



# **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2023 - 2024**



12 JACKIE'S TRAIL DAMARISCOTTA, ME 04543  
(207) 563-5335  
[www.coastalkidsme.org](http://www.coastalkidsme.org)

**Providing an inclusive, developmentally appropriate education  
for preschool children of all incomes and abilities**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>About Coastal Kids Preschool</b>	<b>5 – 11</b>
Mission	5
Board of Directors	5
Administrative Team	5
2022 – 2023 Faculty and Teaching Staff	5-7
Licensing and Certification	8
Our Goals	8
Programs Available	9
1 <sup>st</sup> Day of School	10
Inclusion Policy	10
Confidentiality	11
Rights of Children	11
<b>Enrollment Process</b>	<b>11 – 12</b>
Immunization and Health Appraisal Policy	12
<b>Daily Routines</b>	<b>12 – 14</b>
Classroom Schedules	12
Arrival	12
Signing In and Out – Electronic and Paper	13
Rest Time	13
Locked Door Policy	13
Departure	13
Weather Policy for Playing Outdoors	14
Snow Days	14
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>14 – 16</b>
Interest Centers	15
Themes	15
Handwriting without Tears	15
Outdoor Learning Environment	15-16
<b>Food</b>	<b>16 - 17</b>
Lunches and Snacks	16
Food Restrictions and Allergies	17

<b>Clothing, Gear, and Toys</b>	<b>17 - 18</b>
Clothing and Personal Belongings	17
Toys from Home	18
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<b>18 - 21</b>
Children's Health	18
Chronic but Stable Health Conditions	18
Policy on Communicable Diseases	19
Exclusion Periods	19
Medication Policy	20
Sunblock and Insect Repellents	21
Tick Removal	21
<b>Health and Safety (continued)</b>	
First Aid Kits	21
Accident/Incident Reports	21
Toilet Training	21
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>22 – 23</b>
Advancement to the Next Class	23
Progress Reports and Conferences	23
<b>Discipline and Positive Guidance</b>	<b>23 - 25</b>
Prevention of Suspension or Expulsion	24-25
<b>Events, Occasions, and Other Considerations</b>	<b>25 – 27</b>
Birthdays and Holiday Celebrations	25
Family Events	25
Graduation	25
Field Trips	26
In-house Presentations	26
Swimming and Wading	26
Pets	26
Media	27
<b>Parental Involvement</b>	<b>27 – 29</b>
Parent Participation Program	27
Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)	27
Communication	28
Program Improvement	28
Open Door Policy	28
Parental Grievance Procedure	29
<b>Tuition, Programs and Payment Policies</b>	<b>29 – 31</b>
Registration and Materials Fee	29
Monthly Tuition Rates	29

Additional Program Rates	30
Payment Policies	30
Tuition Assistance	30
Vacation Policies	31
<b>Policies and Emergency Plans</b>	<b>31-33</b>
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy	31
No Smoking Policy	31
No Firearms/Weapons Policy	31
Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan	32
Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form	33

A copy of Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities from the Department of Health and Human Services is available to sign out in the office and can be found online at; <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/child-care-licensing/becoming-a-childcare-provider>

# **WELCOME TO COASTAL KIDS PRESCHOOL!**

Since 1995, Coastal Kids Preschool has provided a high quality, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate program for preschool children. Please read the following information carefully and speak to our Executive Director, Dr. Caer Hallundbaek, or our Education Director, Jenn Caron, if you have any questions. Welcome to the Coastal Kids family!

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to provide an inclusive, developmentally appropriate education for preschool children of all incomes and abilities.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Karen Mook, President  
Gail Page, Vice President  
Normand Saucier, Treasurer  
Karen Moran, Secretary  
John Bristow  
Karen Filler  
Robert Flory  
Christine Wajer  
Jennifer Brennan  
Phillip Elliot  
Abi Iverson  
Joel Russ

Our Board of Directors is composed of community members and past and current Coastal Kids parents. Members represent a wide range of experience, background, and ages. The Board meets monthly and oversees the school's operations, finances, and fundraising efforts.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

Caer Hallundbaek, Executive Director  
Jenn Caron, Education Director  
Sara Larson, Special Education Coordinator  
Priscilla Congdon, Special Education Advisor  
Michele Barter, Bookkeeper

## **2023-2024 FACULTY AND TEACHING STAFF**

***Dr. Caer Hallundbaek***, Executive Director

Caer (pronounced 'Care') has 30 years of experience in administration and development in the areas of education, health care, technology and media. She has developed and led non-profit

organizations including the Godspeed Institute and has served as President of Maine Media Women. She is also the author of the book "Dear Little One." Caer is moved by and dedicated to the experience of children, and she values the importance of high-quality early childhood education. Caer holds a B.F.A. from New York University, a master's degree in theology and religious studies from Fordham University, and a doctorate in interdisciplinary leadership from Creighton University.

***Jenn Caron***, Education Director

Jenn is Education Director and has worked at Coastal Kids since 1999, and her two children are graduates of Coastal Kids! Jenn has a B.S. in Education and Special Education from University of Maine, Farmington, with a wealth of volunteer and work experience as a teacher and developmental therapist. She is a MRTQ level 7 teacher. Jenn loves working at Coastal Kids because of the supportive and engaged community of colleagues and parents. She relishes the challenge of supporting our students, families, and staff. She especially enjoys creating programming and lesson plans that fit the unique needs of all students and enjoys seeing their curiosity, kindness, and joy as they learn and master new skills.

***Priscilla Congdon***, Special Education Advisor

Priscilla is our founder and Special Education Advisor and has worked at Coastal Kids since it opened in 1995. Priscilla has a B.S. in elementary education from University of Maine, Orono, and a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from the University of New Hampshire. She is certified by the State of Maine as a Teacher of Special Needs, birth through five, and is a MRTQ level 6 administrator. She advises Coastal Kids' developmental therapy program and has over 45 years of experience in early childhood education, special education, and school administration. She also worked at L.L. Bean for 15 years! Priscilla is the guiding force behind our educational program and exemplifies Coastal Kids' firm commitment to our mission of inclusion; this makes a difference in the lives of children in our community, and helps ALL children learn from one another and thrive when provided the right tools and support.

***Sara Larson***, Special Education Coordinator

Sara is Special Education Coordinator and has worked at Coastal Kids since 2012 as an assistant teacher, 1:1 student aide, and Starfish class head teacher. Prior to Coastal Kids, Sara came to us with over 7 years experience supporting children in a special purpose preschool. Sara earned her B.A. in psychology from the University of Maine system and has been taking courses for the past 4 years to earn her 282 teaching certification and will complete a Masters in Special Education from the University of Maine Farmington by May 2024. Outside of school Sara loves spending time with her two rescue dogs, reading, being in nature, and drinking all the coffee. Sara loves working at Coastal Kids because she has the freedom to find creative ways to support the children and families she works with, as well as forming cooperative working relationships with all the staff.

***Jordan Barter***, Head Teacher, Dolphins, four-to-five-year-old group

Jordan is Head Teacher of our Dolphins class and has been teaching young children for over 11 years – seven at Coastal Kids! Jordan has an associates degree in Early Childhood Education from Southern Maine Community College and is a level 6 on MRTQ. Jordan was born and raised in Boothbay and looks forward to growing as a head teacher this year. Her favorite things about Coastal Kids are the community feel and the close relationships between teachers and students.

