

Concordia Place General Information Early Learning and Preschool Programs

Concordia Place

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www.concordiaplace.org

Year round: September - August * Days: Monday - Friday * Hours: 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

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Children's ages:	6 weeks - 5 years of age	2-5 years of age
Program Capacity:	148 children	93 children
License & Accreditations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed by the State of Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services • Licensed by the City of Chicago • Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) • Gold Circle of Quality Program through Excelerate Illinois 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed by the State of Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services • Licensed by the City of Chicago • Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) • Gold Circle of Quality Program through Excelerate Illinois

Memberships and Affiliations

Member Department of Early Childhood Development, Northern Illinois District

Member Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children

Member Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children

Member National Association for the Education of Young Children

Member Illinois Action For Children

Member Lutheran Services in America

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Welcome to Concordia Place

Our Mission: Concordia Place believes in creating involved communities where all our neighbors can gather, learn, and grow.

Concordia Place is a vibrant, faith-based nonprofit with proactive solutions to key social needs. We focus on growth and opportunity through economically inclusive early childhood, teen leadership, adult learning and senior wellness programs.

Concordia Place believes that a family's income should not exclude them from quality programs for their children. We serve working families and single-parent families by operating year-round, five days a week with hours of 7:00am - 6:00pm. We offer a sliding tuition scale with a weekly payment schedule (instead of a full semester of tuition in advance) that benefits more than 70% of our enrolled families. We provide our programs without regard to race, gender, or religious affiliation.

It is our goal to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for children. Our program structure reflects a concern for the development of positive social skills. We believe that children who are comfortable in social settings and who can communicate effectively are children best prepared for the challenges of life. The program operates with a variety of structured and unstructured activities, developed around weekly themes, under the supervision of trained and qualified staff.

Our History

In 1981, three single-mothers in Chicago's North Center community approached Concordia Lutheran Church, a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), needing care for their children after school. Even though the women were not members, Concordia Church responded by founding the Concordia Child Care Center in the lower level of the church. Its original goal was to provide after-school and full-day summer care for children ages six to thirteen years old. The school-age program was open when schools were closed in order to assist working parents who need child care.

In 1989, the Concordia Child Care Center expanded to include full-day preschool for children ages three to five years old. Soon the wait list was long, so in 2001, Concordia Lutheran Church purchased a vacant church and school to expand to serve the neighboring Avondale community. In 2002, Concordia Place was created, and the Concordia Child Care Center was included in this new nonprofit organization and continues to serve parents with children ages 2-5 years old. Opening in 2006, this new center at 3300 N. Whipple not only replicates our successful preschool and school-age programs, but also has expanded programs to infants and toddlers as well as teens, seniors, and adult learning programs.

Faith-Based

Concordia Lutheran Church and Concordia Place are inter-connected in more ways than just history. Although Concordia Place is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it continues to be an outreach ministry of Concordia Church. Anchored in the Lutheran Church, Concordia Place is directed in service to our neighbors out of a mission of service and witness to Jesus Christ. Living out our faith by obeying the Lord's second commandment to "love our neighbor" is the "why" we do what we do.

What we do is not limited to only those who share our faith, nor is **what** we do directed to evangelizing people to our faith. The need of our neighbor is justification enough for our response. The church is called to love our neighbor as the way we obey Christ's first commandment—to love God with our all.

Concordia Place has obtained membership as a social ministry organization of Lutheran Services in America. Part of its guiding principles states, *“In response to God’s love, Lutheran individuals, congregations, judicatories and social ministry organizations seek to meet human needs, advocate for dignity and justice, and work for peace and reconciliation among all people. This ministry of service—which is part of God’s mission to the broken world—is essential to the meaning of the church.”*

Employment at Concordia Place is also not limited by religious beliefs or membership. Our employees share a passion for community service, but may have different beliefs than the Lutheran Church.

Programs offered at Concordia Place through full or partial funding from restricted private funding or public sector grants and contracts keep with the terms of the funding and do not include sectarian religious education, but these restrictions do not apply to all programs and activities at Concordia Place.

Concordia Place Funding

Concordia Place is a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. We rely on tuition payments, individual contributions, in-kind donations, public funding as well as grants from private foundations to meet all the costs of all of the programs we offer. Our average yearly funding breakdown is 55% private tuition payments, 30% government funding and 15% fundraising from individuals and foundations. Along with seeking donations from individuals within the community, we ask that all program participants also participate in our fundraising efforts. There are numerous opportunities to participate from attending fundraising events, selling raffle tickets, donating needed items, and making a contribution to our annual fundraising campaign.

Transitioning Into Our Program

Joining an early learning program is a big change for any family, whether it's your first time or you're transitioning from another center. Our goal is to make this transition as smooth as possible and create a plan that meets your family's unique needs. Before enrollment, you may tour the center and are welcome to bring along your child.

Once enrollment is finalized (see more in the Enrollment & Tuition Policies section), we offer play dates. During play dates, you stay with your child in the classroom for a few hours while your child gets to know the teachers and the other children. It also helps them familiarize themselves with the environment. At this visit, there will be time for you to meet with program staff and teachers about what this transition will be like and how Concordia Place staff can help with the adjustment. On your child's first day, we encourage you to support your child's transition by spending some time in the classroom. When you are ready to depart, teachers will help ease the separation.

Ages Served

Our Early Learning and Preschool programs serve children 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Classroom size and child/teacher ratios are based on the age of children:

Group	Enrollment Year	Age	Ratio Children:Teachers
Infants	Early Learning Year 1	6 weeks – 23 months	8:2
Toddlers	Early Learning Year 2	12 – 35 months	12:3
Twos	Early Learning Year 3	24 – 47 months	12:2
Preschool	Preschool Years 4 & 5	3 – 5 years	20:2

Starting Checklist

Use this checklist to help prepare for a great learning experience! Please remember to . . .

- ✓ Label all personal items with your child's name
- ✓ Pack a blanket and a small travel sized pillow for rest time (Pillows are not permitted for infants.)
- ✓ Pack a tooth brush
- ✓ Pack a water bottle or sippy cup for your child's cubby
- ✓ Pack at least one extra set of season appropriate clothing to keep at Concordia (Two sets for children under 3 years old)
- ✓ Pack non-aerosol sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) labeled with your child's name to keep at the center for use during April through September
- ✓ Submit all enrollment forms
- ✓ Pay your registration fee, 1st week's tuition, tuition deposit, and activity fee (if your child is 2 years of age or older)

Additional Supplies Needed from Home for Children Under 3

- ✓ Disposable or cloth diapers: Cloth diapers must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material
- ✓ Diapering Ointment
- ✓ Baby Wipes
- ✓ Appropriate number of bottles (with formula or breast milk) labeled with child's name and date

Other Important Information

Here are some guidelines about what to expect as you join our program.

