and playground gates are locked and monitored so children can enjoy outdoor play safely. Children remain indoors during inclement weather and activities are supplemented through music and movement experiences and visiting COA City Place.

## **Nap Time**

Nap times are provided in accordance with your child's age. The infants in our program sleep whenever they wish. Individually labeled cribs for infants under 12 months are assigned so that an infant may rest at any time during the day. Infants are placed in a crib on their backs according to the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation. All children over 12 months of age, rest on an assigned cot. As our children grow, we have a scheduled nap time as noted on the daily schedule on the family board outside each classroom. The length of quiet time is in accordance with the state childcare rules and regulations. Check with your administrator for needed napping materials. Children 2 years of age and under cannot rest with pillows.

## **Items From Home**

Toys and other personal belongings should not be brought from home as each classroom provides sufficient learning materials for your child's day. During specific sharing days, your child's teacher may ask your child to bring something in for "Show and Tell". In that instance, the item must be labeled with your child's first and last name and taken home the same day.

Choices for a "Show and Tell" day may not include guns or other war toys. We are not responsible for lost items.

## Nutrition

Our nutritional program is guided by the following goals:

- Menu meets the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutritional standards and state licensing rules and regulations
- Food choices provide wholesome food selections
- Mealtime is pleasant with conversation and food group discussions
- Mealtime encourages family style dining

Families must provide infant food requirements except when participating in the CACFP Food Program. All food must be prepared and ready to serve, and come in a labeled bottle covered with a labeled bottle cap. We do not accept opened jars or boxes of baby food. Labels, including the infant's first and last name as well as the date must be on food containers, bottles and caps. We cannot accept bottles that have cereal or other foods mixed in. Nursing mothers may visit the center to feed or provide breast milk ready to serve (also labeled). Daily communication forms provide an area to insert the infant's last feeding and diaper change so we can stick to the schedule. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that refrigerated formula does not have to be warmed prior to feeding. We warm refrigerated bottles by holding them under tap water for several seconds and use bottle warmers for heating at most centers. Families are required to provide the center with an emergency supply of ready-to-feed formula, frozen breast milk, extra bottles and nipples.

Children who eat table food are served snacks and lunches that follow the recommended daily dietary allowances. Please review our menu to insure that your child is not allergic to any food being served. Many of our schools serve a light snack for early arrivals. Your child is welcome to participate in our early arrival snack but may not bring in food from home. If you discover a day when a snack contains foods your child is allergic to, please send in an alternative lunch that reflects several food group choices that meet CACFP guidelines.

We do not serve foods that may cause choking. If you are asked to provide a special snack food, do not include grapes with skin, popcorn, raw vegetables or candy. We are a peanut-free school; therefore, no nuts, peanut butter or other foods containing peanuts are served or can be brought into the school.

Family style dining is advocated unless restricted by a state's childcare rules and regulations. Family style dining is when teachers are encouraged to sit with the children and food is served in containers so children may serve themselves.

## Special Occasions

Speak with your administrator about your child's birthday or other special occasions when you wish to provide a special snack and/or beverage. We encourage healthy treats, keeping in mind local health regulations governing what foods may be brought into our school. To protect the children in your child's classroom who have food allergies, you must coordinate your celebration with your administrator. Many states require that food brought into a school must be store-bought rather than homemade. Check with your administrator for details.



## **HEALTH PRACTICES**

### **Precautions**

The health of everyone at Children of America is very important to us. We adhere to the concept of universal precautions. This means our staff helps to teach your child the personal skills necessary to keep him or her healthy and help to stop the spread of illness and disease. Children are taught to wash their hands after toileting, before and after meals, when coming in from outside and as needed. We also provide a consent form for your signature in the event you wish to have sunscreen, insect repellent or ointment applied to your child.

Special booties are worn over shoes in the infant room to help contain the spread of bacteria that might be brought in from the outside. Our facilities are professionally cleaned nightly and carpeted areas are cleaned frequently.