**Melinda Small, Head Teacher, Puffins, three-to-four-year-old group**

Mindy is Head Teacher of our Puffin class. Mindy comes to CKP with years of experience in the Early Childhood field. She has a B.S. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maine at Farmington and is a level 7 teacher from MRTQ. Mindy's previous work experience includes working with special needs children and those with challenging behaviors. When not working Mindy enjoys time with her husband of 27 years and her two adult children. Mindy enjoys the joy of teaching young children and the way each child brings their own individualism into the classroom.

**Chris Pert, Head Teacher, Starfish, three-to-four-year-old group**

Chris is the Starfish lead teacher and has worked at Coastal Kids since 2021. His two children have both attended Coastal Kids! Chris has a B.S. in Jazz and Contemporary Music from University of Maine, and extensive experience working with children of all ages in many different settings. Chris loves being part of the Coastal Kids community, and exploring the world through the lens of his Starfish students.

**Angela Dunning, Head Teacher, Minnows two- to three-year-old group**

Angela is head Teacher of our Minnows class and has worked with all age groups at Coastal Kids for seven years. She especially loves our toddlers! Angela has a B.A. in Early Childhood Education and is Level 7 on MRTQ. The supportive, helpful staff is one thing Angela likes about Coastal Kids; another is the feeling of success when a child's eyes light up when they accomplish something new! When not at Coastal Kids, Angela especially enjoys spending time with her family and going on many adventures.

**Megan Kilbreth, Head Teacher, Periwinkles, 15 months to two-and-a-half-year-old group**

Megan is head Teacher of our Periwinkles class and has worked at Coastal Kids since 2018. Her two young boys are Coastal Kids alumni! She has a B.S. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maine at Farmington, and she loves that Coastal Kids feels like one big family.

Each class has an Assistant Teacher and Teacher Aide, as well as 1:1 aides for students with special needs. Some therapists and 1:1 Aides are provided by CDS or by the Discovering Kids program. As these programs involve detailed record keeping, you may see these staff writing in notebooks or documenting on Ipads or computers.

All staff members may be reached by email at [firstname.lastname@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@coastalkidsme.org) or by phone at 207-563-5335.

## **What is a high-quality early childhood program?**

A high-quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. You should see:

- Frequent, positive, and warm interactions among teachers and children
- Planned learning activities appropriate to children's ages and development, such as reading stories, block building, painting, dress-up, and active outdoor play

- Specially trained teachers and administrators who are positive, creative, and engaged
- Ongoing professional development for all teachers and staff
- Enough adults to respond to individual children
- A rich variety of age-appropriate materials
- Respect for cultural diversity
- A healthy and safe environment for adults and children
- Inclusive environments
- Nutritious meals and/or snacks
- Regular, two-way communication with families
- School visitors welcome as COVID-19 precautions allow
- Effective, experienced, and accessible administration
- Ongoing, systematic evaluation and program improvement

## **LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION**

Coastal Kids Preschool is licensed for 78 children per day, ages 15 months to 7 years. In January 2017, Coastal Kids Preschool achieved accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and reaccreditation in 2022! Accreditation is the highest mark of quality that an early childhood education program can achieve. It leads to Star Level 5, the highest ranking awarded in Maine's child care quality rating and improvement system (known as QRIS, Rising Stars for ME). Rising Stars for ME is designed to recognize and support providers who are offering early care and education above and beyond the basic standards and to educate the community on the benefits of quality early childhood programs. **Families whose children attend a Star Level 5 program like Coastal Kids are eligible to receive twice the childcare tax credit at the end of the year. Our QRIS Rising Stars for ME number is 1674.**

All teaching staff participate in the Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) professional registry, the State of Maine's voluntary childcare and early education recognition system. All staff members have also been background checked with fingerprinting.

In our pursuit of quality and continual growth, each full-time teaching staff member must participate in 40 continuing education hours per year. This exceeds the State of Maine minimum requirement of 30 hours. Staff members also receive First Aid and CPR training. Annually, the staff assesses and determines their training needs, and the results become part of Coastal Kids Preschool's continuous improvement plan.

## **OUR GOALS**

- To foster the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children
- To provide activities that promote healthy self-concepts and confidence in preschool children
- To provide a language-intensive program for all children, including those with communication delays
- To provide a setting for children with social and behavioral needs so they will learn to express themselves appropriately in groups
- To foster emergent skills that are necessary for success in future learning
- To create a partnership between preschool, families, and public-school staff
- To offer meaningful opportunities for families and teachers to communicate



- To involve parents in learning and teaching their young children

## **PROGRAMS AVAILABLE**

To best meet the needs of the families and children we serve, we offer several different scheduling options. Two- through five-day schedule options are available.

### **Preschool and Full Day Programs**

Morning preschool program	8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Full day program	7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
After school program, K-1	2:45 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For families enrolled in the full day program, drop off time is anytime between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Pick up is anytime between 12:00pm. and 5:00 p.m.

Families enrolled in the morning preschool program are welcome to request additional hours before or after the morning program at the hourly rate but may find it more cost effective to use the full day option.

The afternoon schedule includes inside and outside large motor play, quiet time, arts and crafts, games and activities, center play, snack, and stories.

Coastal Kids Preschool is closed one week in June, to prepare for our summer camp program, and one week in August to prepare for our school year, to deep clean our facility, and for teacher training.

### **After School Program**

Great Salt Bay and Nobleboro Central Schools will bus children directly to Coastal Kids. Our after-school program is for children in kindergarten and 1st grade. Parents may enroll their children for one or more afternoons per week. Priority is given to those with siblings enrolled at Coastal Kids and those who request a consistent schedule.

### **Special Education Program**

Children are accepted into our special education program upon referral from Child Development Services, a division of the Department of Education. These children have been identified as having developmental delays and each has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place. Special educational guidelines determine the number of hours each student may attend. Coastal Kids will work with each family and the CDS Family Service Worker to make sure the goals of the plan are embedded into the classroom curriculum. *\*If a child is not yet identified with a diagnosed special need, but the family or teachers suspect that a child may have a developmental delay, we will support the family through the early intervention screening and evaluation process.* We will participate in the Early Childhood Team (ECT) meetings to help determine a child's goals and will document a child's

progress in meeting those goals. At all times, we work toward identifying the “least restrictive environment” that ensures successful participation for all children.

Our special education programs run the same hours as our regular programs, 8:30 a.m. through 12:00 p.m. morning program, with full day programming as needed and as available. We strive to maintain a ratio of 1/3 children with IEPs (Individual Education Plans) in each of our preschool classrooms. Each child’s schedule will be decided at his/her IEP meeting. Our program highlights social skills training. Research tells us that a critical element of successful social skills training is the provision of true interactive experiences. These experiences make social concepts concrete and promote generalization. We use strategies such as role play, adult cueing, and peer modeling, designed to facilitate developing a child’s social communication and social play skills.

Our highly qualified staff and high teacher/child ratio enable us to focus on encouraging all areas of development: cognitive, language, communication, fine and large motor, and social-emotional growth throughout your child's day. Children will learn through developmentally appropriate opportunities to explore, create, manipulate, and experiment during our morning and full day programs.

### **1st Day of School (including currently enrolled students)**

If a child applies to enroll at CKP and has a known need for additional support services in the classroom, enrollment will be delayed until funding for the additional support is in place. CKP staff will work with families to identify funding and parents will have the option of paying for the additional services.

