

KOCO
Child Care Center



Parent Handbook

“Come grow with us!”

Revised December, 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

Kids of Chatham Organization, Inc. is a not-for-profit center dedicated to providing quality child care programs to families in East Hampton, CT and the surrounding communities.

STATE AND STAFF REQUIREMENTS

KOCO maintains strict compliance with the regulations put in place by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Licensing Department, local fire, police, and emergency agencies, the local health department, and OSHA. These requirements ensure a safe environment for the children and the staff. All staff are trained annually on policies and procedures set forth by the Office of Early Childhood. KOCO employees are also trained by DCF as mandated reporters of suspicion of abuse and/or neglect. KOCO's Abuse and Neglect policy is included in this packet. KOCO does not discriminate on the basis of religion, color, race, sex, age, national origin, or disability. All staff files contain the following information: professional and personal references, pre-employment drug screening, fingerprints, a DCF background investigation, and physical exam and TB test. Staff members are required to complete annual continuing education, may be trained in CPR and First Aid, and work closely with the Directors to provide a quality learning experience for your child.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Kids of Chatham Organization, Inc. (KOCO) is open Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. KOCO has a limited early opening option (6:30 am) for an additional fee. We accept children from 8 weeks to 13 years old. (Children 6-8 weeks old can be accepted with the stipulation that they have been given their first series of immunizations.)

If you choose to enroll at KOCO the following items must be completed before your child can begin:

1. Child Enrollment Form
2. Current Physical Form
3. Last page of Parent Handbook signed
4. Current contract
5. Non-refundable \$45.00 registration fee
6. Tuition insurance equal to 2 weeks tuition
Tuition insurance will be applied to child's last 2 weeks at KOCO with a 30-day written withdrawal notice. No tuition insurance will be refunded.

Once these are completed, the Director/Assistant Director can discuss with you items necessary to bring and the best way to transition your child into our program. **KOCO has an open door policy: if you would like to visit or participate in any activities, you are invited and welcomed to do so.**

REGISTRATION AND FEES

WEEKLY TUITION

Weekly tuition is due by 6 p.m. Tuesday and is payable by personal check, money order, or cash. If at any time your account becomes in arrears more than 2 weeks, your child will be asked to leave the program until which time your tuition is current. Regular tuition is payable regardless of child's attendance. Every year, each family will receive a 2-week vacation waiver. Please notify Directors in advance to arrange for waiver. Additional charges will be added to your bill in the event of a school holiday, vacations, half days, snow days, or if you exceed the number of hours contracted for. A breakdown of all fees is included in this packet. (Appendix A) Parents/Guardians are responsible for all fees. If state or federal assistance is used, parents must meet the guidelines set forth by KOCO.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All children must be signed in and out on the attendance sheet located in the child's classroom. No child may be dropped off before 7 a.m., unless contracted to do so. Please notify the office by 9 a.m. if your child will not be attending that day. If we do not hear from you by 9 a.m., we will call you to see if your child will be attending that day. Due to staffing patterns, part time children may not switch their days without prior authorization from the Director. If you are unable to pick up your child and someone from your emergency pick up list will be picking up, a permission slip must be filled out or written permission faxed or emailed to the office. At any time KOCO staff may ask a pick up person to produce proper ID. Parents may opt to utilize KOCO staff as babysitters. However, KOCO is not liable for staff members hired to perform these duties outside of KOCO. Arrangements may not be made during the employees' scheduled work shift. **It is imperative that you keep all emergency numbers, health issues, and family situations up to date.**

LATE PICK UP

Staffing is scheduled in accordance to children's contracted hours. KOCO closes promptly at 6 pm. If you are going to be later than 6 p.m., please arrange for an alternate pick up. KOCO will provide 2 staff members over the age of 18 to stay with your child. If your child hasn't been picked up by 6 pm, the Directors will attempt to call the parent or guardian. If they cannot be reached, the Directors will attempt to call authorized alternative pick-ups provided by parent at time of enrollment. The Directors reserve the right to contact local authorities for any child not picked up by 6:15 p.m. Our local non-emergency police department number is 860-267-9922. Fees are listed in Appendix A regarding late pick up. **Habitual lateness will result in dismissal from the Center.**