1. Each child is given a cubby for his/her coat, boots, and personal possessions.
2. The program is very active. Children should wear clothing that is casual and not restricting. Gym shoes are preferable; we strongly discourage flip flops and dress shoes. Smocks will be provided by the center for art and water activities, but occasionally clothing may become soiled. Avoid sending your child in jewelry or other small fashion accessories; these items can get misplaced, broken, or become a choking hazard.
3. Do not bring any toys from home unless your child's teacher requests it for a classroom activity.

The program operates from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please make sure that either your child arrives by 9:00 a.m. or that you have informed the teachers that your child will arrive later than usual. Teachers often have planned activities that start by 9:00 a.m., and latecomers can disrupt the group. Please take your child directly to his room and sign in on the sign-in sheet. If your child will not attend school, please call by 9:00 a.m. to let us know.

Concordia Place closes for these holidays (the observation date may differ from the holiday):

- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day

In-Service Days: One day per quarter, the program is closed for staff training, program assessment, and other operational needs. We publish these dates on our annual calendar. Child care is not available on these days, and you must make other arrangements.

About Our Program

Program Goals and Philosophy

Concordia knows that young children are constantly learning and operates its children's programs year round, including summer. Our curriculum continues even during the summer; in other words, we do not offer preschool or early learning September through June and just child care during July and August. Children continue to develop and learn throughout the summer. Our year-round program also provides the consistency from which young children benefit. The program goals that guide our program curriculum and teaching methodology are to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing, and relaxed environment for each child's physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.
- Encourage children to develop a positive self-image, self-reliance, and a sense of their own independence.
- Teach children social skills: the ability to take turns, work together, communicate effectively, and respect one another.
- Provide structured and unstructured time for children to spend in a variety of activities and satisfying learning experiences.
- Provide children with the skills and techniques that allow them to gain control over their environment and competence in their abilities.
- Encourage active curiosity about the world and to promote enthusiasm for learning.
- Help children develop self-discipline by providing an environment with reasonable limits and expectations.
- Encourage good stewardship of our world: to care for their belongings, to show respect for the belongings of others, and to appreciate the world in which we live.

Program Objectives: Early Learning (ages 6 weeks – 3 years)

The program is designed for optimum individual development at the child's natural pace. Teachers base lesson plans and activities on the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines, which is a set of general statements that describe what children should know and be able to do by the time they are three.

Self-Regulation: Foundation of Development

- **Physiological Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to regulate their physical processes in order to meet both their internal needs and external demands in accordance with social and cultural contexts.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to identify and manage the expression of emotion in accordance with social and cultural contexts.
- **Attention Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to process stimuli, focus and sustain attention, and maintain engagement in accordance with social and cultural contexts.
- **Behavior Regulation:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to manage and adjust behaviors in accordance with social and cultural contexts.

Social and Emotional Development

- Attachment Relationships: Children form secure attachment relationships with caregivers who are emotionally available, responsive, and consistent in meeting their needs.
- Emotional Expression: Children demonstrate an awareness of and the ability to identify and express emotions.
- Relationship with Adults: Children demonstrate the desire and develop the ability to engage, interact, and build relationships with familiar adults.
- Self-Concept: Children develop identity of self.
- Relationship with Peers: Children demonstrate the desire and develop the ability to engage and interact with other children.
- Empathy: Children demonstrate an emerging ability to understand someone else's feelings and to share in the emotional experiences of others.

Physical Development and Health

- Gross Motor: Children demonstrate strength, coordination, and controlled use of large muscles.
- Fine Motor: Children demonstrate the ability to coordinate their small muscles in order to move and control objects.
- Perceptual: Children demonstrate the ability to distinguish, process, and respond to sensory stimuli in their environment.
- Self-Care: Children demonstrate the desire and ability to participate in and practice self-care routines.

Language Development, Communication, and Literacy

- Social Communication: Children demonstrate the ability to engage with and maintain communication with others.
- Receptive Communication: Children demonstrate the ability to comprehend both verbal and nonverbal expression.
- Expressive Communication: Children demonstrate the ability to understand and convey thoughts through both nonverbal and verbal expression.
- Early Literacy: Children demonstrate interest in and comprehension of printed materials.

Cognitive Development

- Concept Development: Children demonstrate the ability to connect pieces of information in understanding objects, ideas, and relationships.
- Memory: Children demonstrate the ability to acquire, store, recall, and apply past experiences.
- Spatial Relationships: Children demonstrate an awareness of how objects and people move and fit in space.
- Symbolic Thought: Children demonstrate the understanding of concepts, experiences, and ideas through symbolic representation.

- **Creative Expression:** Children demonstrate the ability to convey ideas and emotions through creative expression.
- **Logic and Reasoning:** Children demonstrate the ability to use knowledge, previous experiences, and trial and error to make sense of and impact their world.
- **Quantity and Numbers:** Children demonstrate awareness of quantity, counting, and numeric competencies.
- **Science Concepts and Exploration:** Children demonstrate a basic awareness of and use of scientific concepts.
- **Safety and Well-Being:** Children demonstrate the emerging ability to recognize risky situations and respond accordingly.

Approaches to Learning

- **Curiosity and Initiative:** Children demonstrate interest and eagerness in learning about their world.
- **Problem Solving:** Children attempt a variety of strategies to accomplish tasks, overcome obstacles, and find solutions to tasks, questions, and challenges.
- **Confidence and Risk-Taking:** Children demonstrate a willingness to participate in new experiences and confidently engage in risk-taking.
- **Persistence, Effort, and Attentiveness:** Children demonstrate the ability to remain engaged in experiences and develop a sense of purpose and follow-through.

Program Objectives: Preschool (ages 3-5)

For preschoolers, we use the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, which were created to guide teachers to prepare children for kindergarten. These standards align with achievement goals set for children in elementary school. The following objectives are used to plan our curriculum, class projects, and to guide our activities in formal and informal play:

Language Arts

- Demonstrate increasing competence in oral communication (listening and speaking).
- Demonstrate understanding and enjoyment of literature.
- Demonstrate interest in and understanding of informational text.
- Demonstrate increasing awareness of and competence in emergent reading skills and abilities.
- Demonstrate increasing awareness of and competence in emergent writing skills and abilities.

