



## Parent Handbook

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The mission of Our Children's Center is to educate children in a dynamic, warm, engaging, responsive, multi-cultural environment designed both to stimulate and to nurture them; to support and fairly compensate a highly-skilled professional staff; to promote and maintain a diverse student and staff population; and to foster a strong sense of community among families.



## An Introduction

Our Children's Center (OCC) is a private, non-profit Montessori preschool and kindergarten. We welcome families from diverse religious, cultural and economic backgrounds. Located in downtown State College, OCC offers a variety of educational programs with flexible options for children ages 13 months to 6 years of age.

Montessori education uses a "whole child" with activities designed to promote social skills, emotional and cognitive growth and physical coordination. Teachers prepare the classroom environment so that the activities presented are attractive to children, developmentally appropriate, multi-sensorial and self-correcting.

Most of the learning is self-directed. Respect for self, others and the environment is a core Montessori principle. The goal of the Montessori educational philosophy is to develop autonomous, competent, empathetic, responsible problem-solvers who will make a positive impact on the world one day.

Our Board of Directors oversees the school's budget and ensures that the school's goals and programs are aligned with our mission. The OCC Board of Directors employs a Head of School to organize and supervise the school's programs.

Tara Steinbugl is the school's Head of School, charged with ensuring the smooth day-to-day functioning of the school, meeting the licensing regulations for both the PA Department of Human Services and The PA Department of Education, curriculum and staff development, grant writing and creating systems for continuous quality improvement for our program. Amy Adkins serves the Office Manager and is responsible for student registration and records, accounting and assisting with daily operations.

"If we could say, 'We are respectful and courteous in our dealing with children--we treat them as we would like to be treated ourselves,' we should have mastered a great educational principle and be setting an example of a good education." ~ Maria Montessori



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Dear Families,

Welcome to Our Children's Center Montessori School. Your child, and indeed, your entire family are part of a special early childhood education program: a school committed to the positive development of children, parents and staff. Our Children's Center is a community-centered school whose mission is to offer the highest quality MONTessori education for all children.

At OCC, we aim to enroll not only a child but the family. We hope that you will take advantage of the school's social and community building events. Parental participation is a vital component of our program. We firmly believe that we can not educate your child without you. Through Board participation, volunteering (either in the classroom or out), or attending school functions, your involvement enriches our school community, and we hope the experience of being part of OCC will enrich your life as well.

This Parent Handbook contains important information regarding OCC's policies and procedures. Each family receives the handbook upon entry to the program and should maintain it throughout their family's enrollment. Should alterations to the content be required, parents will be notified.

Please review your Parent Handbook carefully, and sign and return the Acknowledgement of Receipt within two weeks of enrollment. As always, please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Your children are our source of inspiration, awe and wonder. Let us begin the year together with excitement and anticipation.

Sincerely,

Tara Steinbugl  
Head of School



## Our Children's Center ~Mission~

Our school's vision is to educate children in an engaging and responsive environment designed to both stimulate and nurture them; foster a strong sense of community among our families; to support a highly skilled professional staff; and to promote, encourage and facilitate a philanthropic attitude toward, and engagement with, the surrounding community in order to ensure that the school's children, families, staff, and community together develop a sense of respect for themselves and for others.

To support this mission, Our Children's Center will:

- Support Montessori teachers by providing appropriate materials and facilities in the service of creating a thoughtfully prepared environment for the children;
- Encourage an interconnected network of learning opportunities among students, staff, and parents by offering parenting workshops, avenues for professional development, and ways for community members to share their expertise with our students;
- Develop and maintain a climate of grace and courtesy, kinship, and respect among students and the adults who educate them;
- Facilitate relationships among families through regular written and oral communication between school and home, service projects, volunteer and leadership opportunities support and interest groups and social events;
- Showcase the strengths of the Montessori philosophy of early childhood education by exemplifying the tenets of the philosophy in practice
- Fund scholarships that create educational opportunities for Montessori-minded families with financial need;



## The Montessori Philosophy

Respect is at the core of the Montessori philosophy-- respect for oneself, for others, for life, and for the environment. Ground rules and behavioral expectations for both children and adults in Montessori settings are based upon these tenets.

Specific educational practices common to most MONTessori programs include multi-age groupings, beautiful and carefully designed learning environments, emphasis on teacher observation and research, a focus on the development of the "whole child", children's selection of materials from within an appropriate range, and clear social and behavioral expectations.