Once a child is enrolled, it sometimes becomes evident that the child needs additional support to have a successful classroom experience. If additional support results in costs outside of standard tuition, we will do everything possible to identify funding. If none is found, parents will have the option of paying for the additional services. If that is not an option, please be aware that the child’s time at school may be reduced or the child may be unable to attend until funding is found.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy**

Coastal Kids believes that equal opportunity is important for the continuous success of the organization and strives to comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws which preclude discrimination because of race, disability, color, creed, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, military status, or any other protected classification.

Diversity and inclusion are vital to Coastal Kids Preschool’s mission, values, and practice. We foster and promote an inclusive environment that leverages the unique contributions of diverse students, staff, community members, and organizations in all aspects of our work. Diverse perspectives, experiences, ideas, and abilities enhance our school community and provide meaningful educational opportunities for our students.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Coastal Kids Preschool applies the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regarding confidentiality of student records and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regarding confidentiality of health records. Our employees will not discuss confidential information in places where they could be overheard by those not authorized to have the information. Children's files are kept in a locked file cabinet in the office. Only the Executive Director, Education Director, Special Education Coordinator, and the Special Education Advisor will have direct access to these files. Any files or parts of a file will only be released under the supervision of the aforementioned people. Parents/legal guardians are able to access their child's file at any time. They may grant access to other individuals or organizations (i.e., schools, therapists, grandparents, etc.) by written consent.

## **RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS**

Children receiving Childcare from Child Care Facilities have the following rights:

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.
3. Each child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each child must be provided childcare services without discrimination based on race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex, or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration, and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the child care facility.
6. Each child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the child care facility.
7. Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to child care facility policies and practices.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

Enrollment for the school year program begins in March, and families currently enrolled have first preference before enrollment is open to the public. Enrollment is also available throughout the school year when spaces are available. Summer camp enrollment begins in February.

Families may schedule tours with the Education Director to get an overview of the program. Families who decide to enroll their child in the program may also choose to set up a visitation with the Head Teacher of the child's classroom. The purpose of this brief visit is for the child to acclimate to the classroom setting. There will be no fee charged for the visit.

The following documents must be provided prior to admission:

- ProCare Enrollment Form
- Child Information Sheet
- Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization
- Permission Forms

- Health appraisal by a health care provider with immunization record

Registration fees cover the cost of resources and supplies such as a child's cubby, art supplies, etc. There is a \$25 registration fee per family, billed at the beginning of the school year.

## **IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH APPRAISAL POLICY**

Each child must have immunization records and an age-appropriate health appraisal by a health care provider on file within one month of his/her start date at Coastal Kids Preschool. This health appraisal is considered current if dated within 12 months of the child's enrollment date. It should include a record of all immunizations, a vision and hearing screening, and **must be updated yearly** or in accordance with the recommended schedule for routine health supervision of the American Academy of Pediatrics. As of September 1, 2021, Child Care Licensing does not allow exemptions from immunization for religious or philosophical reasons.

## **DAILY ROUTINES**

### **CLASSROOM SCHEDULES**

We follow a classroom schedule that involves choice times, small and large group times (circle, story, music, movement), and outside time. The daily schedule is posted in each classroom. It is designed to have a balance of active and quiet activities, indoors and out, and to allow children adequate time to explore. These routines allow children to know and prepare for what is coming next and provide a sense of security. Some flexibility is anticipated in response to individual and group needs, special needs, occasions such as visitors, and weather conditions.

### **ARRIVAL**

The Head Teacher is available to greet children, check in with parents, and receive any pertinent information and instructions between 7:15 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. each day. The Assistant Teacher is focused on the other children, helping them select activities and get their day started. After 8:30 a.m., the program school day is in full swing, and teachers need to focus on the children's activities. It is helpful if all children arrive by 8:30 a.m. **Parents are asked to notify the school if tardiness or absence occurs.** Teachers gladly assist children's quick transition into the classroom on those days that a late arrival is unavoidable, but parents are asked to respect the integrity of the program and support it by making sure that children arrive by 8:30 a.m. each morning.

Children in the full day program (or who have added early morning to their schedules) may be dropped off at school between 7:00 a.m. and 8:15 a.m.

Please use caution when navigating the parking lot. We ask that conversations with teachers be limited during this time to avoid traffic congestion. We will be happy to schedule a time for a lengthier conversation about your child's progress.

## **SIGNING IN AND OUT – ELECTRONIC AND PAPER**

For the safety of your child and to follow state licensing requirements, children must be signed in and out each day using the computer touch screen, iPad, or paper attendance sheets.

Each child has a list of authorized persons allowed to drop off and pick up, according to the information filled out on the child's enrollment form. All authorized persons will have an individual PIN assigned by the office. Please give the PIN to each person who is authorized. There will be a backup "sign-in/sign-out" sheet on the table in the entryway if there are any technical issues.

## **REST TIME**

Children in the full day program are required to have the opportunity for a one-hour rest period. Children who do not sleep are able to play quietly after the required rest period. Teaching staff will assist the children with nap time transitions with music, rubbing backs, and reading stories.

For full day students, please supply a small blanket and a crib sheet for afternoon rest time. Each child will have a rest mat labeled with his/her name. A special stuffed animal or doll may be brought as well. Due to limited storage, we ask that you not bring large pillows or sleeping bags. Blankets and sheets are laundered weekly or more often if necessary.

## **LOCKED DOOR POLICY**

For safety, our front doors are locked during the day. Due to high traffic at the 8:30 a.m. drop-off and 12:00 p.m. pick-up, our doors will be unlocked for brief periods. If you arrive at another time, please ring the bell and someone will greet you. If you do not know the person who greets you, please identify yourself.

## **DEPARTURE**

Teachers are available at noon to greet parents of children in the preschool program and to quickly update parents on the day's events and help children transition out of the classroom. Assistant Teachers supervise the remaining children's activities during this time. We understand how important it is for parents to learn about their child's day. Limited time prevents teachers from in-depth conferencing with any one parent for more than a minute or two at the end of the day. **When necessary or desired, parents can ask the Head Teacher to set an appointment for an extended conversation,** or email with any question.

Children are released only to parents/guardians or another adult approved by the parent/guardian. **Teachers and/or administrative staff must be notified by parents when another individual, other than those designated on the authorized to pick-up list, is to pick up a child.**

**Children must be picked up by the designated closing time.** Staff members are only scheduled until 5:00 p.m. and have other commitments at the end of the day. **Late pick-up fees are assessed as stated on our tuition card and in the billing section of this handbook.** Please contact the school if you will be late in picking up your child and let us know your expected time of arrival. This will not waive the late fee but will relieve stress for your child. Repeated late pick-ups will result in a

written notice or a meeting with the Executive Director, and if not remedied, could result in dismissal from the program.

## **WEATHER POLICY FOR PLAYING OUTDOORS**

We follow the guidelines laid out in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Care*, written in collaboration with the *American Academy of Pediatrics*. It recommends that children play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. We monitor outdoor air quality and follow their policy, which states: “Weather that poses a significant health risk will include wind chill at or below 15°F and heat index at or above 90, as identified by the National Weather Service.”

## **SNOW DAYS**

Coastal Kids Preschool follows the AOS 93 school year calendar for holidays and vacations with limited exceptions. Please keep the Coastal Kids Preschool calendar handy to keep you informed of upcoming days off throughout the school year. **If AOS 93 declares a storm day, Coastal Kids will automatically be closed.** In the event a storm *delay* is declared, (one- or two-hour delay in opening) **Coastal Kids will open at 9:30 a.m. for both preschool and full day students.** If severe weather conditions warrant the early closing of the school, parents will be notified by email, social media, and/or phone.

