



Welcome to Creative Paths Learning Studio



Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child(ren) to Creative Paths Learning Studio. Creative Paths serves children ages six weeks through 12 years old. We provide services without discrimination of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, or ability.

The purpose of this handbook is to share information and ideas with parents to promote understanding of our program, and foster a spirit of cooperation between parents and staff. We hope you will find the information useful as an orientation to our school.

We strongly believe that open communication is essential to fully meeting your child's needs. If there are any questions pertaining to anything in this handbook, please ask us! We look forward to developing a partnership with your family.

Sincerely,

Amber Grafman & Katie Schultz



Mission:

Our mission is to provide a safe, creative, and developmentally stimulating environment where children can be independent, self-confident, and curious. We are dedicated to working with families to inspire children's life-long love of learning.

Philosophy:

We believe:

- + That children start their unique developmental journey at birth.
- + In educating from all aspects of development: social, emotional, physical, and cognitive.
- + That a purposefully designed learning environment enhances the educational experience.
- + That children learn best through play, discovery, senses, and exploration.
- + In growth mindset – that we are all capable of achievement with practice and persistence.
- + Intentional experiences and meaningful interactions maximize children's growth.
- + In embracing diversity and that everyone has a place at the table.
- + In partnering with families on their child's developmental journey.

Staff:

Amber and Katie are both highly educated teachers with Bachelor's and Master's degrees, IL Director credentials, Professional Educator Licenses, and over 20 years of combined experience. They earn a minimum of 15 hours of professional development yearly. In addition, we are certified in CPR/AED and First Aid. All caregivers and household members must have a physical and TB test which is renewed every 3 years, and must have proof of 2 doses of the MMR vaccine and 1 dose of the Tdap vaccine.

Enrolling Your Child:

To enroll your child at Creative Paths, you will need to:

- Complete and sign a **Registration Form**
- Read and sign the **School Policy**
- Read and sign the **Parent Handbook**
- Acknowledge receipt of **DCFS Summary of Licensing Standards for a Group Home Day Care**
- Provide an up-to-date **Medical Form** with **Immunization Record** signed by a medical professional
- Complete and sign **Parent Consent for Program Participation**
- Provide a copy of child(ren)'s **Birth Certificate**

At the time of registration, you are required to pay for the first week, security deposit, and the educational materials fee. Tuition payments must be made by Friday in advance of the week services are rendered. The security deposit will be applied toward your child's last week's tuition payment. The educational materials fee is non-refundable and renewed annually. If applicable, refunds will be mailed within six weeks of discontinuation. See "School Policy" for additional information about payments.

Discontinuation or Program Change Policy:

Parents are *required* to give a **TWO (2) week written notice**, in advance, of discontinuation or change in program. If notice is not given for discontinuation, full tuition will be charged for each week's lack of notice. Program changes and discontinuation must be a minimum of six weeks in length to be considered valid. Program changes are anything that affects the days, hours, or tuition rate of the current program.

Dis-enrollment of Children:

Children may be dis-enrolled for any of the following reasons:

1. Creative Paths is not meeting the child's developmental needs.
2. The child is disruptive or aggressive beyond the control of the caregivers, despite efforts to remediate the behavior through intervention.
3. The child continues to bite after redirection and has difficulty working through this stage.
4. Parents and/or Guardians are uncooperative in working with the caregivers.
5. Parents who are delinquent in making their tuition payments.

When any of the above conditions exist, Amber and/or Katie will meet with those involved and attempt to resolve issues of concern. Whenever issues of concern cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of Creative Paths, parents will be given a two (2) week notice to find alternate accommodations for their child(ren). Creative Paths will assist parents in finding these accommodations wherever possible.