EMERGENCY/HOLIDAY CLOSING

KOCO follows the East Hampton town wide emergency evacuation plan in the event of a town wide emergency. In the rare event that KOCO needs to close in an emergency all local television stations will broadcast this information. The information will also be posted on our website: www.koco4kids.org and on our Facebook page. If KOCO is closed for less than 3 days, regular weekly tuition will be charged. If KOCO is closed for three days or more, the daily rate will be charged for those days. If KOCO is closed for the entire week, half the contracted tuition will be charged. Fire drills are conducted once a month and the local Fire Marshal conducts safety checks regularly. KOCO is closed in observance of the following Holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, KOCO will close on Friday, if a holiday falls on a Sunday, KOCO will close on Monday.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

At KOCO, we believe that children learn best through active play and exploration. To achieve this goal, we provide both child and teacher initiated activities to promote exploration and discovery. Our curriculum is designed to facilitate this hands-on learning through a combination of scheduled flexible daily activities which meet and enhance the individual needs of a diverse population of children. KOCO includes accommodations for the cultural, language, and developmental differences of our children.

- Circle time: a gathering of whole group to discuss various themes
- Outdoor Play: children go outdoors every day, weather permitting, to participate in both organized and child directed games
- Center Time: children can choose from a developmentally appropriate array of activities (blocks, art, dramatic play, table manipulatives, sensory manipulatives, books, science, math, electronics, games)
- Meal Time: children eat nutritious snacks and meals together while practicing self help skills and socializing with their peers
- Children are instructed as appropriate in diapering/toileting and clean up practices
- Children are offered problem solving experiences that facilitate concept formation, language development, and sensory discrimination
- Creative experiences allow children to develop and express their own ideas through the use of art, dramatic play, music, language, and motor activities
- Children are provided experiences that promote self-reliance and build self esteem
- Language rich environments to provide opportunities for spontaneous conversation, as well as experiences with the printed word.
- Health education practices which include modeling good health practices sound nutrition and safety awareness

KOCO partners with several area early childhood resources to enrich the curriculum, including the East Hampton Public Library, music and movement programs, MUZZY foreign

language programs and the Early Childhood Council. Our aim is to build a strong bond between school and community, as well as school and home. Your child's teacher will inform you of activities and events specific to their class.

CLOTHING/SUPPLIES/PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please label all items that you send to KOCO.

Please keep in mind that when children are comfortable, they will be more responsive to learning. Casual, comfortable clothing with sneakers is the best attire for our Center. KOCO is not responsible for lost or stained clothing.

Please send your child with all necessary meals, including drinks, as KOCO does not supply any food or beverage on a regular basis. Please attempt to provide your child with well balanced meals and snacks while at KOCO. Guidelines for meals can be found at www.choosemyplate.gov.

You are welcome to send naptime items for your child to use on their cot.

KOCO prefers that children do not bring toys from home.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

All children must have a current physical form and be current in required vaccinations in order to be enrolled at KOCO. The State Day Office of Early Childhood Licensing Department requires that each child have an annual physical examination. If you are not able to get your child's physical completed before it expires, you must notify the Health Consultant in writing of the date of your child's next appointment. You must return the completed health form/vaccination record as soon as possible after the appointment to guarantee uninterrupted daycare arrangements.

Exclusion from Daycare

Children need to be in good health in order to get the most out of their day. Please do not bring your child if they cannot participate fully in all planned activities, or if you feel that your child should not be allowed to go outside. Please do not send your child to KOCO if the following symptoms have occurred:

- FEVER of 99.0° F (axillary - under the arm) or 100.0° F (oral) or higher. Children may return to KOCO after being fever free for 24 hours or on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours.
- RUNNY NOSE WITH GREEN OR YELLOW DISCHARGE. These are symptoms that often indicate infection. If your child has these symptoms please keep him/her at home and see a physician if your child is uncomfortable or has a fever.
- VOMITING OR DIARRHEA. Child can return 24 hours after being symptom free.
- PINK EYE (Conjunctivitis). Children with red, itchy, draining or crusty eyes may have pink eye. Children must remain at home until drainage has stopped. This may occur in 24-48 hours after the start of antibiotic therapy.
- STREP THROAT. Child cannot return to KOCO until child has received a full 24 hours of antibiotic therapy.
- CHICKEN POX (Varicella). All lesions must be dry and crusted over (minimum 5 days – may take up to 7 days) before child returns to KOCO. If child has received the vaccine, the child must see his/her physician and provide a doctor's note before returning to KOCO.
- IMPETIGO. Scabby, crusty lesions on the face (usually around mouth or nose). This is a skin infection that can spread throughout the entire body. Child must receive 24 hours of antibiotic therapy before returning to KOCO.
- SCABIES OR HEAD LICE. Children may return to KOCO 24 hours after receiving a specified shampoo treatment and all signs of eggs are gone. Please bring the empty bottle with your child upon returning to KOCO. Also, it is important to shampoo again after 10 days to ensure all live eggs are eliminated.
- FIFTH'S DISEASE. Although not a serious illness to children, Fifth's Disease can have devastating effects on pregnant women. To protect both staff and parents, children are best kept at home while they have this rash. Children may return once the rash is gone.
- HAND, FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE (Coxsackie virus). Child must stay home until fever free and blisters are dry and scabbed over.
- ORAL THRUSH: Child must be treated with an antifungal medication. Mouth must be free of white patches and child have no difficulty eating.