Mathematics

- Demonstrate and apply a knowledge and sense of numbers, including numeration and operations.
- Explore measurement of objects and quantities.
- Identify and describe common attributes, patterns, and relationships in objects.
- Explore concepts of geometry and spatial relations.
- Begin to make predictions and collect data information.

Science

- Demonstrate curiosity about the world and begin to use the practices of science and engineering to answer questions and solve problems.
- Explore concepts and information about the physical, earth, and life sciences.
- Understand important connections and understandings in science and engineering.

Social Studies

- Understand some concepts related to citizenship.
- Explore economic systems and human interdependence.
- Develop an awareness of the self and his or her uniqueness and individuality.
- Explore geography, the child's environment, and where people live, work, and play.
- Explore people and families and the unique cultural diversity of different types of family structures.

Physical Development and Health

- Acquire movement skills and understand concepts needed to explore the environment, support learning, and engage in health-enhancing physical activity.
- Develop habits for lifelong fitness.
- Develop team-building skills by working with others through physical activity.
- Understand principles of health promotion and the prevention and treatment of illness and injury.
- Understand human body systems and factors that influence growth and development.
- Promote and enhance health and well-being through the use of effective communication and decision-making skills.

The Arts

- Gain exposure to and explore the arts.
- Understand that the arts can be used to communicate ideas and emotions.
- Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.

Social/Emotional Development

- Develop self-management skills to achieve school and life success and develop positive relationships with others.
- Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships. Demonstrate decision-making skills and behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

Curriculum

One of the ways we achieve our program goals is to integrate them into our daily curriculum. We use *Teaching Strategies Gold* for our early learning and preschool programs. *Teaching Strategies Gold* is a comprehensive curriculum for children's learning in all areas of development: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, mathematics, science, and the arts.

The objectives for development and learning serve as the guidelines for what children should accomplish in our program. The curriculum helps us structure activities and experiences. *Teaching Strategies Gold* offers choices, encourages flexibility, and provides specific activities to reach the objectives for development and learning. It helps us to be intentional about the experiences we offer infants, toddlers, twos, and preschoolers, while still having the flexibility to respond to the changing interests and abilities of young children. *Teaching Strategies Gold* uses ongoing assessment to help us decide how to respond to each child and to plan appropriate experiences.

Our curriculum is dynamic and unique and incorporates the needs of the individual child and the classroom; as opposed to predefined, prescribed lesson plans.

In our early learning and preschool programs, our Assistant Directors provide guidance to develop weekly lesson plans, work with teachers to implement the curriculum in the classroom, and evaluate children's academic progress and suggest modifications to each child's teacher

Teachers develop weekly lesson plans, evaluate children's progress and observe children to recognize their individual needs. They use a wide range of teaching strategies that call for different levels of teacher involvement, which in turn, creates classroom communities where children learn how to work together and solve problems.

Special Programs and Field Trips

Special programs and field trips (whether off-site or in-house) are an important part of the educational program, so we periodically invite guests to lead special activities at our centers or we take children ages two and up to local areas of interest. We provide adequate, responsible adult supervision for these excursions through staff and adult volunteers. We charge an activity fee every three months to cover the cost of these special programs for children ages two and up. Please see the Tuition and Fee Scale. Each family is also required to purchase a Concordia Place logo t-shirt to be worn on all off site-field trips.

If you are interested in accompanying us on a field trip, talk to the Program Director, Assistant Director, or Head Teacher to express your interest. We try to ensure that everyone who has expressed an interest can participate, but we may have to limit the number of volunteers. We determine the number of volunteers we need depending on the type of field trip or activity. We appreciate donations to help cover the costs for volunteers; however, Concordia will pay entrance fees for the number of volunteers that are needed. You need to arrange for your own meal if the trip or activity is over lunch time. You may accompany the children on the bus if there is room, but sometimes circumstances require that you arrange your own transportation.

If you are interested in participating in an activity or field trip, but we have reached the number of required volunteers, speak with the Program Director or Assistant Director to see if the activity could accommodate more chaperones. You would be responsible for any transportation and entrance expenses.

Daily Schedule

A planned, yet flexible schedule encourages children to develop cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically. We adjust schedules to be age appropriate and based on the needs and interests of each group.

Infants

In the infant room, the group schedule is built around individual schedules. The individual rhythms of eating, sleeping, and exploring are the basis for which we plan our day. Bottle feeding is individualized, based on the child's needs and input from parents. Mothers who are nursing their babies are welcome at the center to feed their babies at any time of the day. Infants' sleep schedules reflect the child's rhythm and input from parents.

For older children, we follow the schedule below. Specific classroom schedules may vary slightly due to the schedule of shared gross motor space, special activities, weather, etc.

Toddlers & Twos	Preschool	Activity
7:00	7:00	Children arrive and transition into the classroom with support from the teachers. Educational play opportunities such as table toys, dramatic play, blocks, writing table, or art, are offered as children are ready.
8:45	9:00	Snack is served at classroom tables, so children can share each other's company and teachers can engage them in conversation.
9:15	9:30	Circle time is planned for children to listen to books read aloud, have a group discussion, and sing songs. In Preschool, this is followed by time for children to engage in activities throughout the classroom, according to their interests. Teachers interact with children to scaffold learning.
9:30	10:30	Gross motor experiences are offered outside and/or indoor, so children can build skills like running, jumping, balancing, and climbing.
10:00	11:00	Children engage in activities throughout the classroom, according to their interests. Teachers interact with children during their play to scaffold learning.
11:00	11:30	Lunch is served family style, as children practice using utensils, pouring milk, and passing bowls. After lunch is clean up, bathroom trips, and brush teeth as age appropriate.
12:00	12:30	Naptime is prepared by laying out individual cots and children's blankets. Self-help skills are encouraged as children take off their shoes and prepare to rest. Children sleep and relax on their cots as soft music plays. Teachers comfort and soothe children as needed.
2:30	2:30	Wake up. Put cots away, put socks and shoes on. Snack preparation, brief finger plays or singing at the table for awake, non-bottle fed infants and all toddlers/two-year-olds.
3:00	3:00	Snack is served at classroom tables, so children can share each other's company and teachers can engage them in conversation.
3:30	3:30	Afternoon activities involve self-directed play and activity choices, such as art, sensory, and music in the classroom.
4:30	4:30	Gross motor experiences are offered outside and/or indoor, so children can build skills like running, jumping, balancing, and climbing.
5:00	5:00	Play continues in the classroom or large motor space, as children are picked up at the end of the day.

