



COMO KIDS  
CAMP COMO  
PARENT HANDBOOK

**2023-2024**

STONINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER  
28 CUTLER STREET  
STONINGTON, CT 06378



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**Stonington Community Center**  
**28 Cutler Street Stonington, CT 06378**  
**[www.thecomoo.org](http://www.thecomoo.org)**

**Phone:** 860.535.2476

**COMO Kids Cell Phone:** 860.287.5196

### **QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COMPLIMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS**

The purpose of this handbook is to promote understanding of our program and its policies. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments you may call the Education Director. Our staff is committed to providing you and your child with the best possible experience. Together we can ensure a safe and healthy environment for children between school and home.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is critical and we need to know of any major life circumstances your child may be experiencing, as well as, problems or concerns that may arise. This allows us to best understand the needs of your child, as well as, to address any problems that may arise. Please keep the teachers informed and don't hesitate to bring issues forward to the Education Director for resolution. You may also contact the Executive Director, Beth-Ann Stewart.

## WELCOME TO THE COMO

Thank you for choosing the COMO and sharing your child with us. We are a state-licensed site with a long history of providing quality care in a happy environment.

- We offer affordable **before and after school care** on the COMO campus for elementary and middle school youth.
- As a part of our partnership with Stonington Public Schools, all COMO Kids are bussed to and from the COMO to either West Vine, Deans Mill, or Stonington Middle schools.
- COMO Kids receive a 10% discount for all COMO after school enrichment programs if the desired program falls on a day in which they are simultaneously enrolled in COMO Kids? We offer seamless transitions to COMO Pottery/Athletics/MakerSpace programs, allowing your child to be a part of COMO Kids after care while pursuing their interests.
- **Camp COMO** is offered during the summer months.

*The COMO prides itself on providing engaging, age appropriate curriculum, allowing youth to pursue interests and make friends, while ensuring a safe, nurturing learning environment.*

## DONATIONS

As a nonprofit, we greatly appreciate donations of new or gently used toys, paper, books, craft materials, and clothing.

Please consider making a monetary donation to the COMO's Annual Appeal to assist us in providing affordable programs and maintaining our facilities and equipment. When making a donation please consider any matching funds your corporation may offer. The COMO invites all children to participate regardless of ability to pay. Your donation assists us with this commitment to our youth.

## ENROLLMENT POLICIES

### Registration Check List

**All of the following items are due at the time of registration in order for your child to be officially enrolled in the program**

o Current Health Assessment Record including immunizations stating that your child is in good health and free from communicable diseases. Each child entering the center must have an updated physical form signed and dated by his/her pediatrician, which includes the child's date of birth. All children must have their physicals updated annually and immunization records must be maintained per State of Connecticut requirements. This form must remain current for the school year.

o Completed registration information through our online registration system which **MUST** include authorized adults for pick-up, emergency contacts, allergy and pertinent medical information.

o Appropriate medication, if necessary, with required paperwork must be given to the Education Director.

o A **non-refundable** deposit of the first month's tuition is required for registration and to secure a space in the program.

o Membership. Tuition-based programs are a members-only opportunity. Membership is required for participation in tuition-based programs. If your child is enrolled in a tuition-based program, he or she must be enrolled in membership auto-renewal for the duration of enrollment.

#### **Please Note:**

**Any changes in registration can only be authorized by the parent/guardian enrolling the child.**

**The parent/guardian enrolling the child is also responsible for payment of services rendered.**

Tuition is prepaid on a monthly basis. All payments are due 4 days prior to the first of the month of service. Monthly payments for child care programs are averages based upon the year's tuition. All tuition-based programs will require enrollment in automatic billing utilizing Credit Card or EFT drafts.

A non-refundable deposit of the first month's tuition is required for registration and to secure a space in the program. Childcare tuition fees are non-refundable.