Hours & Days of Operation:

Monday – Friday 7:00 A.M – 6:00 P.M

Our school is closed only on the following days during the year:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| * Memorial Day | * Fourth of July |
| * Labor Day | * Thanksgiving Day |
| * The Friday after Thanksgiving | * Winter Break: Dec. 25 th - Jan. 1 st |
| | * Summer Break: August (1 week,
TBD) |

We will close early on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving at 3:00 PM. The full tuition is charged for these weeks. Please note: Should the holiday occur on a Saturday, we will be closed on Friday. Should the holiday occur on a Sunday, we will be closed the following Monday. See school calendar for list of dates.

Late Pick-Up Policy:

Parents arriving after the 6:00 pm closing time will be charged a late fee to reimburse caregivers for the inconvenience of working after closing. This money will be automatically applied to your following week's tuition. The late pickup rate is \$15 for every 15 minutes (or portion thereof).

[EX: 6:01 PM-6:15 PM = \$15; 6:16 PM-6:30 PM = \$30; 6:31 PM-6:45 = \$45....]

If your child is not picked up by closing time, and we have not been notified, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. Caregivers will provide a small snack.
2. All parent numbers and emergency contact numbers will be called twice in an attempt to reach someone.
3. If no one is reached by 7:00 P.M, the local authorities will be notified.

Emergency School Closing / Evacuation / Alternate Shelter:

In the unlikely event of a school closing or emergency evacuation, parents will be notified via phone call and HiMama message as soon as the decision has been made to close, or after their child has reached evacuation destination.

Arrivals/Departures:

We ask that an **adult** accompany children in and out of the home. All parents are required to SIGN IN and SIGN OUT utilizing the sign-in/sign-out sheets at arrival and departure each day. Upon arrival, please store all personal belongings in correct place, assist child in washing their hands, and see that he/she is under a caregiver's supervision before you leave. When picking up your child, please make sure to check their folder for any important notes, take any soiled clothes home to wash, and assist your child in washing their hands.

Your child can be released only to adults designated by you, in writing & through the registration page. If at any time, you would like to add or remove an approved adult on the emergency/pickup list, please let us know. Children may not be released to anyone under 18 years old. This school abides by all legally served court orders. There must be a certified court letter on file regarding parental custody matters to prevent any parent who is listed on the birth certificate to pick up at any time.

Parent Involvement:

You are welcome to visit the school at any time! Creative Paths has an open door policy. In addition, please volunteer in the studio, or share your skills and talents with us. We encourage you to attend the Parent/Teacher Conferences, Curriculum Night, and the Family Events throughout the year. A private meeting with your child(ren)'s caregiver may be arranged at any time.

Mealtimes & Food:

All menus are posted in our welcome area and on the HiMama app. The menu includes foods that are homemade, tasty, healthy, and meet your child's dietary needs. Menu exceptions may be arranged if documented need for medical or religious reasons is provided. We ask that you do not bring food for your child, unless the dietary needs of your child is beyond the school's capabilities. Please inform us of any allergies your child may have. All healthy snacks brought into the school for parties and/or birthdays must be store bought and come in the original packaging. Please see "Parties and Celebrations" for acceptable items for these occasions.

Meals are served at the following times:

Breakfast: 8:15 – 8:45 AM

Lunch: 11:30 – 12:00 PM

PM Snack: 2:30 – 3:30 PM (depending on age and nap time wake ups)

Insurance:

Creative Paths carries liability insurance and home insurance. However, we do not carry insurance for students' emergency medical care or treatment in the case of sudden illness or accident. The parents will bear the cost, if any, of such emergency care.

Parking and Safety:

Please utilize the 4-car driveway when dropping off or picking up children. If the driveway is occupied, you may park on the West side of Pine street facing Lake Cook Rd. We ask that you park your car legally, hold your child's hand, and drive slowly in this area. For meetings and/or family events, please utilize the driveway, Pine Street, and Terrace Court. Never leave children in vehicles or leave vehicles running.

Medication:

The school will dispense medication only as prescribed by your child's physician. A "Medication Consent Form" must be filled out by both the child's physician and the parent. No medication will be given without a completed consent form. Medication MUST be in the original package/prescription container labeled with child's name and expiration date.