Outdoor Play

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) requires that all children go outside daily, when the conditions do not pose a safety risk. Weather that poses a significant health risk includes wind chill factor at or below 25°F and heat index at or above 90°F. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

Sunscreen

Parent should bring a bottle of non-aerosol sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) labeled with their child's name. Concordia staff will apply sunscreen on children as needed throughout the day, during the months of April through September.

Rest Periods

Sleep is important for body and brain development and growth. All children have a daily naptime. Children who do not sleep are provided with a quiet activity on their cots until it is time to get up. You should bring a small blanket (and a travel-size pillow, if desired, except for infants) labeled with your child's name. These are to be kept at the center for naptime, taken home on Fridays to be washed, and returned on Monday morning.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff is selected for their professional qualifications and personal traits suited to meet the many needs of the children. We consider these qualifications:

- Academic requirements set by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Experience working with children
- Emotional maturity
- Commitment to Concordia's Mission & Guiding Principles
- Respect for children and adults
- Patience and flexibility
- Professionalism

Communications

The bulletin board outside your child's classroom is a vital source of information for you: weekly lesson plans, articles, messages, and other information relevant to parents are made available for viewing. Please check the bulletin board daily. You will also receive Concordia Place and Concordia Lutheran church newsletters monthly via email, but hard copies can be made available, if needed. Other communications regarding Concordia Place information (closings, fundraisers, etc.) may be sent periodically throughout the month. Please make sure the email address communications@concordiaplace.org is on your safe email list. Please ensure we have your most current email address. In addition, we put individual communications about your child in your child's mail slot or cubby.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Parents in the Early Learning program will receive a daily note about meals, naps, and diapering and a specific note about something that the children did that day. The Preschool program provides parents with a weekly note that outlines the activities that occurred.

Conferences

Formal parent/teacher conferences occur twice per year, in the fall and the spring. Informal conferences regarding your child's development can occur as needed throughout the year.

Our staff is always happy to meet with parents. Please speak to your child's teacher, the Assistant Director, or the Program Director if you have a question or concern.

Parent Feedback

We conduct a yearly Family Questionnaire to solicit parent input and include parents in our program improvement efforts. Once the evaluations are compiled, we provide parents with a summary of the findings. Concordia leadership benefits by hearing parents' ideas and concerns.

Parent Involvement Activities

Parents and family members are always welcome to come and spend time at the program. You are welcome to come on field trips or participate in our other activities. Adult visitors and volunteers can share in the children's work and play.

Parent participation is an integral part of our program and a valued aspect of our effectiveness and quality. We ask parents to:

- Read and answer all correspondence from school
- Attend individual and group meetings
- Participate in fundraising activities- See below.
- Participate in the Parents Matters group-This group meets quarterly and is comprised of parent Room Representatives. The goal of this group is to promote the mission and fundraising activities of Concordia Place to fellow parents. This group works closely with the Director of Advancement and the teaching staff to disseminate information to other parents.

Fundraising Expectations

We ask that **ALL** parents participate with our fundraising efforts to the fullest extent possible. There are numerous opportunities to help such as purchasing tickets to fundraising events, donating needed items, participating in the annual raffle, and making a general gift to our annual fundraising campaign. You may also add a gift to each tuition payment with a note of intent. We need your help to support our mission to provide high-quality programs to families of all economic levels. You will receive an annual fundraising calendar which will also be posted on the website. All donations are tax-deductible to the highest extent of IRS regulations.

Family Support Services

At Concordia Place, we strive to put families first and build a strong, trusting relationship with each family and child we serve. As part of the State of Illinois Birth to Three Prevention Initiative, our Early Learning program works closely with all of our families to ensure that every family feels supported, valued and a part of our community.

We believe that an important factor in the positive development and well-being of children is the relationship they have with their parents. In the Early Learning program, we utilize a research-based parent curriculum, called Baby TALK, with the goal of nurturing healthy parent-child relationships in these critical early years. Included in the curriculum are center-based parent involvement activities, parenting newsletters geared specifically to the age of your child and topical handouts on parenting concerns such as potty training, self-discipline, sibling rivalry, responding to nightmares and other topics.

We have a Family Support Specialist on staff to ensure that all of your family's needs are being met. Our specialist works with families to assess their access to resources in the community and is able to make referrals to a variety of resources. The specialist can also provide home

visits and will work with you to develop an individualized family support plan that outlines goals you have for your child and for your family.

Child Assessments

Purposes of Assessments

Assessment is the process of gathering information about children in order to make informed decisions. We use assessments to support learning, to identify special needs, for program evaluation and monitoring trends, and for program accountability. Teachers obtain useful information about children's knowledge, skills, and progress by observing, documenting, analyzing, and reviewing children's work over time.

Child assessment methods are consistent with program curriculum and philosophy because they assess the areas of cognitive, emotional, and physical development as well as social skills; the ability to work together and communicate effectively. Teachers determine the developmental progress and learning of the children through observations and assessment results. Teachers also use assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices.

Using Assessments to Inform Curriculum

By observing and assessing the children, teachers find what common interests the children share and use this information to plan their curriculum for the classroom. Teachers write a weekly curriculum that is based on a subject that interests the children, which can be extended for a longer period of time based on the level of the children's interest. Observations and assessment results also help the teachers determine the developmental progress and learning of the children.

Program Improvement

We also use the findings of our assessments to make improvements to our programs, such as increasing teacher trainings or implementing special programming.

Assessment Tools

Staff members are trained on how to use the following assessment tools and how to interpret their results through in-service trainings, outside workshops, and *Teaching Strategies Gold* resources.

- **Observations:** Informal observations of the children are gathered and documented continually by the classroom teachers and support staff within the school environment.
- **Work Sampling:** Teachers collect children's work in individual portfolios in order to track their progress over time. Portfolios may include artwork, writing samples, pictures, and anecdotes.
- **Developmental Screenings – Early Learning:** Within 45 days of a child's enrollment, parents and teachers work together to complete two screening tools: the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE). Ages and Stages is a parent completed child monitoring system. The scoring of the questionnaires determines if children are within the normal range of development, if they need to be rescreened after a period of time, or if they need to be referred to a specialist for further evaluation and support.
- **Developmental Screenings – Preschool:** In the fall of each year, trained Concordia Place staff or developmental specialists from the Chicago Public Schools Child Find Program

administer the Early Screening Inventory – Revised (ESI-R) at our centers. If a child enters the program after the screenings have taken place, a trained staff member will use the same assessment tool and method to screen the child within 45 days of enrollment.