In all aspects of learning. Children move at their own pace, repeating activities until a sense of inner mastery moves them on to the next level of difficulty.. A rich array of hands-on materials is offered, engaging the child in learning on many levels.

- Practical Life activities-- e.g., hand washing, sweeping, and sewing-- develop children's hand-eye coordination, sense of sequence, and ability to remain with the entire cycle of an activity. Practical Life materials enable children to learn how to care for themselves and the environment.
- The Sensorial materials-- a rich array of grading, sorting, and sensory discrimination activities develop children's perceptual abilities and refine their observation skills.
- Open-ended materials-- blocks, sand, dramatic play and art media-- encourage exploration and self-expression while allowing each child to impose his or her organizational style upon the process.
- Literacy and numerical activities, two other well-developed curriculum areas, permeate all aspects of classroom life. Science and cultural experiences enable the child to view the world's similarities and differences-- and to relish life on this planet.
- Music and movement offer the child vehicles for personal expression and joy. Throughout the schools year, curriculum materials are continually revised and expanded in response to the children's changing needs and interests.



In order to design and facilitate learning in these highly-individualized environments, Montessori teachers must be well prepared. They need a complete understanding of child development and the Montessori curriculum, as well as excellent observation and communication skills. Ongoing professional development is required of all staff and tailored to individual needs and interests.

### General Information

OCC Address and Phone	Our Children's Center Montessori 411 S. Burrowes Street State College, PA 16801 Phone: 814-237-1785 Fax: 814-237-1585
Website and Email	<a href="http://www.occmontessori.org">www.occmontessori.org</a> <a href="mailto:occmontessori@gmail.com">occmontessori@gmail.com</a>
OCC Hours	Our Children's Center opens for before-school care at 7:30 a.m. and closes the after-school program at 5:30 p.m.
Contacting Us	The OCC office is typically staffed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Please note, however, that our jobs take us to all parts of the building. Should you need to reach us, please feel free to email or leave a voicemail message; messages are checked frequently.
Messages for Teachers	We realize that you may have an important messages to convey to the staff. Please email all correspondence to the school email <a href="mailto:occmontessori@gmail.com">occmontessori@gmail.com</a> with your child's teacher(s) in the subject line. Messages will be forwarded.



<p>Student Absences</p>	<p>Please call or email the office by 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent that day. Please give the reason for the absence so that we may record it in our illness tracking log.</p> <p>If you know in advance that your child will not be at school on a particular day (including vacations), please let us know in advance.</p>
<p>Non-discrimination Policy</p>	<p>Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sexual orientation or gender identity. Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods. Any individual/client/student(and/or their guardian), who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with the following:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Department of Public Welfare; Bureau of Equal Opportunity Room 223, Health and Welfare Building PO Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17105</p>



## The Rules as School

School wide expectations help children become independent in the environment and aid in the development of the school as a peaceful community.

WE list the following general OCC Expectations below to enhance parental awareness. Please reinforce these rules when in your child's company at school. Additionally, be aware that many of the ground rules apply to everyone, including adults.

The following are the general ground rules at Our Children's Center

- Use quiet walking feet.
- While walking in the hallways, stay near an adult.
- Enter only classroom spaces in which you are invited.
- Use an inside, gentle voice inside the school.
- Touch another child's work only when invited.
- Work together with another child only when invited.
- Keep hands to your own body.
- Play with different friends each day- Share your friendship.
- Wash hands upon entering the classroom, after eating and using the restroom.
- Put your materials away when finished so they are ready for the next person.
- Interrupt politely (when necessary) by gently placing a hand on a teacher's shoulder or arm and waiting for eye contact.
- Take care of each other, the materials, the environment and our world.