Closures will be posted on WCSH, channel 6, email, and social media. Families may sign up for WCSH channel 6 (TV and online) text alerts for AOS 93 closures.

## **CURRICULUM**

Coastal Kids uses *The Creative Curriculum*, a research-based early childhood program. We have chosen this curriculum because we believe it closely reflects the philosophy and goals of Coastal Kids while providing us with an effective assessment tool for measuring children’s development. The Creative Curriculum also closely aligns with the State of Maine Early Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers and the State of Maine Early Learning Standards. The State developed these standards as a guide for best practices by identifying the knowledge and skills that children need to be prepared for a successful school experience.

*The Creative Curriculum* provides guidance for setting up the learning environment, the teacher’s role, the family’s role, and children’s learning and development in all areas: cognitive, language, social/emotional, and physical. The curriculum allows teachers a great deal of flexibility to make the adaptations that are necessary to meet individual children’s needs.

Areas of learning include:

- Language and Literacy
- Social Studies
- Physical Development
- Math
- Creative Arts
- Science
- Social and Emotional Health

Establishing and maintaining a positive social-emotional environment is crucial in the implementation of The Creative Curriculum. We strive to create a warm and welcoming learning environment with home-like elements. Teachers build positive relationships with children and families and help them do the same with each other.

A strong connection between home and school is vitally important to children's learning and development. Parents are their children's first and primary teachers, and we aim to work in partnership with families: we collaborate to achieve the greatest outcomes for children.

## **INTEREST CENTERS**

The Creative Curriculum classroom environment is organized into interest centers which offer opportunities for children to learn through active participation and exploration. Research shows that children learn through their actions on objects and exploration of their environment using all their senses. Therefore, our centers have a wide variety of materials for children to manipulate in order to discover relationships. Centers include sand, water, blocks, art, dramatic play, music, discovery, toys and games, and library. Center times give children the opportunity to make choices and to implement their own ideas, learn appropriate social skills, engage in language experiences, and explore their world. During center times, teachers may interact with children individually or in small groups, modeling positive social interactions, or reinforcing specific concepts or skills.

## **THEMES**

Our curriculum focuses on specific themes or concepts, and these themes are reinforced during the day through center materials and activities, songs, books, and more. Themes may develop from a child's interests or activities, be seasonal, or be teacher-initiated. Field trips and in-house presentations will also be planned to enhance the themes. All classroom curriculum is implemented in a manner that reflects sensitivity to family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language. For more information on The Creative Curriculum, please see our Education Director, your child's teacher, and/or the website [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com).

## **HANDWRITING WITHOUT TEARS**

Our older groups use the *Handwriting Without Tears* (a program from Learning Without Tears) "Get Set for School" curriculum, a multi-sensory program teaching fine and gross motor skills, body awareness, crayon grasp, and letter and number recognition and formation. For more information, see [www.lwtears.com](http://www.lwtears.com).

## **OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Our outdoor space is an extension of the classroom and is considered another space for learning. While outside, children have the opportunity to initiate their own learning experiences and activities with teachers readily available to support them.

The following equipment and materials are available outside (or are taken outside regularly):

- Stationary climbers/swings/ADA swing
- Rubber playground tiles and wood chips

- Model lobster boat
- Water play
- Buckets, shovels, rakes, cups, etc.
- Balls/goal
- Building toys/materials and large tires
- Accessible music station with drums, chimes
- Magnifying glasses, bug catchers, measuring tapes, binoculars, etc.
- Natural elements such as twigs, shells, rocks, pinecones
- Mud kitchens and equipment for “cooking”
- Sand areas beneath roof structures
- Push & pull toys - trucks, wagons etc.
- Bubbles
- Flower/vegetable gardens and garden tools
- Dramatic play props
- Books & mat seating areas
- Picnic tables
- Tricycles, Coupe Cars, and other age-appropriate riding toys

Coastal Kids Preschool is fortunate to have a large, wooded area behind our playground. Early experiences with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder. Wonder is important as it is a motivator for lifelong learning! To encourage the exploration of our natural environment, we have created a Nature Trail outside the circumference of the playground fence. All classes make use of the area for observing seasonal changes and collecting items to bring into our classrooms. The trail also has an area for fairy house building and a “forest circle” open area for group gatherings, storytelling, etc. An extension of our woodland nature trail allows our oldest students to access playgrounds and playing fields at CLC-YMCA and GSB, with special permission from parents.

## **FOOD**

Our program is committed to helping raise a healthier generation of children. Coastal Kids Preschool has made it our policy to follow the **5210 Let's Go!** priority strategies for healthy eating and physical activity:

1. We limit unhealthy choices for snacks and celebrations.
2. We do not serve sugary drinks.
3. We provide opportunities for physical activity every day.
4. We minimize recreational screen time at Coastal Kids Preschool, limiting special movie days to holiday vacation weeks and computer use to occasional learning activities.

As part of the **5210 Let's Go!** program, you may receive parent-geared newsletters which will highlight the messages that your child is learning in this program.

## **LUNCHES AND SNACKS**

As Coastal Kids Preschool does not serve meals, each child should bring a labeled lunch daily, including a drink. Due to limited refrigeration, please use an ice pack. All food in toddler classrooms must be cut into bite-sized pieces (grapes in half, apples sliced, cheese in pieces, etc.). Due to the choking hazard, please do not send hotdogs, popcorn, hard pretzels, whole grapes, large chunks of raw carrots, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We ask for your support:



For packed lunches and breakfasts (for early drop off), please send healthy choices including fruits and/or vegetables. We will share healthy lunch suggestions.

Full day students should have enough snacks for at least 2 snack times.

For birthday celebrations, holiday parties, and snacks, please provide healthy foods. Fun birthday treats include fruit kabobs, fruit and yogurt parfaits, make-your-own trail mix, mini blueberry muffins, fruit popsicles.

If you need assistance with food please reach out to our Education Director, Jenn.

## **FOOD RESTRICTIONS AND ALLERGIES**

If your child has food allergies, or special food requirements, please let us know. For allergies and sensitivities, this will include specific information from the child's physician, detailing what foods are to be restricted or provided/consumed, how to respond to exposure, and/or any other pertinent information. We will do our best to accommodate the children's individual needs. We currently do not have a nut-free facility, but please be aware that our policies may become more stringent based on the severity of allergies of children enrolled in our program.

Coastal Kids is also cleaned and maintained to protect staff and children from exposure to environmental allergies as recommended by health professionals.

## **CLOTHING, GEAR, AND TOYS**

### **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes, including shoes suitable for active outdoor play. Rubber soled shoes that fit securely on a child's feet are preferred, as they help prevent falls on slippery surfaces when children run and climb. No flip-flops, please. During the day, children are involved in active exploration/play. Although the teaching staff do their best to protect a child's clothing, the program does not guarantee the condition of a child's clothing and accessories after a day of play.

Please be sure your child has appropriate **outdoor clothing** as we go outside daily, weather permitting. During the winter months, please bring a **snowsuit or snow pants, hats, mittens, and boots**. Extra hats, mittens, and socks are especially helpful during those snowy months! Be sure to send shoes or slippers to wear inside when boots are removed.