The Chicago Public Schools Child Find specialists also administer hearing and vision screenings as part of the ESI-R screening tool. Children enrolling after the hearing and vision screening will be included in the next scheduled screening on-site at Concordia.

Within 60 days of a child's enrollment in preschool, parents and teachers work together to complete a screening tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE). Ages and Stages is a parent completed child monitoring system. The scoring of these two assessments (the ESR-R and the ASQ-SE) determines if children are within the normal range of development, if they need to be rescreened after a period of time, or if they need to be referred to a specialist for further evaluation and support.

- **Developmental Continuums:** Formal assessments using the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System are completed four times per year, in the fall, winter, spring, and summer.

Teachers use their observations and a variety of assessment tools to summarize children's progress towards developmental goals and milestones. Children's skills and abilities are measured along a continuum so that growth and improvement can be seen over time. Progress is measured in the areas of cognition, social-emotional development, physical development, language and literacy, mathematics, social studies, art, science and technology, and English language acquisition (when applicable).

Concerns and Referrals

If a teacher observes that a particular child has some difficulty in any of the learning objectives or developmental goals, he/she takes these steps to ensure that the concerns are addressed appropriately within the classroom and in partnership with the family:

1. Recognize a possible developmental delay or difficulty.
2. Keep daily observations on the child for two weeks.
3. Schedule a meeting with the parents and a program administrator to discuss the teacher's observations of the child.
4. If the parents are interested in receiving further support, our staff can suggest resources that could meet the child and family's needs. Among other resources, children in our Early Learning program may be eligible for support from Early Intervention services and children in our Preschool program may be eligible for support from the Community Partnership Programs (Chicago Public Schools).

Confidentiality

Observations, assessment information, and screening results, etc. are filed in the child's educational file and stored in a locked cabinet. Information that the staff obtain about a child's performance is shared only with parents and appropriate center staff. If Concordia feels a referral is appropriate, we will ask for your signed permission. See Privacy and Confidentiality for more information.

Transitioning Between Classrooms

Seeley Site

At the Seeley site, children transition from the two's classroom into a preschool classroom at any time throughout the year sometime after their third birthday. We consider multiple factors when determining the timing for a child to transition into the next class, including the child's age, the dynamics in the class, availability of space in the next classroom, and your child's individual needs; consequently, please do not expect your child to transition to another classroom or to a specific classroom on their birthday.

Parents will be informed two weeks before transitioning their child into the next classroom. We transition the children as smoothly as possible by arranging a schedule of visits to the new classroom to spend time with the teachers and children during the week before the official start date in the new classroom. We hope that by transitioning your child slowly into the new classroom routines, this change will be easier for both you and your child. During your child's transition period, a meeting will be arranged between the child's parents and the new teachers. This purpose of this meeting is for the teachers to share more detailed information about the classroom, its schedule, and routines. We encourage parents to share information about their child and anything about their family that may help their child transition more smoothly.

Whipple Site

At the Whipple Site, we practice Continuity of Relationships (COR). Continuity of Relationships is an early learning program policy that supports the idea that children should have one caregiver from the time they enroll in an early learning program until they are ready for preschool. Stable and responsive relationships with parents and primary caregivers are critical for the development of young children. Continuity of Relationships allows children to have close caring relationships, a sense of security and trust and the confidence to explore and learn.

In the Early Learning program, children and their teachers move together into the next classroom in August or the first week of September. The infants and their teachers will move into the toddler room; the toddlers and their teachers will move into the two's room, and all of the children from the two's rooms will move into preschool (with new preschool teachers). A child must be age-eligible for the next classroom by September 1st. For example, to enroll in a two's classroom, a child must turn two before September 1st of that enrollment year.

Common Challenging Behaviors

Physical aggression, temper tantrums and biting are among the most common challenging behaviors exhibited in groups of young children. It is always upsetting and can be frightening for children, parents and teachers alike. We focus our energies on prevention. We observe so that we can anticipate when a child might exhibit a challenging behavior and redirect the child to a more appropriate situation or behavior. Understanding the reasons for their behavior helps us use effective strategies to prevent the behavior. There are many reasons why a child may exhibit these behaviors including: teething, experimenting, exploring cause and effect, imitating behaviors, trying to approach or interact with another child, frustration (especially for non-verbal children), noise and confusion (especially during transitions), when they feel threatened (including when a toy is being grabbed from them) and when there has been a change in a routine or trusted caregiver.

Each child is different. When we begin to notice a child with a pattern of challenging behavior we will call you to schedule a meeting to talk with you about our observations and questions.

At this meeting we will brainstorm strategies and write a prevention plan with timelines. If the behavior continues or grows more intense this may signal that the child needs special assistance, and we will set up a second meeting to discuss referrals to a community resource agency that specializes in the type of support that your child needs.

Discipline Philosophy

We use these procedures to encourage self-discipline for a child:

1. Redirect the child with firm, positive statements.
2. Talk to the child about the relationship between the act and the consequence.
3. Persistent, unacceptable behavior will be reported to parents by the classroom teacher or a program administrator. A conference with a parent may be called, to discuss the best approach to help your child redirect their behavior.

Termination Procedures

Concordia Place seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual children's differences, but on occasion our program is not equipped to handle the emotional or physical needs of a child and/or a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting. Some examples may include:

- A child appears to be a danger to him-or herself, other children at the center, center employees, or anyone else at the center.
- Medical, psychological, or social service personnel working with the center determine that continued care at the center could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child.
- Accommodations required for the child's success and participation would place an unreasonable burden on center resources and finances, and removal is in the best interest of the child or center.

In the case of a child's unacceptable behavior, we try to work with the parents using these procedures:

1. Teacher documents a child's behavior in an incident report
2. Teacher and Program Director discuss the situation
3. Parents and program staff meet to discuss the situation in a positive manner
4. We work together to devise an action plan
5. We schedule a date to evaluate if the plan has been effective
6. If the action plan has not been effective, Concordia staff will provide referrals to outside resources for childcare and support that would better meet the child's needs.