<p>Self-Direction</p>	<p>At OCC, we encourage and expect children to become self-sufficient in many ways. From remembering to put away a work before getting out another work, to helping clean up a spill, to learning ways to tell another child that he or she wishes to work alone, every day provides countless opportunities for your child to gain independence at an appropriate level. You may be surprised at the many activities your child will start to do at home after attending OCC for a time.</p>
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## Getting to Know Your Family and Encouraging you to get to know Us

<p>Getting to know your child</p>	<p>We will ask you to complete a Parent Questionnaire at the beginning of the year so that we can learn about your child and your family. Also, if your child has an IEP or IFSP, please provide a copy to the Executive Director upon entry to the school.</p> <p>During the school year, you are the best person to tell us about your child. Please help us by keeping us informed about any special situations in your family that might impact your child's day. This information can be shared via a quick note to the teacher or email to <a href="mailto:occmontessori@gmail.com">occmontessori@gmail.com</a></p>
<p>Parent Information Meetings</p>	<p>Throughout the year, we will host informational meetings about Montessori Philosophy, child development, or other parent/family education topics. Please watch your email for more information.</p>
<p>Volunteering and Visiting the classroom</p>	<p>Even though we request a morning farewell at the door, this in no way implies that you are not welcome in the classroom. We encourage parent volunteers to become a part of our classroom communities.</p> <p>You may wish to read with children; help with special activities or art projects; or share with the children a special skill or area of interest of yours. Please contact the office or your children's teacher if you have a special subject you would like to share with us. We also hope all parents will visit the classroom at some point in the school year to see how a montessori classroom works. Please schedule these visits with the teacher or office staff.</p>



## Dismissal Procedures

<p>Dismissal</p>	<p>It is important that your child be picked up on time. It can be a frightening experience for a small child to be left at the school after the routine departure time. Late pick-ups also interrupt the schedules.</p> <p>If an unexpected situation arises such that you cannot pick up your child on-time, please notify us so we can explain to your child why you are late. Late fees will be noted to your family's account.</p> <p>All children are dismissed from their classroom.</p>
<p>Tuition Late Fee</p>	<p>Tuition is due on the first of the month. A 3% late fee will be added to the amount unpaid by the seventh day of the month. If you are having financial difficulties and are unable to meet this obligation, please speak with the Executive Director. All such information will be held in strictest confidence.</p>
<p>After school</p>	<p>Our After School Program is held in the Big Room. Primary children begin their afternoons in their classrooms. Primary students will move to the big room between 4-4:15. . Toddlers begin their afternoons in the Older Toddler classroom. Snack is offered to all children by 3:45 each afternoon.</p>



	<p>During After School, our focus is on FUN! We will attempt to play both inside and outside daily. Special projects, crafts, or activities will occur throughout the week.</p> <p>All Primary Children should be wearing their outside shoes while in afterschool. Backpacks and coats will be kept on the ramp near the lobby.</p>
Dismissal Late Fees	Late pick-up fees are \$5 per 10 minutes. Late pick-up fees after 5:30 pm \$10 per 5 minutes.



## Arrival Procedures

<p>Parking</p>	<p>Street parking is available along both sides of Burrowes Street. We recommend utilizing both the 300 and 400 blocks. Please refrain from parking in spaces designed as "church only," as those are reserved for UBBC employees. Should there be no openings, please consider circling around until a space becomes available. Borough streets are regularly patrolled, and unfortunately if the parking patrol feels you are parked illegally, you will be ticketed.</p>
<p>Entrances</p>	<p>Please use the Burrowes Street courtyard door (through the green gate) for drop-off and pick-up. All children should be signed in and out in the log book in the lobby.</p>
<p>Before School</p>	<p>Primary children enrolled in Before School should place their belongings in their cubbies, change their shoes, and proceed to the big room if before 8:30. . Toddlers begin their day in the toddler room. Please remember that you must be signed up to use these services.</p>
<p>Classroom Arrivals</p> <p>8:30-8:50 for Toddlers</p> <p>8:50-9:10 for 3 and 5-day Primary classes</p>	<p>It is important that your child be on time for her session. Young children are comforted by regular routines. The familiarity of predictable rhythm and routines helps them feel secure in the environment. Please keep in mind that arrival time is our first chance in the day to make contact with each child.</p> <p>We regard this initial greeting and orientation time as highly important; it can set the tone for the rest of the day. Consistently arriving late, when all the children are already busy working or already in circle, can be anxiety-producing for some children.</p>



<p>Why say goodbye at the door?</p>	<p>Saying "goodbye" to your child at the door of the classroom is sometimes difficult for your child and for you. You may be tempted to follow your child into the classroom to say goodbye; this practice, however, may make your child feel less secure and lengthen the time it takes him or her to settle into the classroom.</p> <p>We encourage you to say a brief farewell at the classroom door, modeling a cheerful attitude so that your child does not sense any ambivalence on your part. Sometimes, a child creates a small goodbye ritual, doing everything in the same order before entering the classroom. Keeping your goodbye ritual outside the classroom helps your child move into the classroom space and separate from you more easily.</p>
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### General Daily Routines