### **Payment and Refund Policy: Camp COMO**

When registering for camp, only a non-refundable deposit of \$50 is due at the time of registration. The remainder of the balance will be scheduled using the billing method you have chosen on file (credit card or EFT) 14 days before the start of the camp week. Camp payments are non-transferable and cannot be transferred to another week of camp. Additional payments (paying in full), are non-refundable and cannot be used as credit toward other weeks or programming. Schedule changes are filled as availability permits.

### **COVID-19:**

The COMO Team follows stringent cleaning and sanitizing procedures as outlined by NAEYC and the CDC so as to reduce the exposure to COVID-19 to safeguard both the children in our care, and our team. This is our commitment to you during these challenging times. In turn, we ask that families adhere to CDC recommendations in their everyday activities in conjunction with the daily efforts of the COMO Team. Despite all our best efforts, there may be times when COMO childcare is required to close to follow quarantine guidelines set forth by Ledge Light Health District and the Office of Early Childhood. When childcare is closed and in quarantine, the COMO's staffing and operational expenses do not change. In an effort to avert a fiscal crisis, as well as, continue to hold a child's space in the program while also providing compensation to our teachers and staff, when the COMO is required to close childcare for quarantine, tuition will continue to be applied per our billing cycle and there will be no reimbursement for time missed.

**...ENROLLMENT POLICIES CONTINUED...**

**Schedule Changes and Withdrawals: COMO Kids**

Withdrawals and change of schedules must be submitted by the 20th of the month to adjust billing for the following month. The new schedule is effective beginning the first of the following month. Childcare tuition fees are non-refundable. All schedule changes must be approved by the Education Director to ensure space is available.

**Schedule Changes and Withdrawals: Camp COMO**

Withdrawals and schedule changes must be submitted within 2 weeks of the start of the camp week. No refunds or credit will be given for withdrawals inside of two weeks.

**Drop-in Days**

Drop-in days must be approved by the Education Director to ensure space is available. Once approved, parents/guardians may purchase drop-in days online via their online portal.

**Returned Credit Card Fees and Outreach**

Full service billing service will be through Daxko Full Service Billing. A \$30 return fee will be added for credit card payments that decline/return for insufficient funds and a \$20 return fee will be added for EFT payments that decline/return. Two additional attempts will be made automatically to recover the original balance and the return fee. No additional fees will be added by the COMO to your account for additional returns on the same item.

***The COMO also participates in the state's Care4Kids financial aid program for income eligible families. Please call the office at 860-535-2476 for information.***

## ...ENROLLMENT POLICIES CONTINUED

### Sibling Discount Child Care

In an effort to make child care accessible to all, a 10% sibling discount is available. Contact the COMO office at 860-535-2476 for more information.

### PICK UP AND DROP OFF POLICY

If you are continually late picking up your child, the COMO reserves the right to request that another person on the pick-up list pick up your child.

Parents must call or e-mail the COMO in advance if someone on the pick-up list other than a parent is picking up their child. **Only persons listed on your child's pick-up list will be allowed to remove your child from the program.** Staff will request a form of photo identification from persons they are unfamiliar with. COMO employees are not allowed to be on any child's pick-up list. All authorized pick-ups must be added or deleted directly to/from your account profile, before the child can be released from care. Parents must alert COMO to any additions or deletions. If a child has not been picked up within fifteen (15) minutes of our closing time, a staff person will attempt to call the child's parents at all available numbers. If they cannot be reached, the staff person will attempt to call the emergency and alternate people listed on the emergency cards. The police will be called after one hour if parents or other adults specified on the permission to release forms cannot be reached. At that time the child may be released to the police. Two staff members at least 18 years of age or older will remain with the child at all times. Additional charges will accrue for late pickup.

## **LATE FEES**

Children must be picked up promptly from childcare to avoid a late fee. A penalty of \$10 for the first 10 minutes and \$1 for each additional minute by the school clock will be added to your bill if a child is picked up late from the program. The appropriate fee will be assessed and charged to the credit card on file. You may not drop off for before care childcare earlier than 7 am. If you are dropping off for the day any earlier than 9 am it will be assumed that your child is attending before care, in which case the appropriate fee will be assessed and charged to the payment method on file.