Special Care Plans:

Allergies, asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, epilepsy, or any other medical conditions are to be stated on the registration form and discussed with Amber/Katie. These require a "Special Care Plan" to be completed by the child's parent and doctor. By enrolling your child at Creative Paths Learning Studio, you authorize certified caregivers to carry out care plans as written by physician. These care plans must be completed and turned in prior to your child's start date.

First Aid & Emergency Medical Care:

Every caregiver is certified in CPR/AED/First Aid, SIDS, Shaken Baby, and is a Certified Food Manager. The “First Aid Report” is used for minor injuries, and is intended as a form of parent communication. This form will be used if your child receives a minor bump, bruise, scratch, or mark that produces redness. Courtesy calls to the parents will be made ahead of pick up at the discretion of the caregivers. **We ask each parent to sign and date the form, and take their copy of the report.** In the event of a more serious nature, the school policy is to call 911, and then the child’s parent(s). A caregiver will accompany the child with the paramedics (if ratio allows) in the event that the parent/guardian does not arrive prior to departure. By enrolling your child at Creative Paths Learning Studio, you authorize all caregivers to make medical decisions on your behalf, such as calling an ambulance. Caregivers will write a complete and detailed account of the incident and procedures/actions taken.

Change of Information:

In regards to your child’s safety and well-being, it is VERY important that we have the most current information for parents and emergency contacts. If there is any change to phone numbers, addresses, emails, etc. please notify us immediately (preferably via email or HiMama).

Animals & Pets:

All animals in the have a current certificate of good health from a licensed veterinarian on file, and is renewed yearly. The school is very sensitive to possible allergy issues, and all pet houses/cages/waste management is utilized in the area of the home that is not utilized for Creative Paths Learning Studio.

Keller Park:

Creative Paths utilizes Keller Park in addition to our rear play yard. Children will be transported via buggy, stroller, or wagon. Caregivers will travel with a first aid backpack that is equipped with a first aid kit, extra diapers/wipes/clothes, and an emergency binder with all children’s emergency contact information. Parents will be required to sign a permission slip in order for their child to participate.

Parties/Celebrations:

Birthdays and other occasions that are special can be celebrated at school. A sign-up will be available for any school events. Please coordinate with your child’s caregivers if you plan on bringing in a special treat to share.

All items must be store bought and in original packaging.

*****We are a Nut, and Sesame-Free School!!*****

Communication and Newsletters:

Newsletters are published monthly. Our welcome area is intended as a way of communication to keep you informed, so please check it daily. The welcome area includes the class schedule, school calendar, menu, and special notes for parents. Creative Paths tries to be as paperless as possible, so we will utilize email and HiMama communication as much as possible. If you would like to speak to your child's caregivers, the best time to call is between 12:00 – 2:30 P.M. All children receive a daily report via HiMama that includes information on all bottles, meals, diaper changes, naps, and activities throughout the day.

Conferences:

Four progress reports are sent home per year. Parent/Teacher conferences are held two times per year – in the fall and spring, in order to inform the parents of their child's academic, social, emotional and physical growth. Conferences may be held as often as the teacher or parent feels that such meetings would be beneficial to the child. They may be requested either by the parent or caregiver, and an appointment should be made in advance.

Birth Certificates:

Parents are to provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate (or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child) within 30 days of enrollment. The school shall make a copy, and return the original copy to the parent/guardian. If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available, the parent/guardian must submit a passport, visa, or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age, and an affidavit/notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate. By law, the school is required to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement if the parent/guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30 day time frame.

Personal Belongings:

We ask that children do not bring personal toys or other belongings to school because of the potential for loss or breakage. Please label everything with your child's name (including all extra clothes brought to school). The school does not assume responsibility for lost or damaged items. If your child is missing anything, please let us know as soon as possible.

Illness Guidelines:

If a child has a communicable disease, please notify the school. It is required that parents notify us of the nature of the illness. **Children absent due to a contagious illness/disease may not return to school without a signed statement from a physician.** In the instance of a communicable disease, a notice will be sent home. Any child with a communicable disease that requires antibiotics/treatment must provide a doctor's note to return to school. Specific illnesses require a certain amount of time out of school – please communicate with the office on this matter.