ILLNESS OCCURRING WHILE AT KOCO

Your child will be sent home from daycare if he/she exhibits any of the following:

Please note: You are expected to pick up your child within one hour of notification of illness. Meanwhile, your child will be constantly supervised in a quiet area.

- *FEVER 100 axillary.* Children may return to KOCO after being free of fever for 24 hours or after 24 hours of antibiotic therapy.
- *FEVER 99.4 axillary with additional symptoms of illness.* Lethargy, sore throat, cough, thick nasal discharge or irritability and unwillingness or inability to participate in activities. Children may return to KOCO after all symptoms are gone.
- *DIARRHEA (unexplained change in stool consistency and odor and/or inability to be contained by diaper or controlled by child.)* Child may return in absence of symptoms, or after 24 hrs. of medication, or with note from physician diagnosing non-contagious illness. With or without fever, parents will be notified after 1st episode, must go home after 2nd incident takes place and can return after being symptom free for 24 hours.
- *VOMITING (with or without fever):* Child must go home after 1st episode and can return after being symptom free for 24 hours.
- *SKIN RAHSES/BLISTERS/LESIONS:* Child will be sent home if they exhibit any rash, lesions, hives, or blisters on hands, feet, or in mouth. Once diagnosed by a physician, child may return when appropriate. (see previous page for these conditions)
- *EYE DISCHARGE:* Child will be sent home if they exhibit any draining or crustiness from or around their eyes.
- *HEAD LICE:* If child is suspected of having head lice, the child will be sent home until treatment is completed. Children observed with louse/lice (moving insects) will be sent home and may return to KOCO after being treated with a specified shampoo treatment and all items on the head lice action sheet completed. The treatment must be repeated in 7-10 days. It is strongly recommended that the hair be completely clear of all nits as quickly as possible. A child will be sent home if there is evidence of nits and the child is untreated. This can be accomplished by aggressive combing out of the wet hair with an approved nit removal comb. Signed, completed head lice action sheets and empty shampoo container must be returned to the Administrator on Duty before the child may return.
- *Unwillingness or inability to participate in program accompanied by signs or symptoms of illness.*

Any child sent home with a short term contagious illness may return when no longer contagious with a **minimum of one day (or 24 hours) from the time the child is sent home.**

MEDICATIONS

Medications will be administered in accordance with state regulations and KOCO policy. Medications will only be administered with a completed Medication Administration Form. This form is required for **all** medications including over the counter. Blank forms are available in the office.

Your pediatrician must complete the entire top half of the form. **Please ask your pediatrician to be very specific in listing the symptoms and/or conditions for administering the medication.** In the absence of a stop date, the authorization will expire 1 year from the date it is written.

The parent authorization portion of the form must be complete. Your signature in this area signifies that you have already given this medication to your child **at least once** and that you are authorizing KOCO staff to administer this medication to your child.

The medication must be in its **original** labeled container. Please note siblings may not share. All medication brought to KOCO must be checked in by the Directors and stored in a locked container away from children. The only exception to being stored in a locked container is an EpiPen for anaphylaxis prevention. If the medication is a prescription, the pharmacy label must be intact on the medication. The prescription must be current and the medication must be prior to its expiration date. All unused medications shall be returned to the parent or destroyed if not picked up in 1 week after notification of expiration.

If your child has food allergies, he/she will only be allowed to consume what is in their lunchbox. Every effort will be made to inform you of special events (celebration, parties, and birthdays). If you would like to leave a special snack that your child is able to have for these occasions; you are welcome to do. If your child's class is participating in a cooking project, every effort will be made to inform you of this activity. Please note that your child will not be allowed to participate in the cooking project without your permission.