Each child will have a cubby and a coat hook labeled with his/her name. Please try to keep the following items stored there: a complete change of clothing including a shirt, pants, extra underwear, and extra socks. It is important for children to have a complete change of clean clothes in the event of an accident (toileting, food-related, or curriculum-related). Children may be upset about soiled clothing, and in such cases, it is more comfortable for children to change into their own clothing. All clothing must be marked with the child's name or initials. Clothing should be exchanged to accommodate children's growth and seasonal weather changes.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

The program requests that no toys from home be brought to school. As it can be difficult to share, bringing toys from home can be overwhelming for both children and teachers. Toys from home are usually not as durable as program toys and may be easily broken.

Security items are very important to a child and the teaching staff support their use, especially during transition times. Security items often include blankets, stuffed animals, or dolls. These transitional items or self-comforting items are respected by teachers. As children adjust to the program and their need for a security item lessens, teachers put these items in a child's cubby where they are accessible as needed. Teachers do not force a child to separate from a security item, but help a child find new ways to be comforted and feel safe.

The best items to bring from home are found "treasures." The teachers are always eager for a child to share these with the class. Shells or stones, wildflowers, bugs, seeds, magazine pictures, and many more things are valued by children and their teachers. Children often like to share things from home. The interest in bringing a toy from home can be redirected from toys to treasures.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Coastal Kids Preschool endeavors to ensure the health and safety of each child enrolled. Because of this, we have policies to help safeguard the healthy growth and development of each student. Your cooperation in complying with these policies is essential to successfully caring for all our children.

### **CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

At enrollment, families/parents are asked to provide information about any special health needs that their child or children might have. A child's health information is kept confidential. When families/parents provide the program with information about allergies, diet restrictions, or special health care needs, that information is shared with those individuals who provide care for the child. By regulation, some of it may be posted in the classroom so all adults who care for the child can be informed.

Coastal Kids Preschool recognizes that families of children with special needs and chronic health conditions need childcare and educational placements for their children. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that programs make reasonable accommodations for children who meet these criteria. As an agency, we will make every effort to accommodate all children and will consider each case individually to comply with the requirements of the ADA.

### **CHRONIC BUT STABLE HEALTH CONDITIONS**

Children who have chronic health conditions or special developmental needs may need additional assistance. Families are asked to provide the school with written medical instructions from their health care provider for handling such conditions as asthma, orthopedic or sensory problems,

seizures, serious known allergies, or specialized feeding needs. Coastal Kids Preschool has forms available for this purpose. Please see your child's teacher or the Education Director.

## **POLICY ON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

To prevent the spread of disease, please keep your child at home if he/she has a contagious illness (COVID-19, strep throat, head lice, conjunctivitis, flu). You should also keep your child at home if he/she has had any of the following symptoms **within the past 24 hours: vomiting, diarrhea, or fever of 100.4 or above**. Children can return to school when they have been fever **free for 24 hours** without the use of fever-reducing medications. Please keep your child at home if they are not well enough to participate in all aspects of the program, including outdoor play.

Children are not admitted to the program if any of the above symptoms are obvious upon arrival. If these or other symptoms develop during the day and/or children are unable to participate comfortably in activities, they will be kept comfortable in the Education Director's office or other designated area until a parent can pick them up.

Should your child become sick during the school day, you will be notified, and it is expected that you will pick your child up within one hour. If the parent/guardians are not able to be reached, we will contact the next person on the emergency list. Please be sure that all emergency phone numbers in your child's file are up to date. We will make every effort to keep your child comfortable and to reduce exposure to other children until he/she can be picked up.

## **EXCLUSION PERIODS**

When a child has been exposed to a communicable disease (for example: COVID-19, strep throat, chickenpox, etc.), please report that information to the teachers, the administrative staff, and/or the Education Director. If a child contracts a communicable disease, parents must keep the child at home for the appropriate exclusion period. Written documentation may be requested from a health provider if signs/symptoms persist.

Families/parents will be notified if a student in their child's classroom has contracted a communicable disease.

Children may return to the classroom when the following conditions have been met:

- **COVID-19:** Quarantine is completed (if applicable) and symptoms are not present, per current Lincoln Health and CDC guidelines. (Call the school for confirmation and possible tuition adjustment)
- **Body Rash** With a doctor's statement allowing the child to return to the classroom
- **Chicken Pox/Shingles** 6 days from onset of rash if spots are crusted over
- **Cold Sores (Herpes simplex)** None
- **Severe Cough and asthma attacks** Discomfort has subsided, and the child is no longer in distress and can participate in regular activities
- **Conjunctivitis** Until eyes are clear and free from weeping, 24 hours after antibiotic treatment begins

- **Diarrhea and/or Vomiting:** 24 hours after vomiting ends and bowel functions have returned to normal
- **Fever** 24 hours fever-free **without** fever-reducing medications.
- **Flu** Until recovered fully enough to participate in school activities
- **German Measles (Rubella)** 5 days from onset of rash
- **Hand Foot and Mouth Disease** 24 hours after fever ceases and until symptoms have subsided
- **Head lice** Until treated with adequate insecticide shampoo and all nits are removed
- **Impetigo** 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun and the area is covered or dry
- **Measles** 9 days from onset of rash
- **Pinworms** 24 hours after treatment has begun
- **Respiratory infections** 24 hours after fever (if any) has returned to normal without fever-reducing medications, 24 hours after antibiotic treatment (if needed) has begun, and if the symptoms have ceased to interfere with child's activity level
- **Ringworm** 24 hours after treatment has commenced and if the area is covered
- **Shigella, Giardia, Salmonella** After obtaining two negative stool cultures, diarrhea symptoms have ceased, and a note from the doctor releasing the child to return to school is received by the office
- **Strep infections** 24 hours fever free without fever-reducing medications , or 24 hours after the start of antibiotics
- **Thrush/Yeast infections** Until treatment has begun
- **Whooping Cough (Pertussis)** 21 days after onset of illness

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

If your child is prescribed antibiotics, he/she should be out for at least 24 hours after the first dose. If there is a dose that must be administered during school hours, you must provide written authorization on a form provided by us in advance of the student's return. No medication can be administered without this authorization.

Prescription medications must be in their original container bearing the pharmacy label which shows the prescription number, date filled, physician's name, child's first and last name, strength of the medication, directions for administering and storing, and expiration date. Over-the-counter medication must be supplied in the original container and be labeled with the child's first and last name.

Medication Permission forms must be on file in the office for the staff to administer any medications. Forms are available by contacting the office by phone or an electronic copy can be requested. Forms may be signed, scanned, and emailed to [jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org). All medications are kept in a locked container in the office or other designated cool storage area.

## **SUNBLOCK AND INSECT REPELLENTS**

Coastal Kids Preschool encourages the use of sunblock with a broad UVA and UVB protection to protect children from the harmful rays of the sun. The teachers and staff will apply sunblock and child-friendly insect repellents when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease. Please supply the desired products in your child's backpack. Families/parents are asked to apply sun block in the morning when dressing their child. The teaching staff will reapply sunblock in the afternoon after naptime.

## **TICK REMOVAL**

If we find a tick on your child, we will remove it according to recommended guidelines provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics unless you have requested otherwise on your permission form. The AAP recommends immediate removal and cleaning the area with an antiseptic solution. The teaching staff will communicate with you as soon as possible. Upon request, we will save the tick.