In the case of making a decision to bring your child to school or to keep them home due to illness, the following guidelines are adhered to at school:

- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities, or that calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- A Hacking cough
- A temperature over 100° should stay home until they are fever free, without medication, for 24 hours.
- Yellow/green nasal drainage
- An earache and/or drainage from the ear
- Sore throat with redness or white spots in the back of the throat
- A rash, until a doctor determines it is noncommunicable
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the previous 24 hours
- Eye(s) that are red, burn, and/or have drainage (Conjunctivitis)
- Unexplained mouth sores

Until a doctor determines them to be non-communicable, the school reserves the right to isolate and/or send the child home if they show signs of illness or disease. It is required that we have all updated names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons authorized to pick up your child on file at all times. It is also necessary for us to have the name and phone numbers of your child's physician.

Clothing and Supplies:

Children should come to school so that they can participate in all activities. Comfortable, loose fitting clothes are a good choice. Children's "home shoes" should safely accommodate running and outdoor play and must be close toed – these may be gym shoes, rain boots, winter boots, etc. depending on the weather. Parents must provide their child "inside shoes" that they will change into upon arrival and after outside play – these may be non-slip on slippers if you wish. All outerwear should be labeled with the child's name. An extra set (or two) of clothing should be left in your child's cubby. All blankets (15 months +) used at naptime are provided by the school, and will be washed regularly. Parents may provide a small lovey/stuffed animal for naptime (15 months +). Sleep sacks/swaddles for infants should be provided by parents. Additional items that are to be provided by parents are diapers, baby wipes, diaper rash cream, and sunscreen. All diaper rash creams, lotions, and/or sunscreen must be unexpired and accompanied by a permission slip completed by the parents. All infants must come with their bottles labeled with their first name, last name, and date.

School Pictures:

School pictures will be taken in the Fall and Spring. There will be no charge for the photo session. Pictures/proofs will be made available to parents for review and purchase. The school will also take candid pictures, unless parents request otherwise, of all children for academic documentation/portfolios, and will be incorporated into family events. Pictures may also be used for advertising purposes.

Outdoor Play:

It is our policy that a child who comes to school must be well enough to participate in both indoor and outdoor play. If there are medical reasons that your child cannot play outdoors, but is well enough to be at school, we will be happy to comply with your physician's request when presented with their written instructions. **Children remain indoors when weather is below 25 degrees and/or higher than 90 degrees.** Creative Paths factors in wind chill, heat index, and wind velocity, as indicated by the National Weather Service. Children go outside to the rear play yard in the morning and afternoon for outdoor activities. Morning outside time may be substituted with a walk through the neighborhood or to Keller Park.

Confidentiality:

Creative Paths respects the right of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral, and developmental records and information concerning their child(ren). These rights to privacy and confidentiality are protected by various federal and state statutes, local ordinances, and regulatory rules. If your child is involved in an altercation or biting incident with another child, Creative Paths will not reveal your child's identity to the parents of the other child without your prior written consent, except as required by law. *If your child or someone in your family tests positive for COVID-19, Creative Paths will not disclose your identity to anyone unless requested by local health authorities.*

Customer Service:

It is very important for Creative Paths to keep up our commitment to excellence. We strive to provide the best care and education for your child(ren). If you feel we have not met our high standards, or you have issues needing resolution, please let us know.

Nap Time/Rest Time:

All children ages 6 weeks through 5 years have a nap/rest time. All infants in our care are put to sleep on their backs. Infants may receive their nap on demand or on a set schedule written out by their parent. Children ages 15 months + nap from 12:00 – 2:30 P.M. Music and/or stories are played, and children are made comfortable on their own individual cribs/cots with their own blankets and/or lovies. If a child is not tired, they may rest comfortably and/or engage in another quiet activity on their cot.