A separate form for nonprescription topical medications (e.g. diaper rash ointment, teething gels, etc.) must be completed by the parent prior to administration. The medication must be labeled with the child's name in its original container. Please be aware that without the correctly completed forms and properly labeled medications, **NO MEDICATION WILL BE DISPENSED**. This is for the safety of your child.

If your child is currently receiving a medication for a potentially life threatening condition (e.g. diabetes, asthma) your child will be refused entry to the program until the proper forms and medications are provided. Medications may not be stored in diaper bags or in children's belongings.

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS

While all precautions are taken to provide a safe environment, accidents will occur. KOCO staff continuously monitor children in their care both indoors and outdoors, during naptime and in bathroom areas. Ratios and group sizes are always maintained. If an injury occurs, first aid is administered and you will receive a written report. If an incident that involves your child occurs, you will receive a written report. In the event that an incident or accident is of a more serious nature, we will contact you by telephone.

BACK TO SLEEP POLICY

All infants under the age of 1 will be placed on their backs for naps in their cribs. Studies done by the American Academy of Pediatrics suggest that babies who sleep on their backs have a reduced risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

PARENT COMMUNICATION/INVOLVEMENT/RESPONSIBILITIES

It is critical that KOCO and the parent establish a partnership. Open and honest communication by all parties is crucial to your child's success. Most programs provide a written daily note home; parents may call to check in to the classrooms at any time. We are a not-for-profit corporation, managed by a parent Board of Directors. As parents, you have a voice in decisions that affect the center. Board Meetings are held regularly and many opportunities to volunteer are available. Volunteers can serve on committees, help with building and maintenance or offer their expertise. Time commitments are minimal. Please see the Director if you would like more information on ways that you can help. Please use designated spaces when dropping off and picking up your child, do not park along the curb. Monitor your child's location in the parking lot at all times. Cars left running will be subjected to a fine. (see appendix A)

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

KOCO's goal is to provide children the opportunity and motivation to make choices, function independently, learn and practice social skills, respect the needs of others, adapt to routines, and become responsible members of a group. We focus on positive, observable behaviors, and encourage children to use words to express their feelings. KOCO prohibits physical restraint unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other children. A child may be removed from the group by a staff member for private discussion and problem-solving; the child is then encouraged to return to the group as soon as appropriate.

Our no tolerance policy regarding bullying or threatening behavior applies to everyone – teachers, children, family members. Physically or verbally intimidating, threatening or abusive behaviors may be cause for immediate disenrollment from the center. Depending upon the degree and nature of the disruptive behavior, Co-Directors may opt to employ one or more of the following strategies to prevent possible disenrollment:

- Reassess classroom environment, activities, schedule, supervision.
- Document and share disruptive behaviors with family.
- Schedule in-person conference to discuss behaviors with family.
- Provide or recommend resources to family (literature, professional consultation, assessment by school district).
- Suspend enrollment for a period of time agreeable to the center and the family.

If a family fails to support the efforts of the center to remediate their child's disruptive behavior, the center may opt to proceed with disenrollment.

LATE TUITION PAYMENTS

KOCO expects families to keep current on tuition payments. If tuition is more than 2 weeks in arrears, an administrator will contact you to make payment arrangements. If a family is consistently in arrears, and/or fails to follow the agreed upon payment arrangements, the center may opt to proceed with disenrollment.

LATE PICK-UP

Please plan to pick your child up by 5:55 pm at the very latest. We understand that unforeseen circumstances sometimes arise, and we are happy to keep your children safe and engaged in the event of an emergency. However, families that consistently pick their child(ren) up after closing time will be charged extra (according to the terms of the contract), and the center may opt to proceed with disenrollment.

In the event that disenrollment becomes necessary for any reason, the family will be given written notice 2 weeks in advance.

Kids of Chatham Organization

POLICY AGREEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook and I agree to adhere to the policies set forth. I agree to accept any changes made to this handbook with written notification from KOCO. The Directors discussed with me the techniques used to manage behaviors at KOCO. Those techniques will be reviewed as necessary. I give permission for KOCO to photograph my child for use in the classroom, on the KOCO website, and for brochures.

Parent Signature

Date

Director/Assistant

Date