<p>General Daily Schedule</p>	<p>7:30-8:30/8:45 am        8:30-8:50 am        8:50-9:10 am        8:50-11:30 am        11:30-12:30        12:30 pm        11:30-1:00 pm        1:00-3:15 pm        3:15 pm        3:30 pm        3:30-5:30 pm</p>	<p>Before-School        Toddler Arrival        Primary Arrival        Morning Work Cycle        Lunch, Play Time        Half Day Dismissal        Lunch        Afternoon Session/ Nap        Toddler Dismissal        Primary Dismissal        After School begins</p>
<p>Office Hours</p>	<p>8:30am-4:30pm</p>	



<p>Daily walks</p>	<p>Each day the children spend some time outdoors, weather permitting. Younger children play in the play yard adjacent to the school or take walks around the block. Children walk with a partner; usually a younger child is paired with an older child or teacher as he or she learns about this new experience.</p> <p>Older children go for walks in the neighborhood (also walking with partners), play in the play yard or play at the central parklet.</p>
<p>Indoor play</p>	<p>The All-purpose room, also known as the Big Room, is also utilized as an indoor play area with gross-motor activities supervised by teachers. We have climbers, scooters, stationary "exercise" equipment, and many other fun activities for the children.</p> <p>Pre-3 children have a designated space in the All-Purpose room as well for indoor and large motor play.</p>



## Parent/ School Communications

<p>Communication from School to Home</p>	<p>In an attempt to keep parents informed, the OCC website (<a href="http://www.occmontessori.org">www.occmontessori.org</a>) has been enhanced. There you will find an updated calendar, as well as other great information for both new and current families. To help you stay informed with the happenings at OCC, all parents can expect classroom reflections, periodic all school emails, and quarterly newsletters. Weekly Classroom Reflections will offer you photos and brief descriptions of the "happenings" in your child's classroom throughout the week. Emails from the OCC office will aim to both inform and update families on current events at the school. Newsletters will be published in the late fall and spring. These feature articles from each classroom as well as other helpful (and often educational) information.</p>
<p>Keeping the Lines of Communication Open</p>	<p>The importance of communication and understanding between teachers and parents cannot be overemphasized, each sees the child in a different setting and all different times of the day and consequently sees different facets of his/her personality. Knowing about changes (e.g. moving, new baby, grandparents visiting) can greatly help us in understanding changes in the child's behavior and attitudes in school. Each classroom features a wipe board outside of the door for daily communications. Toddler families will also receive a written "daily reports", offering information about their child's diapering/potting, foods, interactions and overall temperament. While we are strongly of the mindset that the staff should be open and available for parent-teacher communications, sometimes such communications during the school day can be difficult. If you would like additional feedback on how your child is doing, or simply have questions, feel free to speak with the head of school or send an email to <a href="mailto:occmontessori@gmail.com">occmontessori@gmail.com</a>. She or your child's teacher, will respond as quickly as possible.</p>



Resources	Many wonderful resources are available online via our website. We also have a Parent Resource Board located outside the Older Toddler Room.
Conferences	Parent-teacher conferences are available for all parents several times each year, with additional conferences when needed. Please see the current school calendar for scheduled conference days. Sign-ups will be available as each conference time nears. If you have concerns that you would like to share about your child before your conference time, please contact the head of school.
Progress Reports	Written progress reports for each child are sent home 3 times during the school year. These offer an additional source of detailed information regarding your child's experience in the classroom, academic progress and overall development. We will utilize classroom observations, the Ages and Stages Developmental screening Tool, as well as Student portfolios to provide parents with a comprehensive view of their child's progress and development.