Families must follow the policies outlined in this manual. In addition to the above situations, children may be immediately dismissed from the program, at the discretion of the Program Director, when the family fails to comply with the regulations of the program, including:

- payment of tuition and fees
- timely pick-up of the child
- irregular attendance or frequent or prolonged absences with no medical or approved reason

- failing to provide required documents or complete required forms including but not limited to physical, birth certificate and proof of income on a timely basis

We expect our enrolled families to exercise good judgment, loyalty, honesty, respect, and integrity in all dealings with Concordia, its employees, and students, on or off premises. Any conduct that could be detrimental or harmful to Concordia Place, its facility or staff members, or students, is unacceptable. Families may also be immediately dismissed from the program, at the discretion of the Program Director, should a parent or guardian:

- exhibit conduct that is inconsistent with the philosophy and goals of the program
- exhibit aggressive, rude or inappropriate behavior toward any children, staff or other visitors
- exhibit behavior that endangers any center children, staff or visitors
- exhibit conduct that could be detrimental or harmful to Concordia, its employees, or students, on or off premises, including electronic behavior
- spread rumors or accusations about Concordia, its employees, administrators, families, and visitors through gossip or other means of communication, e.g., e-mail, text messaging and social media

Anti-Bullying Policy

Concordia Place recognizes that bullying is a serious form of violence that can hurt people in a way that can affect the rest of their lives. Bullying is the repeated physical or psychological intimidation which creates a pattern of harassment and abuse.

We realize that efforts to stop bullying must involve the entire center community, beginning with our policy that states clearly that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated by anyone regardless of age, gender or position. We incorporate anti-bullying into the curriculum and encourage parents to speak with their children about bullying.

Children cannot handle acts of bullying on their own; they need the support of adults, as well as procedures and practices in place for responding to bullying behavior in a fair, age-appropriate and consistent manner. We monitor and speak up whenever we see bullying occur, and children are encouraged to tell an adult if they see or experience bullying. The child being bullied has a say as to how s/he would like to address the situation:

- a) Speak with the person doing the bullying, alone or in the presence of an adult
- b) Work with the Program Director or Assistant Director and the parties involved
- c) Work it out with the classroom teacher
- d) Involve parents

The child who is bullying will work with staff and the parties involved to identify a plan for how he/she can manage his/her feelings.

Health and Safety

Food

Meals & Snacks

Our program ensures children receive healthy snacks and meals. We offer a mid-morning snack, lunch, and mid-afternoon snack with healthy foods, avoiding "junk" food and sweets. A catering company provides organic lunches each day. We purchase our own snack foods to prepare and serve the children. We do not serve any products that contain high fructose corn syrup, artificial flavors, or colors. Children are provided hormone free milk or water to drink at mealtimes; never juice.

Each month's menu for lunch and snack is posted on the bulletin board outside each classroom, as well as emailed to all families with our monthly newsletter.

Infant Foods & Formula

Parents of infants will provide specific, written information on food and formula to their child's teacher. It is important that the teachers caring for your child have accurate information regarding formula changes, dietary restrictions, and new food introductions in order to provide the best care. Other than formula and breast milk, all food is provided by the center. We cannot accept food from home unless accompanied by a physician's note.

Infants younger than six months are not offered solid foods unless the practice is recommended by the child's health care provider and approved by the family.

Milk

In our Early Learning classrooms, staff will discard, after one hour, any formula or human milk that has been served but has not been completely consumed after a feeding or has not been refrigerated. Children enrolled in Infant and Toddler classrooms who are not on formula or breast milk are served whole milk daily. Children over the age of 2 years old are served 1% milk daily. Parents may provide non-dairy milk only with a physician's note.

Outside Food Prohibited

Other than formula and breast milk for bottle-fed children, all meals are provided by the center. Exceptions are considered for religious and medical reasons only. A physician's note must accompany all requests for dietary changes due to medical reasons. If exceptions are made on religious or medical grounds, parents are responsible for following the Peanut Safe Policy and not bring food that contain peanuts, peanut products, or that have been produced in a factory that processes peanuts or peanut products. If you have a doctor's note to bring outside food, you must provide nutritional food, which excludes "junk" food, sweets, desserts, sugary beverages, candy, or other food products lacking nutritional value.

You are permitted to bring a treat or snack for children in the classroom to celebrate a special occasion; we encourage healthy treats like fruit snacks and yogurt. All foods must be store-bought and in their original container with an ingredient label. Before it is served to the children, the Program Director or Assistant Director must first verify that the food follows this policy.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Concordia Place is a member of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides a small subsidy for nutritious food for the children. The Child and Adult Care Food Program is available to all eligible children without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or

handicap. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in any U.S.D.A.-related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250.

Peanut Safe Policy

Due to the prevalence and severity of some peanut allergies, Concordia has a Peanut Safe policy. Because peanut allergies can be serious and life threatening for some children, we strive to provide a safe and healthy school environment for everyone. Our food program uses no foods containing peanuts or peanut products.

Peanut Safe environments can only be achieved if everyone does their part. We ask you to comply with our peanut policy by not bringing any food into the center that contains peanuts, peanut products or that has been produced in a factory that processes peanuts or peanut products. Your help and cooperation is integral.

Although we strive to provide an environment safe of peanuts, we cannot guarantee a peanut-free environment.

Pick-Up Policy

Sign Out of Child: At the time of pick up, each child must be signed out by a person authorized to pick up that child. This policy is for the protection of you and your child. Failure to sign a child in or out will result in a \$5.00 penalty assessment. Multiple incidents of failure to sign out a child could result in dismissal from the program.

Pick Up Time: You may pick up your child at any time during the day, although we encourage you to plan around the classroom schedule so that your child can fully experience our program activities. If you need to pick up your child earlier than usual, please inform your child's teacher.

Late Pick Up: We ask you to strictly adhere to the 6:00 p.m. pick-up deadline. If, for some reason, you are delayed, please call the center to inform us. Calling the center to give an estimated time of arrival allows us to notify our staff and your child regarding the time that you will arrive, however, a phone call does not waive the late fee. While we understand that emergencies do arise, if you are delayed and unable to pick up your child before 6:00 p.m., you are solely responsible to make other arrangements for your child to be picked up.

Children who have not been picked up by 7:00 p.m. may be released into the custody of the Chicago Police Department. This is not our choice, it is the law.

We charge a late pick-up fee of \$10.00 for the first fifteen minutes plus one dollar each minute thereafter. This is payable with your next tuition payment. Repeated tardiness will necessitate that your child be withdrawn from the program.

Authorized Pick-Up Person(s): Only those persons authorized in writing by the legal guardian (on the Authorized People to Pick Up Section of the application) will be allowed to pick up your child. This policy is for the protection and safety of your child. Under no circumstances can we release your child to anyone who has not been properly authorized in writing by the legal guardian.