## **FIRST AID KITS**

Program first aid kits are stocked according to the American Red Cross suggested guidelines. Each classroom has a first aid kit in the classroom backpack as well as first aid supplies in the cabinet above the sink. Classroom backpacks also contain copies of emergency information for the children and these backpacks travel with the class whenever they are outside the classroom. Teachers receive First Aid and Pediatric CPR training.

## **ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS**

An "Accident Report" will be filled out when an injury occurs to a child. If there is any kind of mark (redness, teeth marks, bruise, scratch, etc.), blood is visible, or the child continues to complain, an "Accident Report" must be filled out, no matter how minor the injury. No other child's name will be mentioned in the report. There is a 24-hour reporting requirement for serious injuries or a child death to Licensing.

An "Incident Report" may be filled out when the family/parent needs to be notified of the behavior of a child such as biting, seriously hurting others, unusual behavior, etc. If a child is hurt or bitten by another child, our policy is to provide information on the event, without disclosing the other child's name.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Toilet training is done when your child is ready and in cooperation with the family. Because readiness develops at different ages for individual children, toilet training is not required for advancement from the toddler classes. Please discuss your child's individual needs and experiences with your classroom teacher.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the process of discovering and identifying what children know and tracking the progress of their development and learning. Assessment is used as a basis for how children can best be supported in their growth, development, and learning. Assessment and evaluation are integral parts of a strong early childhood program. Coastal Kids uses The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum, which is the Creative Curriculum assessment system.

The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum is based on 50 research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with the State of Maine Early Learning Standards. The Infant and Toddler curriculum is based on 21 research-based objectives. Each child's development is tracked in the following areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy and math (approaches to learning, self-help skills, and health are embedded in these areas). These help teachers focus on what matters most for children's success. It can be used to support all types of learners, including children with special needs and children with advanced knowledge and skills. All head teachers have completed training on the use of this assessment. Teachers document and track each child's development and learning over the school year. This process helps us to recognize areas in which your child may be exceeding or need additional support and helps ensure that children are ready for kindergarten upon graduating from our program.

The following sources of documentation are used to assess the interactions, interests, and progress of each child over time:

- Teacher observations
- Photographs of children working in various learning centers with written documentation as to what objective they are mastering in The Creative Curriculum
- Samples of the child's work
- Parent information outlining family traditions, child interests, and goals for the child

All assessments, evaluations, and communication with families about their child's growth and development are sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language.

The information gathered for each child will be shared during a requested parent-teacher conference, where parents/guardians work with teachers to develop goals for their children. Additionally, teachers communicate with parents through daily conversations and notes as needed. Children in the Periwinkles class will receive daily notes. If there is a concern about a child's developmental progress, we will utilize the observation and documentation of the child and will partner with the family to refer the child to Child Development Services (CDS) for screening and/or further evaluation. We will not contact outside assistance without the express written consent of the child's parent/guardian. CDS will make the determination of a child's eligibility for

early intervention services through a formal screening process. If you would like more information on our assessment plan, please see our Education Director or Special Education Coordinator.

## **ADVANCEMENT TO THE NEXT CLASS**

A majority of children move to new classrooms in September, but some transitions do occur in June, if the child attends during the summer. Occasionally, transitions may occur during the school year as well. Parents will be included in these decisions and are encouraged to speak to their child's teacher or the Education Director with any questions or concerns about class placement and/or advancement.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Written reports are sent home twice a year to keep you informed of your child's growth in the program. Parents are offered conferences at that time to discuss their child's developmental progress. Teachers will discuss the child's adjustment to school, overall development, peer relationships, and school involvement, as well as answer parents' questions. All parents are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss their child's development. In addition, you are always welcome to request a conference or meeting with the Education Director and/or teaching staff at any time. Teachers are readily available for informal conversations and sharing of information.

## **DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE GUIDANCE**

An important goal in our curriculum is helping children learn to regulate their emotions and interact in appropriate ways with other children. Because these are learning goals, guidance and discipline are focused on teaching children instead of punishing them for their mistakes. Young children are learning how to wait for their turn, cope with disappointment and frustration, join others in play, solve social problems within a group, respect differences among their classmates, take care of their classroom, organize their time, and much more.

At Coastal Kids Preschool, we use many methods and techniques to guide our children toward appropriate behavior while also allowing them opportunities to manage their own behavior. We use routines and have clear expectations of behaviors to provide consistency and predictability.

We will help children learn to operate in a group through positive guidance and modeling of appropriate play behavior. By modeling appropriate behavior through our own interactions and by encouraging children's on-task behavior, we are reinforcing positive interactions. We will redirect energies when necessary and assist in conflict resolution when the need arises. We encourage the use of words and other appropriate means of communication to solve problems. We also discuss alternative behaviors to help them achieve their goals in a positive way. We occasionally offer a child a quiet "calm down" time along with strategies to help the child calm and organize his/her body. Teachers discuss and explain undesirable behaviors and help create options for alternative behaviors that help children develop problem-solving strategies before returning to the group or activity. At no time do we use shaming, withholding of food, verbal abuse, or corporal punishment as a means of managing behavior.

All our teachers, and many of our assistants and 1:1 aides, have been trained in the Safety-Care™ program. Safety-Care is an evidence-based crisis prevention training for professional staff. This is the program used by AOS 93 and by many other school systems and centers across the country. Safety-Care differs from other behavioral safety or “crisis management” courses in that it is entirely based on positive reinforcement and de-escalation. It is also designed to be effective both with individuals who have the communication skills to engage in complex verbal interactions and with those who do not. If you would like to know more about the Safety-Care program, please contact the office.

Teachers will notify the Education Director of children who need additional assistance in developing positive self-esteem and self-control. The Education Director will then contact the parents and a team meeting will be set to discuss alternative strategies which will support the child. The team will discuss the situation and will work collaboratively to find a solution to improve the behavior. Together, the team will develop a plan about a consistent response to behavior, both at home and at school, as appropriate. This plan will include the following elements and positive behavior support strategies:

- changes in the classroom environment
- contingencies for consistent teacher response to the behavior
- methods of parent/teacher communication
- a timeframe for review of the plan

If the behavior does not stop after the plan is in place, the team will reconvene. The team may also decide to seek outside resources to support staff and family. Such outside resources will most likely include Child Development Services, who can assist with the team decision regarding screenings and/or assessments to determine the level of support for individual children. **Coastal Kids Preschool will not contact outside assistance without the consent of parents/guardians.**

## **PREVENTION OF SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION**

High quality early learning programs are important in preventing suspensions and expulsions. At Coastal Kids Preschool, we are committed to creating positive learning environments that focus on fostering social-emotional development. We will respond to challenging behavior by incorporating positive discipline practices and policies before ever considering suspension, expulsion, or other exclusionary measures.

**In an effort to prevent suspension or expulsion of children, Coastal Kids shall adopt the following in policy and practice:**

- Use diverse and developmentally appropriate practices that provide stimulating and interactive learning experiences, age-appropriate expectations, teachable moments, and knowledge of evidence-based best practices in child development and early education
- Invest in professional development and training to ensure educators have the competencies to support children’s social and emotional health
- Develop and implement classroom expectations that are developmentally appropriate, clear, and consistent
- Develop healthy and nurturing relationships with children
- Develop strong partnerships and relationships with parents



**Options prior to expulsion:**

- Conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and the development of goals
- Identify and engage Child Development Services, behavioral health consultants, and other community resources with parent permission
- Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion
- Provide reasonable accommodation
- Reduce the number of days and amount of time in the program for a specified amount of time

Exclusionary measures will not be considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If an expulsion must occur, Coastal Kids will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternative placement. Coastal Kids complies with all federal and state laws regarding suspension and expulsion.