### **Clothing**

For the safety and comfort of your child, washable clothing closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes are required at Children of America. All children should bring at least one change of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks in a labeled zip-locked bag. We ask that everything be labeled with your child's first and last name, including hats, jackets, mittens, swimsuits and towels. We are not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

### **Illness and Contagious Diseases**

Parents are informed of any instance where their child may have been exposed to a contagious disease that affects children while at school. We contact the local health authorities if there is an outbreak or a reportable illness. A child who is suspected of having a communicable disease is isolated from other children until a family member can pick him or her up. Children who are absent because of a contagious disease may not return to school until the transmission period is over. In some instances, a doctor's note may be required. If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, you must notify Children of America within 24 hours.

### **Diapers**

Parents must provide labeled disposable diapers and wipes if their child is not fully toilet-trained. Cloth diapers are permitted if the child's healthcare provider requests they be used. Cloth diapers must be laundered by a commercial diaper service. We will support your efforts to help your child become toilet-trained. We ask that you supply us with at least two complete changes of clothes and a supply of disposable diapers and training pants each day. Diapers, clothing and training pants must be labeled with your child's first and last name. Soiled clothing is sealed in a disposable bag and given to you at the end of the day. We will make every effort to follow your directions to ensure consistency between home and school.

## Allergies

The staff at Children of America takes every precaution to make sure that children who have any kind of allergies are protected. Please inform the school administrator of any allergies your child may have on your enrollment forms. We also require any food that is brought in does not contain any peanut products.

## Smoke Free

To maintain a safe and comfortable working environment, Children of America prohibits smoking throughout the school.

## Medication

To ensure proper dispensing of medications to your child, please give all medications to administrative staff members. They will see that it is stored and dispensed properly. As-needed medications will be administered only when documented signs and symptoms are present. Our administrative staff will provide you with a medication authorization form that must be completed and on file. Nonprescription medications administered by Children of America staff are sunscreen, diaper ointment and insect repellent. Authorization forms for these are available during registration and any time at the front desk. Oral gel may be administered only when there is a medication authorization form completed by the family on file. Label dosages are followed. All medications must be in their original packaging and labeled with:

1. Child's first and last name
2. Medication name
3. Dosage
4. Frequency
5. Duration (e.g., number of days to be given)
6. Expiration date

Prescription medication is only administered if the frequency required is more than two times a day. Medication labeled "as needed" is administered only when accompanied by explicit instructions informing staff when medication is to be administered. Signs and symptoms to look for must be clear. A doctor's authorization is required for as-needed and long-term medications. Our staff properly disposes of any medications left at the facility past the time allotment listed on the medical authorization.

Sunscreen and insect repellent are applied at the teacher's discretion before children participate in outside activities. Diaper ointment is also applied at the teacher's discretion during diaper change. All of these are only applied if a family has filled out an authorization form, noting adverse reactions. The only variance to this is if the family requests something different. Children ages 9 years and up may administer their own sunscreen with supervision. Products must be in their original containers labeled with the child's first and last name. Manufacturer's instructions are followed.

## Medical Records and Vaccinations

All current medical and immunization records for your child must be submitted prior to your child attending on the first day. Our staff will keep you informed when immunizations need to be updated. For more information, visit the Schools for Disease Control website at [DCD.gov](http://DCD.gov). Families requesting immunizations be waived for religious or philosophic reasons must submit their request for a waiver in writing using the appropriate state forms where applicable. If you choose not to have your child immunized, he or she may be sent home when there is any instance of contagious disease. Your child also may be excluded from some activities that could put him or her at risk.

## Illness Policy Guidelines

Children are excluded from activities if their symptoms or illness prevent them from participating in routine activities or pose an increased risk to the child or other children or adults with whom the child comes into contact. Please keep your child at home if he or she is not well enough to participate in normal activities. A child may not come to school for 24 hours or will be sent home if he or she has a fever of 100° F or above and not be able to return for 24 hours and/or has one of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea (more than one loose stool or increased number of stools)
- Severe coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing (especially in infants under 6 months)
- Yellowish skin or eyes (may be signs of hepatitis)
- Tears, redness of eyelids, watery or stringy discharge (conjunctivitis/pink eye)
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Headache and stiff neck
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Vomiting
- Infected skin patches
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- Tea-colored urine
- Loss of appetite
- Unusually cranky, less active behavior

If your child is suspected of developing a communicable disease, he or she will be isolated from the rest of the class until you arrive.