## Supplies for School

<p>Inside Appropriate Shoes</p>	<p>All children should have a pair of "indoor shoes" to wear within the classrooms. These shoes should be easily put on and off by the child. No slippers please. "Indoor shoes" are not necessary for Before and After school care. Please plan for these shoes to remain at OCC.</p>
<p>Outside Appropriate Shoes</p>	<p>Children should wear weather appropriate shoes to school each day. All footwear should be comfortable and sturdy. For your child's safety, we strongly recommend sneakers as the safest footwear for active play. Children trip easily in sandals and dress shoes, and boots are slippery on the linoleum floors.</p> <p>We discourage flip-flops or other types of loose-fitting footwear for outdoor wear at school.</p>
<p>No Toys Please</p>	<p>We ask that children not bring toys to school as they often become a source of confusion and heartache in the classroom. Please explain to your child that some things are for school and some things are just for home. Items found in nature, however, are always welcome.</p>
<p>Children's Cubbies</p>	<p>Please check your child's cubby regularly to ensure that clothing is season appropriate and the correct size</p>



## Snack Time

<p>Snacks</p>	<p>Nutrition is an integral part of the daily program at OCC. Our goals include increasing children's acceptance of a wide variety of foods and promote good eating habits for optimal physical and mental development. Snack time provides an excellent opportunity for working toward these goals.</p> <p>OCC parents are asked to contribute a small fee for snacks each semester. This helps to offset the cost to purchase them. Typically, each classroom is served one carbohydrate and either a fruit, vegetable or dairy product.</p> <p>In our primary classrooms, snack is set out near a table, designed as the snack table in the classroom. Children monitor their own hunger level to determine when they will have a snack. Pre-3 children enjoy a group snack midway through the morning. In keeping with promoting healthy habits, water is available to drink with snack.</p>
<p>OCC is Nut-Free</p>	<p><b>OCC is a NUT-FREE school.</b> An understanding of peanut/tree-nut allergies is essential to the health and safety of the children attending OCC. In some cases, peanut allergies are so severe that a child can react to peanuts when airborne, as well as when they come into contact with skin.</p> <p>Please do not bring lunches or snacks that contain peanuts or tree-nuts (almonds, walnuts, ect.). As a safety precaution, when your children enter the classroom each morning, children will be asked to wash hands and faces at the sink.</p>



## Lunch Time

<p>Lunch Time</p>	<p>If your child brings lunch to school, please pack a nutritious lunch of foods they enjoy. A placemat and cooler pack should also be included. Please send reasonable child-sized portions. Microwaves are available for heating up leftovers, often a nutritious choice for your child (and you will also know if they liked last night's dinner!). Please limit the number of items to 3-5 different foods. Sometimes too many choices cause confusion and children actually eat less food.</p> <p>Please avoid pre-packaged lunch meals. In our experience, they are nutritionally inferior, they end up largely uneaten, and if microwaveable, they take longer to heat, so your children may have to wait longer than the other children to eat their lunch.</p> <p>We try to encourage the children to make their best choices with regard to the order in which they eat their lunch. However, we will not police their choices. Please pack only items that you are comfortable with them choosing. Desserts are discouraged.</p> <p>Please note that lunches are not refrigerated. Cooler packs <b>must</b> be utilized to maintain foods requiring cooler temperatures. Lifter lunches will not remain cool throughout the day, however. Please be sure to disregard as necessary.</p>
<p>Zero Waste</p>	<p>OCC is aiming to become a Zero-Waste facility. In doing so, we ask that all children pack lunches in a fashion that is "earth-friendly." Please avoid individually, pre-packaged goods (including individual yogurt and applesauce containers, tubed yogurts or applesauce). We also ask that children bring reusable drink containers. We appreciate your cooperation as we encourage our children to understand and appreciate the importance of aiming toward a zero-waste lifestyle.</p>



Catered Lunches	<p>OCC now offers catered lunches. Lunch includes an entrée (spaghetti, pizza, macaroni and cheese, sub sandwich), veggies, and fruit. Sign-up for these lunches is online or at the office.. Lunches must be purchased monthly, there is no adjustment for absences, or school closures. Menus are available on our website. Children who do not participate in catered lunch may enjoy PIZZA THURSDAY! Individual sign up sheets are located in the log book in the lobby. All accounts will be charged monthly if you choose to participate in either of these programs. We do ask that children enjoying catered lunches not bring additional lunch items that day.</p>
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### Forms and Documentation