## **EVENTS, OCCASIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

A child's birthday is their special day, and we are happy to help celebrate as a program. We focus on non-food ways to celebrate with children. Your child may get a birthday crown to wear for the day or be "class line leader." If you wish to provide a snack to share with the class as well, we request healthy treats.

We celebrate various holidays as appropriate and of interest to the children in our program. Activities may include art, music, books, and cooking projects. As our activities are based on the culture and traditions of the families we serve, please be open with us about how your family celebrates various holidays and feel free to offer suggestions for activities we could incorporate into our classroom celebrations. Please don't hesitate to let us know if your family does not choose to celebrate a certain holiday or if you do not want your child to participate in a particular celebration at school.

### **FAMILY EVENTS**

Coastal Kids Preschool hosts a variety of family events throughout the year. These include open houses, Week of the Young Child and Art Show, apple picking, Pumpkinfest, Villages of Light, graduation, and sing-alongs. If you have a specific idea for an event or are interested in helping to plan an event for families, please speak with our Executive Director, Education Director, or PTO.

### **GRADUATION**

In June of each year, we hold a celebration and recognition event for children leaving Coastal Kids Preschool and going on to kindergarten. Children will share songs and receive diplomas in recognition of their growth and accomplishments. Although the celebration is in June, children are welcome to stay at Coastal Kids for summer camp until they enter kindergarten in the fall.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trip consent forms are signed by parents at enrollment and placed in the child's file. Further written consent for a field trip is not required, but all parents will be notified in advance of any trip. A first aid kit and each child's emergency information are taken on all field trips. Annual field trips during the school year generally include Biscay Orchards, Pinkham's Plantation to see giant pumpkins, Lincoln Home for our Halloween parade, Fort William Henry, and/or the Boothbay Aquarium. All staff who drive on field trips have had DMV record checks and have completed the Bureau of Highway Safety's Child Care Provider Transporter Training. Parent helpers are welcome to attend and help drive on field trips. Parents who transport children other than their own will need to have DMV record checks.

## **IN-HOUSE PRESENTATIONS**

Coastal Kids has several in-house presentations during the school year to enhance our curriculum. Some of the in-house presentations from our community include storytellers, lobstering families, fire fighters, police officers, dental assistants, Chewonki's animal programs, therapy dogs, artists and musicians. Also, families are always welcome to share their talents, skills, and professions. Please see your child's teacher if you are interested in visiting.

## **SWIMMING AND WADING**

During the summer camp program, we offer water play in wading pools, sprinklers, mud kitchens, and water tables. You will be required to sign a water play release form in order for your child to participate. Please provide a bathing suit and towel labeled for your child.

## **PETS**

Coastal Kids Preschool's classrooms may have fish as pets. Our insurance restricts dogs from visiting the program unless they are certified therapy or guide dogs. Animals should only be brought to the center after permission has been granted by classroom teachers and the Education Director.

For any animals visiting Coastal Kids, documentation is required from a veterinarian, animal shelter, or visiting program to show full immunization of the animal, and animals must appear to be in good health. Staff members and teachers will closely supervise all interactions between children and visiting animals and will instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Staff members will also make sure children within the classroom have no allergic reaction/symptoms to animals.

Insects may be brought into the classroom if they are contained in an insect cage, plastic insect keeper, or plastic jar with a lid. Reptiles of any type are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk for salmonella infection.

## **MEDIA**

Our website, [www.coastalkidsme.org](http://www.coastalkidsme.org), is a valuable resource for school information. The site also has links to child-related community resources and a calendar. We also have a Facebook page that is regularly updated with the latest information and photos, as well as an Instagram page. Families will need to sign a media release form for your child's photograph to appear on our website, Instagram, or Facebook pages. Most classrooms are making the transition from individual Facebook pages to posting photos and information on ProCare. Please be sure to download the ProCare app, and if you have any questions reach out to our Education Director at [jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org).

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

Parents are encouraged and welcome to get involved at Coastal Kids Preschool, and there will be various opportunities for parents to participate in school activities over the course of the year. We encourage parents to visit their child's classroom and share areas of expertise with the children. Please let your child's teacher know about your special talents, interests, and hobbies. Parents are also invited to help in classrooms as special guest readers, parent helpers on field trips, or to help facilitate a craft.

As part of your child(ren)'s participation at Coastal Kids Preschool, each family is strongly encouraged to contribute six or more hours per school year in support of the school program. There will be many opportunities to share your time and talents throughout the year. These may include driving on field trips, providing building or yard maintenance, attending parent committee meetings, serving on the Board of Directors and/or PTO, helping at Spring or Fall Clean-Up Day, sharing a hobby or profession with your child's class, helping with fundraising events, donating snacks or supplies, etc.

Because Coastal Kids is a nonprofit, your volunteer time assists the school in providing a full program and helps keep our costs as low as possible.

### **PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

Coastal Kids' PTO is organized to support the education of our children by promoting and encouraging relationships amongst parents, teachers, and the school community. Our students' educational experience will be enhanced by:

- Strengthening communication and collaboration between parents and teachers
- Bolstering school spirit and fostering community connections between families and the school
- Supporting school programming via fundraisers, school events, and volunteer opportunities

- Enriching children’s educational, social, and developmental experiences

Please consider volunteering to join this committee by contacting the Education Director. Monthly meetings will be held.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Coastal Kids Preschool strongly supports frequent and effective parent-teacher communication. You are welcome to visit by appointment. When you have concerns or questions, we encourage you to communicate them to us in a timely manner so that we can find a mutually satisfying solution. Only in this way may we hope and expect to be responsive to your needs.

Upon enrollment, you will be asked to complete a child information form. The intent of this is to get to know your child and your family, so that we can provide an appropriate high-quality program for your child right from the start. We can offer materials and activities that your child is interested in and start making connections with your child if we know a bit about his/her family life and past experiences.

Following NAEYC recommendations on preschool screening, we have begun to use the developmental screening tool, *Ages and Stages Questionnaire*. Families will be given the questionnaire to fill out during the first week of school. We have chosen this tool because it is widely used in many programs across the country and is highly valid, reliable, and accurate. ASQ relies on parents as experts, is easy to use (10-15 minutes to complete), and creates the snapshot needed to catch delays and celebrate milestones. We will use a variety of mechanisms such as family conferences, surveys, and daily written and verbal communication to promote dialog with families. We will work to provide information in a language that the family can understand and will ask adults to translate or interpret communications as needed.

It is important that communication remains open between home and school. We communicate and involve families in the program through newsletters and emails. We will email newsletters and updates unless you would prefer a paper copy.

Emails are sent to provide school-wide news and to keep you informed of upcoming events. **Please make sure we have an up-to-date email address for announcements and news.** In addition, teachers may send home monthly class newsletters detailing activities covered during the past weeks and outlining concepts to be focused on the upcoming weeks. Teachers may also include their email addresses in their welcome newsletters and families are encouraged to email or call at any time with questions or concerns.

## **PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**

We strive to provide the highest quality early education for your child(ren) and recognize that this is an ongoing rather than a finite goal of any program. We are continuously looking for opportunities to improve our policies and practices and we welcome any comments or suggestions you may have. Additionally, we participate annually in a formal program improvement process whereby we survey both parents and staff about various aspects of our program and then develop a written plan for improvement and goals for the upcoming year. We encourage all families to participate in this process to help improve the quality of education and care for all children.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Although our door is locked for security reasons, parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom. We are happy to hold outdoor meetings, as well.