## **DEPENDENT CARE FORMS AND TAX INFORMATION**

Tax information for all child care payments will be available in participants' online member portals Jan 1 and will remain accessible for one year. Please notify the front office if you are requesting tax information for child care prior to September 1, 2021.



## OPERATING POLICIES

### Holiday Closings

**Note, childcare is not available on the following days:**

|                |                        |                |
|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Labor Day      | Columbus Day           | Veteran's Day  |
| Thanksgiving   | Christmas Eve          | Christmas Day  |
| New Year's Day | Martin Luther King Day | Presidents Day |
| Good Friday    | Memorial Day           |                |

### Closing Alerts Policy

**School Cancellation:** In case of severe weather or other emergencies, if Stonington Public Schools call a "traditional Snow Day with School Closure," all COMO Kids full-day distance learning care, before and after care and Preschool, is cancelled. If Stonington Public Schools calls an "Emergency Full Remote Learning Day," the COMO will remain open for programming unless the COMO determines campus closure is necessary.

**Delayed Start:** Before Care for COMO Kids full-day distance learning and Preschool will be available for delayed starts of Stonington Public Schools at 8:30 am.

**Early Release:** If Stonington Public Schools calls for an early dismissal COMO Kids after-care will be canceled. All COMO Kids after care participants will either be bussed home or a parent pick up from school according to the Early Dismissal Forms filled out upon registration. COMO Kids full-day distance learning and Preschool will dismiss at 11:30 am should Stonington Public Schools call for an early dismissal. There will be no afternoon preschool.

**After School Programs Cancellation:** Should Stonington Public Schools cancel after school programming this **does not** mean that COMO Kids and Preschool are canceled. Programming will run as planned unless it is decided that the COMO campus will be closed.

## SICK CHILD POLICY

When determining your child's overall well-being, ask yourself:

Can your child participate with reasonable comfort and receive adequate, appropriate care without interfering with the care of, or posing a threat to, the other children?

### **Your child must stay home...**

If your child has a fever of 100.8 degrees auxiliary (arm pit) or 99.8 degrees orally he/she will be sent home.

Your child needs to be fever free for **24 hours** before returning to school.

If your child has diarrhea he/she needs to stay home. If your child has two loose bowel movements at school or is frequenting the bathroom more than twice each hour you will be notified. The child needs to be diarrhea free for **twenty four hours** prior to returning to our program.

If your child has vomited then they need to stay home.

If your child vomits while in our program he/she will be sent home and must be vomit free for **twenty four hours**.

If he/she has had an antibiotic prescribed and it has been administered for less than 24 hours.

If he/she has any unidentified rash: In this instance a doctor's note will be required prior to the child being allowed back in the program.

**...SICK CHILD POLICY CONTINUED**  
**COVID-19**

**Test, Mask, Go**

**Individuals with mild respiratory disease symptoms (e.g., infrequent cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, etc.) can continue participating in-person provided:**

- they are fever-free ( $< 99.8^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and feel well enough to participate,
- they do not live with anyone who has had COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks,
- they can wear a mask consistently and correctly,
- they test negative for COVID-19 prior to reporting in-person on every day they have symptoms, as well as one final test on the morning their symptoms have completely resolved.

**Individuals who have any respiratory disease symptoms should not use the Test-Mask-Go strategy if:**

- they have a fever ( $\geq 99.8^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) or feel feverish (they should not report in-person until their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of medication)
- they live with a person who recently tested positive for COVID-19 (within the past 2 weeks)  
Instead, these individuals should stay home until their symptoms resolve and test for COVID-19.

**Individuals testing positive for COVID-19 should complete isolation according to the [CDC Isolation and Precautions w Quarantine Calculator](#).**

**...SICK CHILD POLICY CONTINUED**

**PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD HAS A  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.**

Illnesses such as COVID-19, chicken pox, pertussis, measles, etc. are all reportable diseases in accordance with the Department of Public Health.