## Common Contagious Diseases

Disease	Incubation Period	When it is "catching"	Symptoms	Length of Illness
Chicken Pox	4-21 days	1 day before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Rash</li> <li>• Itching</li> </ul> Individual spots begin as water blisters, spread over the whole body, form crusts by the fourth day	7-10 days Preventative: Varicella
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	Eggs hatch in 7-10 days and reach maturity 1-3 weeks later	By direct contact with an infested person or his or her personal belongings such as comb, brush or hat	Severe itching and scratching; nits attach to hairs as small, round, gray lumps	Exclude from school until treated
Conjunctivitis	24-72 hours	By contact with discharges from conjunctivae or contaminated articles	Pink or red eyeball with swelling of the eyelids and eye discharge	Exclude from school while symptomatic or 24 hours after treatment is completed
Ring Worm	4-10 days	By direct or indirect contact with lesions or contaminated surfaces	Circular with demarcated lesion; itching is common	Exclusion from school not necessary as long as lesion is properly covered
Streptococcal Diseases	Variable, often 1-3 days, maybe longer	By direct contact with infected persons and carriers or by contact with their respiratory droplets	Impetigo: multiple skin lesions, blisters turn into brown crusts Scarlet fever: fever and sore throat, Strep throat: sudden onset of fever, sore throat, sandpaper like rash Symptoms may be absent in some cases	Exclude from school until 24 hours of appropriate drug therapy is completed
Whooping Cough	7-14 days	From beginning of cough for 3-4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cold</li> <li>• Whooping cough</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> </ul>	4-6 weeks Preventative: DPT vaccine

## **Head Injuries**

Trained staff members assess all head injuries and look for symptoms of concussion, open wounds, etc. If warranted, they call 911.

## **Injury**

You will be informed by telephone or by written report upon pickup if your child is injured. In the event of a minor injury, trained staff will perform proper first aid care. You may want to consult with your family physician to determine whether the nature of the injury requires medical attention, vaccination or any other care. In the event that a serious injury has occurred, we call 911 and notify you immediately. We use the emergency medical treatment form we have on file that authorizes us to act on your behalf if you cannot be reached, ensuring there is no delay in your child receiving treatment. Children of America carries a student accident policy that covers the cost of treatment for any injury on our premises or while off-site on a school activity.

## **Biting**

We strive to minimize biting incidents. Toddlers, especially, often use biting as a form of communication. If your child is bitten by another child, we comfort him or her and care for his or her needs immediately. If your child bites another child, we develop a plan with you to try to correct the behavior. If biting continues, to protect the other children, you may be asked to temporarily remove your child or he or she may be suspended or dis-enrolled from the program.

## **Confidentiality**

We respect the right of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral and developmental records and information. Children of America will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the child's program plan without the written consent of the child's parents and will notify the parents if a child's record is subpoenaed.

## **Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

Children of America employees are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect by calling 800-562-2407 or 800-800-5556, depending on the circumstances.

Children of America cooperates in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the program, providing consent for disclosure of information from and allowing disclosure of information to any person and/or agency necessary for the prompt investigation of allegations and protection of children.

If a staff member is suspected, he or she will be removed from the work area and suspended with pay until the investigation has been concluded. Staff members cannot return to the school until they are cleared. Once cleared, they may return to their normal work schedule. If the allegations are proven, the staff member will be terminated immediately.

## **FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

Parents receive daily communication reports via email. General information as well as site-specific information is available on our website, ChildrenOfAmerica.com. Families also receive news on the family board outside their child's classroom.

### **Assessments**

Early screening is key to providing an effective literacy program. Each aspect of our curriculum, combined with the assessment initiatives set by diverse state/national parties, guides us when selecting screening tools. At COA, we use the following assessment programs: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), BRIGANCE® Early Childhood Screens, and Early Math Diagnostic (EMDA).

These tools measure your child's knowledge of important emergent literacy fundamentals, such as: name writing, alphabet knowledge, print and word awareness, literacy concepts, developing language and quantitative mathematics concepts. We conduct bi-annual assessments to evaluate our preschoolers' progress. By employing these standards, our children consistently outperform the national standards year after year.

### **School Digital Periodicals**

Each school has its own digital area on the COA website. Schools post upcoming events, curriculum specifics, teacher moments and several insider communications—all to keep our families involved and in touch.