## **PARENTAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Coastal Kids Preschool is committed to supporting our students and to positively, effectively, and efficiently addressing difficulties and differences with families. If a concern or grievance arises, the order of operations is as follows:

- Discuss the issue with the teacher involved and/or with the Head Teacher of the class involved; this can be done in person (at drop-off or pick-up) or by phone, zoom, or email
- Schedule a conference between the Head Teacher and parents; at this point, our Education Director and/or Executive Director will be brought into the conversation if not already included
- Schedule a conference between our Education Director and/or Executive Director and the parents to mitigate the situation and determine an appropriate path forward

Progress made and conclusions reached at any/all stages of a grievance procedure will be documented for student and staff files.

## **TUITION, PROGRAMS, AND PAYMENT POLICIES**

### **MONTHLY TUITION RATES**

	<b>MORNING PROGRAM, 8:30 – 12:00</b>	
	<b>Toddlers</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
<b>2 days</b>	\$398	\$382
<b>3 days</b>	\$559	\$539
<b>4 days</b>	\$719	\$691
<b>5 days</b>	\$839	\$810

	<b>FULL DAY PROGRAM, 7:00 – 5:00</b>	
	<b>Toddlers</b>	<b>Preschool</b>
<b>2 days</b>	\$659	\$632
<b>3 days</b>	\$917	\$883
<b>4 days</b>	\$1,141	\$1,098
<b>5 days</b>	\$1,325	\$1,278

Tuition is calculated and paid over 10 equal monthly payments, September through June. It is the same regardless of snow days, holidays, school calendar, family vacations, quarterly in-service days, and absences.

### **ADDITIONAL PROGRAM RATES**

• After-school care, 2:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	• Grades K – 1	• \$20.00/day
• Additional hours (as needed, if space is available, A.M. or P.M.)	• Toddler • Preschool	• \$ 11.00/hour • \$ 10.00/hour
• Additional Half Day		• \$44.00
• Additional Full Day		• \$72.00

### **PAYMENT POLICIES**

- Monthly payments are due at the start of each month upon receipt of our invoice. Weekly payments may be set up with our Bookkeeper and are due by the first day of attendance each week
- A \$40.00 late fee will be assessed, and enrollment will be discontinued, if the balance is not paid in full or a payment plan is not established with our Bookkeeper by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Billing inquiries or payment plan arrangements may be set up by calling our office or emailing [bookkeeper@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:bookkeeper@coastalkidsme.org).
- A \$35.00 fee will be assessed for any check returned for insufficient funds.
- Late pickup fee is \$10.00 per 5 minutes late. Children must be picked up by 5:00. Ongoing lateness will be addressed with our Executive Director.
- We will send an invoice once per month and will note any additional hours or fees.
- Payment options include cash, personal check, automatic withdrawals, and credit card payments. Please contact our bookkeeper at [bookkeeper@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:bookkeeper@coastalkidsme.org) for further information.
- Two weeks notice is required and billed for withdrawal from school.

Special education services may be funded by Child Development Services and/or MaineCare; these services are documented in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

Coastal Kids Preschool has a scholarship fund for those who apply. The granting of assistance is based on need and availability of funds. Our scholarship is a reduction in tuition. We also have funds for emergency scholarships should financial hardship arise during the school year. An application is available on our website or contact the Education Director, Jenn at [jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org) if you are interested in applying for scholarship support.

In addition, the State of Maine has several ways to help families pay for childcare. The state website, <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/>, has information on these programs. Coastal Kids accepts subsidies including ASPIRE, Transitional Child Care, and State of [Maine Child Care subsidies](#). Some employers in Maine also offer childcare benefits to their employees. Please reach out to our Education Director, Jenn at [jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org](mailto:jenn.caron@coastalkidsme.org) with any questions.

## **VACATION POLICIES**

### **School Vacation Policy**

Coastal Kids Preschool is closed to all students on holidays and for two shut down weeks: the third week of June; and the third week of August. Holidays and shut down weeks are removed from tuition calculations. You are not charged for these days.

Child Care Weeks occur during AOS 93's scheduled vacation weeks. Coastal Kids will be open for all day students only who need childcare. These weeks occur over December break, February break, and April break. All day families are asked to sign-up before the scheduled breaks.

### **Family Vacation Policy**

Tuition is expected to be paid for any family vacations that are taken during the school year.

## **POLICIES AND EMERGENCY PLANS**

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

Maine law requires reporting to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) when there is a reasonable concern for student safety and/or cause to suspect abuse or neglect. Childcare personnel are mandated reporters (Maine Law: 22 MRSA Chapter 1071 §§4011-4015). Coastal Kids Preschool takes very seriously the trust that families place in us when enrolling their children. Essential to that trust must be parents'/guardians' belief that Coastal Kids Preschool considers physical, sexual, or emotional abuse intolerable and that immediate action will be taken. Any observation/incident that results in the suspicion of abuse or neglect will be reported immediately to the Education Director. If it is determined that a report is warranted, the accusation, suspicion, or risk of harm will be reported immediately to the DHHS Licensing Specialist.

### **NO SMOKING OR VAPING POLICY**

Coastal Kids is a smoke-free facility. Smoking, vaping, and marijuana use in any form are not permitted anywhere on school property.

## **NO FIREARMS/WEAPONS POLICY**

No firearms/weapons are allowed on the school premises.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE and EVACUATION PLAN**

In the event of an emergency, teachers gather and count the children, take the daily attendance sheet and classroom backpack, and evacuate the building to a safe place. All staff will assist children when evacuating to the designated location.

Coastal Kids Preschool has agreements with two nearby businesses to use their facilities as walk-to emergency evacuation sites. The Periwinkle, Minnow, and Starfish classes will walk to Floor Magic, and the Puffin, Dolphin, and Sea Turtles classes will go to Coastal Family Eye Care (formally McCormick & Bouchard).

Once in the safe, designated location, teachers take attendance and account for all children. (During monthly fire drills, children practice walking out of the building, taking attendance, and remaining in a safe location still on CKP property).

The Education Director and teachers ensure that all children are evacuated from the building or otherwise are in a safe place. After the children are safe and accounted for, a leader is named to contact the Fire Department and/or Police Department. The Education Director and/or Executive Director, are responsible for checking each of the classrooms and bathrooms for any child or adult that was left or unable to hear/see the alarms. The Executive Director, Education Director, and/or the Police Chief are responsible for all parent/guardian communication.

A complete disaster and evacuation plan is readily available in the office.

## **THANK YOU!**

We welcome you to the Coastal Kids Preschool community. Thank you for taking the time to read through our policies. We look forward to a fantastic school year!



## Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form

We understand that it is our responsibility to review this information concerning current school policies in effect for the school year, which supersedes and/or replaces all other manuals, guides, handbooks, policies, statements, and understandings previously issued by Coastal Kids Preschool concerning the terms and conditions of enrollment.

We also understand that it is our responsibility to question or discuss with the Executive Director, or Education Director, anything in the Family Handbook that we do not understand.

We acknowledge that our family has received a copy of Coastal Kids Preschool's Family Handbook 2023-2024.

---

Parent Name (Please Print)

---

Parent Signature

---

Student Name(s)

---

Date