Cleanliness:

The school is on a very strict cleaning schedule. Caregivers clean and disinfect equipment daily (and as needed) and follows OSHA guidelines for diaper changing. We promote cleanliness and good hygiene with the children. Parents are asked to wash their child's hands upon arrival to school. Frequent handwashing is practiced by staff and children throughout the day. We follow all State and Federal guidelines for handwashing.

Health Services:

Creative Paths has many resources to support the health and well-being of children and families. The strong partnerships with local agencies and school districts provide children with early intervention services, mental health, and many other types of resource & referral opportunities. Caregivers do a daily health check to ensure all the children arrive to school in good health. We have multiple care plans for a variety of situations and/or medical conditions such as: Asthma, Diabetes, food and other severe allergies. These care plans help caregivers to support and care for children's needs and to keep communication open with families.

Birth – Three (6 weeks – 36 months) Feeding:

Infants are provided food either by the parent choosing "on demand" and/or by providing the caregivers with a specific schedule in writing. All meals in this age group are given additional menu consideration regarding type, size, and shape. Any foods that pose a choking hazard are not served at this age level: berries, candies, raisins, corn kernels, raw carrots, whole grapes, hot dogs, nuts, seeds, popcorn, raw peas, peanut butter.

Formula fed infants may keep a can of formula & nursery water at the home, and parents will be notified via HiMama when running low. Please note: Creative Paths does not provide formula or nursery water.

Parents of breast fed infants must provide ready-to-feed bottles and/or frozen breast milk. DCFS breast milk storage policy is: 48 hours in the fridge or 2 weeks in the freezer before discarding.

Diaper Changing Procedures:

There are specific procedures we follow each and every time a caregiver changes a child's diaper. These procedures are posted by the diaper changing station. Diapers and wipes are to be supplied by the parents for all untrained children and children going through the potty training process. Children wearing diapers are changed every 2 hours, or as often as needed to maintain the health and cleanliness of the child.

Potty Training:

When you feel that your child is ready to be toilet trained, please discuss this with us. As a child gets older, toilet training becomes a consideration in our program (usually between 24-30 months). The manner in which toilet training is conducted can have a tremendous impact on a child's social/emotional development. Toilet training requires consistency, patience, and a lot of positive encouragement. When the decision to start potty training has been made, please remember the following:

- Bring six – eight pairs of cotton training underpants to school.
- Have several complete sets of clothing available (replenish as needed).
- Dress your child in loose fitting clothes (dresses or elastic waisted bottoms)
- Pull-ups will be used only at naptime.

Each child's individual readiness for toilet training must be considered, and requires patience and understanding. Communication between parents and caregivers is key in keeping the child's needs as a primary concern.

Discipline Philosophy:

The ultimate goal of guidance/discipline is self-discipline: self-control and self-direction. Our goals in caring for children include directing their behavior with words and by example, so that they will learn the skills necessary to control their own behavior and cooperate with others. At Creative Paths Learning Studio, it is our intention to try to prevent many behavior problems by providing direct supervision and guidance, age appropriate activities, love and interaction, a daily routine, and clear boundaries. Creative Paths also feels it is important to let parents know what we will NOT do when guiding/disciplining children. Children are precious, and will never be treated in a demeaning way. Caregivers will never use corporal punishment or physically harm children in any way. Food, rest, or use of the bathroom will never be threatened or withdrawn. The State of Illinois Licensing Rules provides very exact guidelines regarding what is and is not allowed regarding discipline. Creative Paths wholeheartedly agrees with these rules, not only because it is law, but because it is right. It is there to protect our children.

Biting:

Experts in the field of child development tell us that biting occurs primarily as a result of a child's inability to communicate. There may be many reasons why a child might bite.

The child receiving the bite will be comforted, the bite area will be cleaned, and ice will be applied if necessary. A "First Aid Report" will be made to communicate with parents. With any incident, both the biter and batee's parents will be contacted by the caregivers.