Emergency Contact Information	<p>At the beginning of the school year, or when your child enrolls, you will complete an Emergency Contact Form. This is kept in the office so we can reach you if necessary. We have copies in each classroom, on the playground, and available for field trips excursions.</p> <p>Please make sure your emergency contact information is current at all times. Please notify us of changes in home, work, or cell phone numbers, physicians, and/or emergency contact individuals as soon as such changes occur. Office staff will check with you every six months ensure your information is current.</p>
Health Assessments	<p>All children enrolled at Our Children's Center are required to have an age-appropriate Health Assessment completed by their physician. This report must be submitted keep enrollment and updated regularly. Immunization records (or "Refusal to Immunize" documentation) must also be on file. Returning students will receive notice of need for renewal. Should your child have an annual physician exam scheduled, please have a form on-hand. Forms are available at <a href="http://www.occmontessori.org">www.occmontessori.org</a> .</p>
All About Me Pages	<p>All families enrolled at OCC are asked to complete "All About Me" photo pages. These are displayed in the child's classroom for them to enjoy and share with their friends. These forms are available online.</p>



Accident Report	If your child has sustained an injury during the day, you will receive a brief written accident report detailing the nature of the injury, how it occurred, and which staff members were present. Please sign and place in the office "In-Box." A copy will be kept in your child's file. The original will then be placed in the Parent Folders in the lobby.
Medication Form	These forms, available in the log-in book in the lobby, must be completed for any lotions, creams, or lip balms to be applied to your child. All medications must be in their original containers and kept in a locked location within the school. Please contact the office for the appropriate course of action for your situation.



## Illness Policies & Procedures

<p>Illness-Onset at Home</p>	<p>Your child's health is very important to us. Please call the office to let us know when your child is going to be absent due to illness. Please keep your child at home until he or she is symptom-free without medication for at least 24 hours.</p> <p>This 24-hour period ensures that your child is fully recovered and not contagious before returning to school. A good rule of thumb is that if your child is not well enough to participate fully in the day's activities (<u>and this included outside play</u>), he/she should stay at home.</p> <p>When you call the school to inform us of an absence, or when you receive a diagnosis for your child, please let us know. You can email or leave a voicemail message about your child's symptoms and/or illness. We are required to track illnesses in a log at school.</p>
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<p><i>Illness-Onset at School</i></p>	<p>If your child becomes ill at OCC, we will call you to arrange for immediate pick-up. If we cannot reach you, we will call the individuals listed on your emergency card. We will keep your child in the office under staff supervision, until you arrive.</p> <p>We will call you if your child has one or more of these symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A temperature of 100 degrees or more</li> <li>● A temperature below 100 with behavior changes</li> <li>● Vomiting or diarrhea</li> <li>● An unexplained rash</li> <li>● Symptoms of a communicable disease</li> <li>● Unusual or persistent drowsiness</li> <li>● Unusual and persistent behavior change</li> <li>● Wheezing or difficulty breathing</li> <li>● Evidence of head lice or discovery of a deer-tick bite</li> </ul>
<p>Illness-Online Resource</p>	<p>A helpful online source that lists common childhood illnesses and their symptoms is at <a href="http://www.familydoctor.org">www.familydoctor.org</a> or <a href="http://www.webmd.com">www.webmd.com</a></p>



## Winter Weather Considerations

<p>Winter Clothing</p>	<p>During the winter, we take all of the children outside on days when the temperature is above 25 degrees F (this includes the wind chill factor and/or real-feel temperature). OCC uses the AccuWeather website in order to make the decision about going outside to play or if we will stay indoors.</p> <p>When the weather turns cold, please send your child to school with the following <b>labeled</b> items: winter coat, hat, gloves or mittens, sturdy walking shoes or warm snow boots, (not rain boots) and try to have him or her wear warm pants. If your child does not want to wear pants, please send in a pair of sweatpants to wear over tights, leggings, or lightweight pants.</p> <p>Planning for and allowing children to keep a pair of snow pants at school is a great way to know that they are always prepared.</p> <p><b>Please be sure that all winter gear is labeled.</b></p>
<p>Winter Weather Closings</p>	<p>We follow the State College Area School District's decision when deciding to delay, cancel, or dismiss early due to weather.</p> <p><b>OCC will open at 9:00 when SCASD calls for a two-hour delay due to inclement weather.</b> The Kindergarten buses, however will follow SCASD's two-hour delay, when there is one. Please notify the school if you will be driving your kindergartener to school or if they will be riding the bus.</p> <p>Should SCASD dismiss early, OCC families will be notified as to our closing time. The safety of our families and staff is our primary goal in making these decisions.</p>