### **Open Communication**

Children of America encourages open communication to address concerns about your child's experiences. Your administrator and assistant administrator are available to set a time to discuss issues or situations that may arise. By keeping an open dialogue, we are able to discuss and resolve your specific concerns. We also assign a Regional Manager who oversees several of our schools to assist if necessary.

### **Special Events**

Our school offers several events during the year to encourage families, children and others to come together and join in the fun. These events may include open house, special evening get-togethers, fall harvest fun as well as holiday celebrations. We encourage you to participate and connect with other parents whose children attend our school.

### **Refer a Friend**

We encourage you to tell your friends about our school. If a family enrolls a child as a result of your referral you will receive One Week of FREE tuition. Tuition is reimbursed after the child's fourth week with us. Your friends need to notify us at the time of their child's enrollment that you have referred them. This offer is void if referral notification is made after the child's enrollment.

### **Always Close By**

Our schools are equipped with video surveillance monitors in classrooms, outdoors and in the lobby. This is part of our security system as well as a service families can elect to purchase to view their child in the classroom through their computer. We also utilize a customer-care component to our telephone system that records all calls for quality control.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **Enrollment**

Children of America is an equal opportunity provider of childcare services. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, religion, gender or national origin. We accept children with disabilities and special needs based on our ability to meet their needs and will make “responsible accommodations” based on the recommendations of the child’s healthcare provider and families. We may ask you to share professional evaluations during the enrollment process when necessary to determine how best to meet the needs of your child. At this time, you will be informed of and given a chance to agree upon any variations in regular procedures that need to be undertaken to meet the specific needs of your child.

Upon enrollment, we introduce your child to the assigned classroom and teachers. You should review the Family Guide so that any questions you might have may be answered prior to your child attending. We request that all enrollment forms be completed and turned in on or before your child’s first day. Your child’s health assessment, including immunization and medical records and proof of birth, must accompany the enrollment forms. The nonrefundable registration fee and first week’s tuition are due on or before your child’s first day of attendance.

### **Part-time Enrollment**

Children of America offers part-time enrollment opportunities until a room is full. Once the room is full, the family is given the option to continue with the part-time schedule or begin a full-time schedule. Either way, they must pay the full-time rate.

### **Sign In/Out**

For the safety and security of every child, all children must be signed in and out by a parent or an individual who has been specifically authorized by you. (There’s a place for this on our enrollment form.) Everyone must have an access code to enter, so be sure you do not allow unauthorized persons to enter the building behind you. All children should be escorted through the parking lot and to and from their classrooms every day. This gives you a chance to check your child’s cubby and the family board for upcoming events as well as speak with the teacher for any additional information. Those who are authorized to pick up your child must present picture identification before the child is released to them. Older children (anyone under 18 years of age) may not sign themselves or their siblings in or out. If custody is an issue, please provide a copy of the notarized court order so we can follow the correct legal course of action.

### **Open Door**

We welcome and encourage visits by families at any time. Custodial parents and guardians have unlimited access to the school during business hours. Please stop in at the front desk and let us know of your arrival so we can assist you. If our administrator is not available, our assistant administrator will help you. We also designate an administrative assistant or teacher to be accessible if the administrator and assistant administrator are unavailable or out of the office.

## Tuition and Fees

The tuition agreement (Schedule of Fees) given to you with the enrollment packet outlines the times and days of the week your child attends and the tuition charged. Tuition is due the first day of each week and a **\$20** late fee is charged if payment is not made by close of business on Tuesday. Tuition for monthly payers is due by the first business day of the month. A **\$20** late fee is charged if not paid by the close of the second business day of the month.

Tuition must remain current so your child may continue to attend.

## Late Pickup Charges

Please observe the operating hours of the school and make every effort to pick up your child before the end of the day. If you are late, our staff and administrators are not permitted to remove your child from the school or transport him or her to another location. If such an event occurs the administrator will call all contact numbers including parents, guardians and authorized emergency contacts. If contact is unsuccessful, the administrator will contact the appropriate community authorities. When children are not picked up at their scheduled time, a fee of **\$15 per family** for each quarter hour will be charged to your account. Please inform the school if you will be late so we can accommodate your child until you arrive. Tuition will not be refunded or pro-rated.