**Emergency Medical Care Form**

COMO staff will attend to minor cuts and bruises. If emergency medical care is needed, 911 will be called and a parent or emergency contact will be called immediately. If the staff is unable to reach a parent or emergency contact, the designated physician will be notified. Emergency contacts will be considered as part of the child's pick up list.

**Administration of Medication Policy**

It is advised that parents arrange for their child to be given medication at home or by the school nurse prior to attending COMO programs. Parents of children who require administration of medication more than twice a day need to give the medication to the Education Director in the original container with the prescription and the paperwork required by the CT Office of Early Childhood.

## **...SICK CHILD POLICY CONTINUED**

### **Administration of Medication Policy**

The COMO will administer emergency medications which include prescribed inhalers and premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e. Epi pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), nonprescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl). The COMO will not administer ear drops, nose drops/sprays, or eye drops however, parents/guardians are welcome to administer at the COMO.

Parental responsibilities include providing the center the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the COMO or online at [www.thecomoo.org](http://www.thecomoo.org). The medication authorization form **must include information, such as:**

- The child's name, address, and birthdate
- The date the medication order was written
- Medication name, dose and method of administration
- Time to be administered and dates to start and end the medication
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur

Notation whether the medication is a control

## BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY

The program strives to create a **loving and secure** atmosphere that provides each child with the tools necessary to grow and develop socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. We believe that every child deserves to feel safe and comfortable in their place of learning. The Behavior Guidance Policy lends itself to supporting the development of a child's ability to resolve conflicts and exhibit developmentally appropriate behaviors as a response to conflict through the use of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. The Pyramid Model is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework used to promote social and emotional development while preventing and addressing challenging behaviors through the use of evidence-based practices that:

- Build positive relationships
- Develop supportive and nurturing environments
- Provide individualized supports to address persistent challenging behavior when needed

When disputes arise among children or between a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage a talking out process among those involved. The goal of this talking out process will be to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using children's ideas whenever possible.

Methods for resolving conflicts are:

- Positive guidance
- Setting clear limits
- Redirection

A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control.

## **...BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY CONTINUED**

Staff will continuously supervise children during behavior guidance.

In accordance with federal and state civil rights laws, staff shall not be abusive, neglectful, or use physical, corporal, humiliating, psychological, threatening or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child, another child, or an adult. Staff should never withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

### **CHILDCARE EXPULSION OF CHILDREN POLICY**

The COMO reserves the right to suspend a child's participation in the program temporarily or permanently. Intentionally causing injury to another child or leaving the staff's supervision will result in temporary suspension. COMO reserves the right to expel a child if all other possible interventions have been exhausted or based upon the seriousness of the child's actions. If your child's participation is temporarily suspended, you will continue to be responsible for payment for the originally scheduled days.

Suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures will only be used if there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications. Before a determination is made the child's education team (Education Director, teachers, and assistant teachers), the Executive Director, the parents or guardians, and consultants will be engaged to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.

## **...BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICY CONTINUED**

The COMO will address challenging behaviors through the Pyramid Model's tiered approach beginning with implementing high quality supportive environments and nurturing, responsive relationships followed by targeted social/emotional supports. If the challenging behavior continues then intensive intervention, in form of a behavior support plan, will be implanted. The program will collect data through the use of Behavior Incident Reports to help identify the function of the behavior as a means to develop an individualized behavior support plan. The child's education team (Education Director, teachers, and assistant teachers), the Executive Director, the parents or guardians, consultants and local school systems must also be engaged for the development of the individual behavior support plan.

The Education Director will reach out to partners at the local public school systems and the Office of Early Childhood in an effort to address consistent challenging behaviors and support the success of the child in the program. If need be, the COMO will also offer assistance to families to access other services and possible alternative placement.