You should secure at least three (3) alternative persons who can pick up your child. Each person designated as an alternative pick-up person must meet all of these requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older.

- Have and present at the time of pick up, an acceptable photo identification card (driver's license or other recognized form of identification).
- Be available to pick up the child before 6:00 p.m.
- Be authorized by you, in writing, as an alternative pick-up person on the Authorized People to Pick Up Section of the application.
- Have a current telephone number on the Authorized People to Pick Up section of the application.

Parents **must** understand that, unless a copy of a certified legal document to the contrary is on file at the center, both parents listed on the birth certificate will be acknowledged as legal guardians.

We adhere to the following provision stated in the Illinois Child Care Act. 225 ILCS 10/7.1) (from Ch. 23, par. 2217.1)

Sec. 7.1. (a) (1) A facility described in Section 2.09, 2.10, or 2.18 shall retain on file a list provided by the legal guardian of each child under its care, designating persons to whom it may release custody of such child, including:

(A) a primary list containing the names of persons to whom the facility can expect to usually release custody of the child, and

(B) a contingency list containing the names of persons to whom the facility can expect to occasionally release custody of the child, and setting forth the manner in which such child may leave the facility in the custody of any such person.

(2) No such facility shall release custody of any child under its care in any manner not authorized by the child's guardian, or to any person who is not known to the operators of the facility as, or cannot present sufficient identification proving himself to be, an individual listed by the child's guardian as one to whom custody of the child may be released.

Lastly, **you** are required to keep this information accurate and current **at all times**. It is not the responsibility of the center to verify that this information is up to date.

Mandated Reporting

The State of Illinois, Department of Children and Family Services, requires that all staff members of day care institutions look for, and report evidence of any and all cases of suspected child abuse. When a child's health and safety is endangered, staff members are legally obligated to report their suspicions of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities by calling the state's DCFS hotline. In the process of investigating such reports, the authorities may have access to the child's records on file at the center.

Health and Medical

As required by State Law, every child enrolling in our programs must have a health form on file on which your doctor verifies that the child's immunizations are up to date. A physical examination, including a T.B. test and lead test, by your doctor is required. This form should be less than 6 months old when your child first starts and must be updated every two years. We will notify you when a current medical form is needed.

Before your child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, when a child is overdue for any routine health services, you must provide evidence of an appointment for those services. The exception is for any immunization for which parents are using a religious exemption.

Do not bring your child to the program if he or she is suffering from any contagious or communicable diseases. No child shall be admitted with these symptoms or conditions:

- Temperature of 100°F or greater (If under 101°F, fever must be accompanied by any of the symptoms of coughing, nasal discharge, fatigue, or sudden change in mood or disposition in order for your child to be excluded from the program.)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Any unexplained rash
- Nasal discharge accompanied by any of the symptoms of coughing, fatigue, fever of 100°F or greater, a sudden change in mood or disposition
- Mucus producing cough
- Redness of eyes or discharge
- Signs of body pests, such as head lice and/or nits

In addition to these symptoms, we will also take into consideration your child's ability to participate fully in our program when determining whether or not they need to go home. This includes being well enough to go outdoors for play and being able to participate in the daily classroom routine.

If a child becomes ill while at Concordia, we will notify you, and you will be required to take your child home until fully recovered. If necessary, the child will be separated from the group in order to prevent other children from becoming infected.

After your child is free of any symptoms for a period of 24 hours, your child may return to the program. A doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious is required whenever a child has been absent for five days or longer, or returns prior to 24 hours on medication prescribed by your doctor.

Immediately report to the office if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, such as strep throat, viral infections, pneumonia, pink eye, scarlet fever, etc. Notification is important for the health of all the children in our program.

Medications

We cannot administer over-the-counter medications to any child at any time. Prescription medication will be given to your child if the medication is in its original bottle with the date, child's name, and times of day it is to be administered. We also need a form from you **and** from the doctor to be completed stating the nature of the illness, type of medication, amount of medication to administer, and the times to be given. We will provide you with these forms upon request. Please hand the prescription to the Program Director, Assistant Director, or Head Teacher, with instructions attached. Medication is not permitted in the classroom. Medicine is placed in a locked box in the refrigerator or in a locking cabinet in the Program Director's office.

Incident Reports

An incident report will be filed for any accident or injury with a detailed description of the incident. The parent will be asked to sign the report to acknowledge that they have received it and will be given a copy.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident, we will contact the child's parents. Concordia Place staff will determine if the situation requires immediate medical attention. If so, your child will be taken immediately to the nearest hospital. You should go directly to the hospital – not to Concordia Place. Concordia Place carries liability insurance for its operations. In the case of medical emergencies or accidents, the family's insurance is the primary coverage.

Weather Related Closings

The Concordia Place President/CEO makes the decision to close Concordia Place based on many factors, including temperature, amount of snow, road conditions, and the safety of our staff and those we serve.

We communicate a closing as soon as possible via text message, posting on the Concordia Place website home page, and e-blasts. Concordia is also enrolled with the Emergency Closing Center. Please listen to Chicago media stations for such announcements (see below).

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Concordia has developed an Emergency response plan that helps us respond to many types of emergencies. Depending on the situation, we will use one of these protective actions:

- **Immediate Evacuation** – Students are evacuated to a safe area near the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire or other similar emergency.
- **In-place Sheltering** – Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- **Evacuation and Relocation** – Total evacuation of the facility and relocation may become necessary if the situation will not allow us to return to the building. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility. Parents will receive a text message/e-mail alerting you of the situation and information on picking up your child. **For our Whipple center**, we have agreements to relocate our preschool children to Linne School, 3221 North Sacramento Avenue or in the event that Linne is closed, to Brands Park, 3259 N. Elston Avenue, Chicago, IL. There is also an agreement to relocate infants and toddlers in the event of an evacuation to Daughters of Charity Building, 3335 N. Whipple. **For our Seeley center**, we have agreements to relocate our children to Epiphany United Church of Christ at 2008 W Bradley, St. Benedicts Catholic School at 3900 N. Leavitt, and the Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club (within Revere Park) at 2501 W. Irving Park Road.
- **Modified Operation** – may include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems, such as utility disruptions, that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Concordia is enrolled with the Emergency Closing Center. In the event of a facility emergency, please listen to Chicago media stations for such announcements. Announcements relating any

of the emergency actions listed above can be found on WGN radio, WBBM radio, Channels 2, 5, 7, 9, 32 and CLTV.

During an emergency, please do not call the school. This keeps the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. We have set up an emergency notification system. Should any emergency arise, you will receive an email and/or text message informing you of the situation.