## Payment Methods

Tuition and fees are paid using COA Fast Pay (reoccurring payment system) with either ACH or debit/credit cards (MC/VA/DISC). Cash or checks are not accepted. When using a credit card, a 2 percent fee will be added to your total payment. Any NSF will result in a **\$50** service charge and must be replaced immediately. Tuition payment methods will be restricted for repeat non-sufficient funds.

## Discounts and Credits

Check with the school administrator to see if you qualify for a corporate or family discount. All discounts and coupons must be presented at time of enrollment to qualify. A child also is eligible for a vacation credit (five consecutive days) on the enrollment anniversary for each child's continuous year of attendance. This credit is to encourage families to spend time together. While using the vacation credit, your child may not attend the school.

## Holiday Closings

	Halloween (early closing)
New Year's Day	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Presidents' Day	Memorial Day
Independence Day	Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	

Schools may close early on the day before a holiday. Families are informed by email and notices posted near the check-in computer. COA's standard policy is to observe Friday as a holiday when a holiday falls on Saturday, and Monday when the holiday falls on Sunday. Exceptions may occur and will be announced in advance.



## **Inclement Weather Notification**

Decisions to close a school are made by following the state and local restrictions in your area. In the event the school is closed or closing early, an Emergency Text Alert is sent to the family. Based on the message received, please make arrangements to pick up your child. Children are safely cared for by staff members until every child is picked up. Tuition is not refunded during such closings.

## **Emergencies and Accidents**

The school has devised several procedures to follow in the event an emergency occurs while a child is in our care. In the event of fire or tornado, our staff follows the written instructions posted in each classroom, describing emergency evacuation routes and the procedures to be followed to assure that children arrive at the designated spot. To prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the school conducts monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills. Should we need to evacuate due to fire or weather conditions, loss of power, heat or water, we will evacuate to the designated location you were given when you enrolled your child. A sign will be posted on the front door, if possible, indicating we have been evacuated and the location where you can pick up your child. Parents are contacted as soon as possible and instructed to pick up their child. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts as listed on your child's enrollment form.

In the unlikely event there is an environmental threat or threat of violence, our staff will secure the children in the safest location possible, contact and follow directions given by the proper authorities and notify parents as soon as the situation allows. Parents also will receive an incident report.

There is always one staff member present who has training in first aid, communicable diseases and CPR. In the case of a minor accident or injury, our staff will administer basic first aid and TLC. If the injury or illness is more serious, first aid is administered and parents are contacted immediately to help decide on an appropriate course of action. If any injury or illness is life threatening, EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Our staff members cannot transport children in their vehicles. Only parents or EMS can transport.

An incident/accident report will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the injury or accident, if any of the following occur: the child has an illness, accident or injury that requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; the child has to be transported by emergency squad; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs that jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, the report shall be available within 24 hours after the incident occurs. The center shall also contact licensing personnel from the appropriate office within 24 hours when there is a general emergency or serious incident, injury or illness. The report will be provided to licensing personnel within three days of the incident.

## **Withdrawal**

Should you need to withdraw your child, we require two weeks' written notice prior to your last day of attendance. Use the two-week notice form located at the back of this guide to inform us of your departure. Your account will continue to be billed the weekly tuition until a two-week written notice is provided.

## **Outside Employment for Staff**

Children of America discourages its employees from making independent childcare arrangements with school families. If, in the event you enter into an arrangement with an employee, it must be done off school grounds and with the full knowledge and understanding that the employee enters into the agreement as a private citizen and not as an employee of Children of America. Children of America is not responsible for its employees away from the school and outside of their working hours and is not liable for their actions or omissions. You may be required to sign an acknowledgement and waiver to this effect.

## **Dis-enrolling**

Should one of the following situations arise, Children of America may ask you to dis-enroll your child with or without a two-week notice:

- Failure to pay your child's tuition in full and on time.
- Verbal/physical abuse by you towards management/staff or your child to other children or staff
- Your child bites another child
- Noncompliance with immunization and exclusion due to illness

In instances where Children of America decides it is in the best interest of the child to terminate enrollment, the child and the family's needs shall be considered along with referrals to other agencies or facilities when appropriate.