When staff suspect that a child has a developmental delay or other special need staff will take the following steps:

- Present documentation, data and an explanation for the concern to the parent(s),

- The Education Director will work with partners at local school systems and the Office of Early Childhood to suggest next steps to parents which could include referral to screenings and meeting to develop an individualized behavior support plan,

- Provide families with information regarding diagnostic evaluation



## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGELCT POLICY AND PROCEDURE...**

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

All COMO staff are mandated reporters and therefore have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center.

#### **CHILD ABUSE IS DEFINED AS A CHILD WHO HAS HAD:**

- non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her;
- injuries which are at variance with the history given of them;
- a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

#### **CHILD NEGLECT IS DEFINED AS A CHILD WHO HAS BEEN:**

- abandoned;
- denied proper care and attention physically; educationally, emotionally or morally;
- allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well-being (CT GS 46b-120).

#### **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- As child care providers we are mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm of any child.
- The COMO supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.

### **SUPERVISION POLICY:**

At **NO** time shall a child be left unsupervised

1. A staff to child ratio of no more than ten children to one teacher shall be maintained at all times (this includes indoor, outdoor, gym time, field trips & naptime). At least two teachers will be staffed at all times. At **NO** time should a staff person be alone with **one** child - two staff or two children must be present.

2. Teachers will supervise the class primarily by sight. Teachers may only rely on sound for short intervals. When this is the case, teachers will check frequently on the child(ren) out of sight. **Teachers MUST be aware of where the children are at all times.**

3. The class size shall not exceed twenty preschoolers.

4. Teachers must always count the children when they leave a room and before returning to the room.

5. Children are carefully watched while outside at play. Teachers are divided up when outside; some teachers are stationary at the playground equipment while others rotate among the play areas. When a child goes inside to use the restrooms from outdoors, a staff member is designated to accompany him/her. Children are never allowed to travel from the outside to inside by themselves.

## **PLAYGROUND POLICY**

Children must be supervised at all times.

Children must sit on their bottoms on the swings. NO JUMPING OFF

The area in front of and in back of the swings must remain clear of objects and children when in use.

Woodchips are to stay on the ground. Matting is to stay underneath the woodchips.

Children need to use two hands when climbing.

Slide rules: UP the stairs DOWN the slide

Balls are played with in designated areas. Balls that go outside designated areas must be retrieved by a staff person.

Equipment must be returned to the proper storage areas.

Children should go outside to play each day that it is not raining, below 32 degrees, and/or any type of pollutant that may be hazardous to children. In cases when children cannot play outside, physical activity/gross motor practice will occur in the gymnasium or the auditorium. Parents should dress their child in clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.

On hot days, children are provided with opportunities to play in the shade. Written parental permission is required to apply sunscreen or sun block. When in the sun, children should wear sun-protective clothing, sunscreen/sun block, or both.

The program will maintain outside space for the children that is the equivalent to, or greater than, 75 square feet for each child. This is per CT State Regulations and NAEYC Standards. The total amount of required play space is based on a maximum of one-third of the center enrollment.

## **COMO Kids & CAMP COMO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLAN**

COMO Kids and Camp COMO will follow a flexible daily schedule that meets the individual needs each child enrolled in the program and including those with cultural, language and developmental differences.

COMO Kids and Camp COMO participants enjoy access to the entire COMO campus, where opportunities for educational, creative and recreational pursuits abound. Children will have the opportunity to:

- Flex their creative muscles in the COMO pottery studio;
- Problem-solve using emerging technology in the COMO MakerSpace;
- Explore the natural world in the Children's Garden and Outdoor Classroom;
- Enjoy gym games;
- Be active on the COMO tennis and paddle tennis courts;
- Express themselves on the COMO stage
- Create incredible memories with their peers and teachers;
- Foster new friendships.
- Field trips into Borough including duBois Beach during the summer months?

The daily schedule will always includes indoor and outdoor weather dependent physical activities, which will allow for fine and gross motor development and opportunities for problem-solving experiences.

**Thank you  
for being a part of the  
COMO!**

Stonington Community Center, Inc.

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**[www.thecomoo.org](http://www.thecomoo.org)**



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