## OCC Excursions

Walks	<p>Frequently, all of our classrooms enjoy walks around the neighborhood. Toddlers will utilize strollers as necessary, but generally everyone walks in pairs. Occasionally, we venture as far as the Nittany Lion Shrine or the Alumni Gardens Duck Pond. We enjoy our neighborhood and the wonderful attributes of being located in the State College Borough. All families are asked to sign a walking field trip consent at enrollment.</p>
Field Trips	<p>As part of our educational program, we occasionally take groups of children on excursions into the community. The opportunity to go on field trips depends upon each child's age, level of maturity, and interests. We view the three-year cycle as a continuum &amp; plan field trips accordingly.</p> <p>Younger children need to focus on "the basics" of familiarity with routines, materials, teachers, and expectations; hence, they may go on only one field trip, perhaps to a park. Older, more mature children usually have these basics under their belts and are ready and eager for more frequent and diverse community experiences. All families are notified of pending excursions and permission is requested prior to the event.</p>
Walking Field Trips	<p>Several of our destinations are within walking distance of OCC. Even so, if we are to enter a facility, we are required to gain your permission for your child to join us. Examples of "Walking Field Trips" would be a trip to Schlow Library, Alpha Fire Company.</p>



## The Growing and Developing Child

<p>Social Services Referrals</p>	<p>When a child demonstrates learning or behavioral difficulties, it is up to the classroom teacher to closely observe and document the child's behavior. In order to support the child, the teacher will attempt to adapt the activities and environment to meet the child's needs. Parents will be notified of concerns and working together with the school's administration, a plan will be created to address concerns.</p> <p>Following the initial adaptations and modifications, parents may be referred to additional family and community outreach to support the child's needs. Resources will be made available to the family. The OCC staff will encourage and assist with any and all supports within our capacity.</p>
<p>Toilet Learning</p>	<p>In toileting, as in all aspects of daily living, we encourage children's natural progression toward independence. Independence occurs in stages if the child receives appropriate support and practice along the way.</p> <p>OCC teachers and staff help the children as needed, by changing diapers and pull-ups, helping them to use the toilet, and wiping. We also gently encourage children to move towards independence in this area.</p> <p>Our expectation is that parents will work with us to support their child's growth toward independence in toileting. There is a bathroom in the downstairs classroom. Children in the upstairs classrooms are always supervised when they use the bathrooms.</p>
<p>Transitions</p>	<p>Occasionally during a child's enrollment in our program, a decision is made to transition into a new classroom. This decision is often a joint product of the child's development, teacher observation,</p>



	<p>parent input, and/or program specifications. This process begins with brief visits to the new classroom and these visits are elongated over time. The determination as to the duration of a transition is based solely on the individual needs of the child.</p>
<p>Transfer of Records</p>	<p>Requests for student records should be made in writing and addressed to the school's office. All requests must include the signature of an authorized parent or guardian, granting their permission for the release of records. The signed written release should include the child's name, birthdate, reason for the request, and address to which the documents should be sent.</p>

### Tuition Statements & Fees

<p>Tuition Monthly Statements</p>	<p>Statements will be emailed near the 25th of the month for all tuition due on the first day of the following month. These statements serve as both your invoice and your receipt for the previous month's payments (for taxes or reimbursement purposes).</p> <p><b>Our Children's Center's Tax ID # is 25-1815148</b> also in the upper right-hand corner of the monthly statement.</p> <p>Payments are accepted via check, bank bill-pay, cash, or PayPal. Check payments may be placed in the OCC Payments Box, located outside of the office door or mailed directly to the school. Many banks now offer an automatic bill-pay options, allowing the bank to send a payment directly to OCC via USPS mail. Payments are also accepted through PayPal using the link on our website. You will incur a convenience fee for this service. If you have any questions regarding your tuition, please let us know.</p>
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Returned Check Fees	For all checks returned to OCC for any reason, families' accounts will be charged the amount of equivalent to those incurred by OCC.				
Drop-In Fees	<p>When available, one-time visits to additional programs are welcome. Availability is based primarily on ratios and staffing. Please contact us ahead for availability. Fees for "drop-in" programming is as follows:</p> <table data-bbox="540 909 1300 982"> <tr> <td>Early Care (7:30 - 8:50 a.m.)</td> <td>\$15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Afterschool Care (3:30 - 5:30 p.m.)</td> <td>\$20</td> </tr> </table>	Early Care (7:30 - 8:50 a.m.)	\$15	Afterschool Care (3:30 - 5:30 p.m.)	\$20
Early Care (7:30 - 8:50 a.m.)	\$15				
Afterschool Care (3:30 - 5:30 p.m.)	\$20				
Financial Aid	<p>The OCC Scholarship program is supported through the following primary sources: Annual fundraising of the OCC Board of Directors; designated proceeds raised through the OCC Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship Fund (EITC); proceeds of the OCC Endowment fund and other annual fundraising and grants specifically supporting scholarship at OCC Eligibility for scholarship does not guarantee actual receipt of scholarship.</p> <p>Applications for financial aid are available upon request.</p>				