## **Swimming**

School-age summer campers may be involved in swimming activities at the local public pool. A lifeguard is present at all times and our childcare staff also actively supervises the children. Parents must sign a COA permission slip, before their child can attend. The permission slip also contains the staff to child ratio that is followed while the children are at the pool and specifies if any additional adults will be in attendance. Younger children have access to water play activities at the center, including sprinklers and small wading pools. Parents are required to sign a written permission slip before their child can engage in water play with standing water. Please send swimsuits, towels and sunscreen for your children. Sunscreen also requires a signed medication authorization form. If your child burns easily, please include a lightweight T-shirt he or she can wear over his or her swimsuit.

## **Transportation/Field Trips**

Children of America offers transportation to and from a child's elementary school and field trips only with written parental permission. Drivers are trained in CPR/First Aid and all procedures for transporting children. Vehicles used for transportation meet the safety standards set by DMV and are kept in good condition. State statutes about safety belts and child restraints are followed. Children are required to adhere to safety control standards such as buckled seatbelts and remaining seated at all times. We reserve the right to deny transportation service to children behaving in an unsafe manner during transport. When transporting, the safety of all children is our primary concern. Children of America reserves the right to discontinue bus transportation to and from other schools during the school year and alter transportation routes as needed.

We reserve the right to deny transportation service to children behaving in an unsafe manner during transport. When transporting, the safety of all children is our primary concern. Before departing, a count is taken of all children and marked on an attendance sheet specifically created for the trip. Upon arrival at the destination, another count is taken to ensure all the children have arrived safely. This procedure is repeated when leaving the destination. During the course of field trips, each staff member has specific children he or she is responsible for supervising. Before any child participates in a routine or special trip, the school must obtain written permission from the parent or guardian. If a child needs transportation due to an emergency, such as an accident or injury, 911 will be called.

At times a child may arrive at the center from another program. If a child is scheduled to arrive and does not, we first contact the parent to confirm the child is scheduled to be at school that day; next we contact the program he or she is to have arrived from; and then consult with the parent to determine further action. For this reason, it is very important you contact the school to let us know when your child is not attending. Children of America reserves the right to discontinue bus transportation to and from other schools during the school year and alter transportation routes as needed.

## **Typical Daily Schedule**

Our daily program schedules are created based on the developmentally appropriate practices for each age group. The times allocated to each activity may vary depending upon the children's interests and abilities. A copy of your child's typical schedule is posted outside his or her assigned room.

## **Evening Care**

Children of America does not provide evening care.

## **License**

Please take time to read the licensing information you receive at enrollment.

## Family Code of Conduct

COA expects families to adhere to the following standards of behavior at our schools:

- Turn off your cell phones. Bringing your child to and from school is a time to be child-focused, not distracted.
- Watch your language. Use appropriate language while on school property. Foul language will not be tolerated and may lead to dismissal of your child.
- Be careful of your behavior. Remember children are impressionable, and they are watching. If you have a concern, please conduct yourself properly and seek administrative assistance.
- Be security-minded. After entering your code to open our doors, please do not allow unregistered guests to gain access. Our staff is responsible—and happy to—attend to visitors.
- Extend courtesy to others. Your child is anxious to see you. Take a moment and ask your preschool child about your child's day. For younger children, read the daily communication sheets prepared for you about your child.
- Support our policy to discourage divulging Children of America information through social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.
- Parents or visitors may not film or record any of our children with video, camera or phone equipment. This protects the safety and security of all our children.

Thank you for your support.



## Nondiscrimination

Children of America does not discriminate based on race, cultural heritage, national origin, marital status, religion, political beliefs, disability or sexual orientation in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 327, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877 8339. In addition, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD 3027) found online at [ASCR.USDA.gov/Complaint\\_Filing\\_Cust.html](http://ASCR.USDA.gov/Complaint_Filing_Cust.html), at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA providing the same information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Standard mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [Program.Intake@USDA.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@USDA.gov)



### Two-Weeks Notice

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_  
Hereby give Children of America a Two Weeks Notice from the date listed below to  
withdraw my child from

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Location of Center)

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Day Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that in order for my Two Weeks Notice to be valid,  
I must sign and date the form. This form is also to be signed by an administrator  
of the program. I further understand that I am to keep a copy of this signed f  
orm in my records for six months.*

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Administrator Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## **Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have read Children of America’s Family Guide and agree to abide by the contents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Child’s First and Last Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**