In all cases, the child will be closely supervised and the caregivers will attempt to minimize the behavior. The identity of the child will be kept confidential. The following steps will be taken with a biting child:

First & Second Incident: The child will be redirected to appropriate activities, and parents will be notified. Caregivers will carefully assess the learning environment to minimize frustration for the child. Caregivers will also read books, sing songs, and talk about appropriate ways to use their teeth.

Third Incident: Parents will be called to pick up the child for the remainder of the day.

Recurring Incidents: Amber and Katie will meet with parents of biting child. A plan will be implemented for the child to be followed both in the school and at home. If the child continues to bite despite the implementation of a remediation plan, the child may be discontinued.

Integrated Pest Management System:

Creative Paths is committed to reducing pesticide use while maintaining a pest-free environment for our children and families. Our Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system eliminates regular pesticide application and includes a variety of non-chemical and bait type methods to achieve long term solutions. Use of any pesticides will be a last resort, and notice will be posted at least 2 days prior to application.

Maintenance of Safe Working Conditions

1. All residents and caregivers are non-smokers. Smoking is not allowed inside or anywhere on the grounds of the home.
2. Creative Paths Learning Studio is a gun free home. Possession of firearms or consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, or unauthorized medically prescribed drugs is prohibited.
3. Radon testing is conducted by a licensed professional, and all results are visibly posted by the front door. Testing is repeated every 3 years.
4. The DCFS licensed facility's water had been tested for lead by an IDPH licensed lead inspector. Results are visibly posted by the front door.

Creative Paths Learning Studio Sample Daily Schedule:

7:00 – 8:00 A.M.

Arrival – As you arrive, be sure to sign in, wash child’s hands, and communicate with caregiver about morning needs

Choice Time – Curriculum choices include: blocks, soft toys, library, cognitive toys/activities, large motor areas/activities, sensory and discovery toys/activities, and music & movement.

8:15 – 8:45 A.M.

Breakfast

9:00 – 11:30 A.M.

Community Time – Circle time including songs, fingerplays, puppets, felt board stories, and early literacy and math.

Outside Play / Morning Walk (Weather Permitting)

Daily Activities – Cognitive, literacy, math, sensory, and art activities based upon weekly theme

Story Time – Read and discuss stories, poems, finger plays, and felt board stories.

Choice Time & Individual Guided Learning – Children will select from a variety of interest areas, and be guided to observe and interact with each other. Teachers will teach/guide children in specific activities and skills in individual or small groups.

Music and Movement

Individual Infant Play – Tummy time, crawling/walking practice, exploring soft toys

11:30 – 12:00 P.M

Lunch

12:00 – 3:00 P.M

Nap/Rest Time – Times vary for different age groups

Snack

3:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Outside Play

4:00 – 6:00 P.M.

Choice Time – Curriculum choices include: blocks, dramatic play, soft toys, library, cognitive toys/activities, large motor areas/activities, sensory and discovery toys/activities, art, library, and music & movement.

Departure Time – As you pick up, make sure to sign out, wash child’s hands, and talk with your child’s caregiver about their day.

[page intentionally left blank]

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:
PLEASE SIGN BELOW AND RETURN**

I, _____,
Please Print Name

Parents of _____,
Name(s) of Child(ren)

Acknowledge and certify that I have received this Parent Handbook. I promise to have an understanding of Creative Paths Learning Studio's educational philosophy, discipline policy, illness guidelines, and late fee pick-up policy, along with the other policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. I have read, understand, and signed the School Policy.

Creative Paths respects the rights of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral, and developmental records and information concerning their child.

If a parent is late to pick up after closing, Creative Paths will be responsible for the child's protection and well-being until the parent or outside authorities arrive.

** I understand that everything written within this parent handbook is reflective of the center under normal operating procedures. Certain rules and procedures may change due to abnormal circumstances such as the CoVid-19 pandemic**

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

- Registration
- School Policy
- DCFS Verification Receipt
- Completed Medical w/Vaccination Record
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Program Permission
- Walking Field Trip Permission Form
- Allergy/Medical Action Plan: _____