## Emergency Plan

In the event of an emergency situation at the school, the school's response is defined in our Emergency Plan. Depending upon the circumstances of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions"

**In Place Sheltering:** Sudden occurrences, weather, hazardous materials or intruder related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

**Immediate Evacuation:** Students will be evacuated via the "Fire Drill Routes" to a designated area away from the building. Once declared "All Clear" we will return to our classrooms. Should the situation require a complete evacuation of the facility, children will be taken to the SCASE/Fairmont Elementary School Building, 131 W. Nittany Ave, State College, PA 16801.

**Modified Operations:** This may include cancellation/postponement of normal activities due to such things as weather or utility disruptions.

All of the above situations require the staff to follow specific instructions and procedures, including securing the emergency information binders. Once the situation has been resolved, parents will be contacted via phone and email as to the status and procedures for the safe release of their children.



## Statement of Discipline

Our Children's Center has a strong commitment to implementing discipline of students in a respectful, firm and encouraging manner. It is our long-term goal to help children learn to be self-disciplined rather than merely monitored by adults.

The OCC Staff manual states that "No Corporal punishment is ever to be implemented at school" (e.g., hitting, spanking, pushing etc.) In addition, no psychological or humiliating punishment is ever to be implemented at school (e.g., denial of snack or lunch, threats of physical punishment, name-calling, intimidation, etc).

Children who present behavior problems are discussed at staff meetings and with the Head of School. Appropriate remedial strategies are based on systematic observation of the child and communication among staff and with parents.

Short-term solutions in the classroom may include the child staying near a teacher or removing themselves to a quiet place in the room to calm their bodies and consider more appropriate behavior options.

The establishment of clear limits and consistency in maintaining these limits goes a long way toward preventing problems from occurring and toward supporting the child's development of self-discipline.



## Additional Policies and Procedures

<p>Schedule Change</p>	<p>Any request for a change in your child's schedule must be submitted in written form and be approved by the Head of School. Every attempt will be made to accommodate parental requests within the limits of our program restraints. However, should it be determined that it is not in the best interest of the child or the school, requests may be denied. Modifications to programming often involve a tuition rate change.</p>
<p>Withdrawal (Parent Request)</p>	<p>If the withdrawal of a child is necessary for any reason, parents shall agree to provide OCC with two full month's written notice of such; otherwise, two month;s tuition will be forfeited. Under special circumstances and at the discretion of the Head of School, withdrawal requests due to a job transfer can be negotiated. If the date of a child's withdrawal on or after March 1st, the remainder of the year's tuition is due.</p>
<p>Withdrawal (OCC Request)</p>	<p>Rarely, the Head of School, after much thought and discussion with a family, may determine that OCC does not best suit the needs of a particular child and/or the school community. Parents will be given two week;s notice to find alternative care. The Head of School will assist parents, as best they can, in finding a more suitable location for their child and/or refer the</p>



	family to other agencies for assistance
Medications	<p>If your child's doctor prescribes medication that must be administered during school hours, we ask that you return to administer it personally. If you are unable to do so, please give the medication to the office. A signed Medication Form must be completed including administration instructions, dosage and frequency. Please note that medication must be brought to school in the original labeled container. The physician's written instructions must be current and apply to the child who is in our care (rather than a sibling, for example) in order for us to administer medication.</p> <p>Never send any medicine in your child's lunchbox or backpack, even if he or she rides the Kindergarten bus. Cough drops, vitamins, lotions and lip balm are all considered medicinal and may not be in the possession of children at school.</p>



Please read, sign and return to OCC's school office.

The Pennsylvania State Department of Education and The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services requires that all parents be made aware of the policies and procedures applicable to enrollment in our program. Please read this book in its entirety. Once completed, please acknowledge your receipt and understanding of the information included by signing and returning this form.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_