We use the contact information you provided on your enrollment forms for your emergency contact telephone numbers. Should your contact phone numbers change, it is important that you notify the front desk immediately.

Also during an emergency, only those persons you list on the designated pick-up form will be allowed to pick up your child. We will not accept different pickup arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

Building Security Measures

The security and safety of your children is our first priority. We want to assure you that we have security measures in place at each of our sites. We have external door locks, security cameras, door monitoring from multiple stations, and screening procedures for people entering our buildings. Teachers in each classroom do not allow children to leave with anyone unless they are on the authorized pick-up form.

Both sites use an electronic entry system to help prevent unauthorized persons from entering our buildings and program areas. All persons entering the building will be granted entry via our external door by staff. Parents will be provided with limited access badges or key fobs for internal doors. Each family will be issued up to two badges without cost. You may purchase additional badges. If you forget your badge, you may be asked to show identification before a staff member will give you access to the children's program areas. Please keep your badge in a safe place. Replacement badges are available. If you lose a badge, IMMEDIATELY notify us so that we may deactivate your badge. When you withdraw your child from Concordia, you must return all the badges you have been issued to the front desk staff when you give your four week written notice. You will be charged the lost badge fee for each unreturned badge.

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these procedures. You are part of our security systems, too. Do not allow people you do not know to enter our buildings with you as you enter or leave.

Animal Control Policy

Healthy household pets (including gerbils, hamsters, and guinea pigs) that appear healthy and present no danger to children are permitted in our center, if allowed by local health regulations. Dogs and cats must have had a rabies vaccination verified by a licensed veterinarian. All animals are physically separated from children both indoors and outdoors except as a portion of a specifically planned program activity under the direct supervision of a staff member.

Immediate treatment will be obtained for any child who sustains a bite or scratch from an animal and the child's parents are notified immediately. In addition, the center will notify the county animal control administrator.

Animals and/or pets are properly housed, fed and maintained in a safe, clean and sanitary condition at all times. A responsible staff person is assigned to take care of any animal or pet on premises. Domestic animals, birds, or fowl are not permitted at any time in areas where foods

are prepared and maintained. The center is always kept free of stray animals which may cause injury and/or disease to children.

Pest Control Policy

Concordia Place is committed to providing children in its care with a safe environment, which includes preventing exposure to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children and property from pests that may be found in the facility and its surrounding grounds, under some circumstances they may pose a hazard to children and staff. To minimize potential pesticide exposure to children and staff, pest control practices in this facility focus on prevention and monitoring.

In the areas used by the child care facility, Concordia:

- Bases pest management decisions on the results of regular inspections. The facility avoids routine use of pesticides not exempted below.
- Ensures that pesticides are applied by certified pesticide applicators or registered technicians.
- Ensures that pesticides are not applied when children are present at the facility. Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children are removed from the area before pesticides are applied. Children do not return to the treated area within two hours of a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever time is greater.
- Provides at least two operational days but not more than 30 days advance notice of pesticide application to parents and staff except in emergencies where pests pose an immediate health threat to children or staff (e.g. wasps).
- Notifies parents and staff as soon as possible when advance notice is not provided and include an explanation of the emergency, the reason for the late notice and the name of the pesticide applied.
- Makes accessible, upon request, all records of pesticide applications and advance notices for at least 90 days.

This policy does not apply to the following exempted uses of pesticides:

- An antimicrobial agent, such as disinfectant, sanitizer, or deodorizer, or
- Insecticide baits and rodent baits.

Toy Donation Policy

Concordia appreciates that parents, neighbors, and friends provide gift-in-kind donations for our programs. The children benefit from donations of books, games, and toys. For dramatic play, children also enjoy costumes, clothing and shoes in small sizes for girls and boys, purses, and small business jackets. While our preference is for new items, if you have gently used items that you would like to donate, please speak with a program administrator prior to bringing in your donation.

Below are some guidelines to help ensure that your donation can be put to good use:

- It is most helpful when we receive items that are clean. Please wash or wipe down items before donating them.
- Complete items only; for example, no puzzles with pieces missing.
- Books should be in good condition, without missing or torn pages.
- We regret that for sanitary reasons, we cannot accept donated stuffed animals.

- Please do not donate toys or games that require batteries.
- We do not accept weapon toys or other items that can promote violence.

Non Solicitation

Concordia recruits and trains teachers and staff to the highest measures of quality so that we provide your child and the other children in our programs the best nurturing and developmental environment possible. Solicitation of employees for alternative employment violates the relationship of trust with Concordia and potentially affects the quality of the care we provide to the families enrolled here. By enrolling your children, you agree that for a period of not less than 6 months subsequent to leaving our program, you will not seek to employ, entice away, or even attempt to entice away anyone currently employed by Concordia or anyone who was employed by Concordia in the preceding six months.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Document Retention

Concordia Place collects, uses, and retains information about participants in our programs and their families for many purposes, such as account payment, records of the child, donations, etc. These records are required for various licensing and government reporting purposes as well as our own program and business operations and are the property of Concordia Place.

Concordia staff members and parents are required to respect the confidentiality of each child and family enrolled in our programs, including enrollment records, anecdotal records, parent-teacher conference notes, developmental assessments and other personal records. Teachers may make notes for their anecdotal records but such notes will be considered as confidential information.

Discussions concerning a child or family, with anyone other than the child's parents or guardians, or other staff members having direct contact with the child, are strictly prohibited. Personal information about families or children in our care will be divulged to staff members only to the extent of what is necessary to know in order to support the child in care. Discretion and privacy are required when discussing confidential family and child information, particularly taking care not to be overheard by staff, parents or children.

Concordia uses private and confidential information to compile statistics about our program and operations that we report to licensing, program funders, and other required reporting. Your personal information is not identifiable.

We use photographs, videotapes or tape recordings of children for program purposes as well as funding reports, program quality assessment, etc. In the initial enrollment forms, families indicate their written permission for us to use these for any outside purposes, such as marketing and media.

We will not give out information to a third party without your prior written approval. It is our policy not to share information about a family with anyone other than appropriate staff members or our representatives.

Lists of parents' email or home addresses and/or phone numbers are treated as confidential. This information may be used by staff, parents or others working on behalf of Concordia for events, projects, communications or other express purposes. Concordia may use this information for non-program communications to keep you informed on news, activities, and events as it relates to Concordia. However, the lists will not be given to parents or anyone else for non-Concordia related purposes.

In addition, Concordia staff, parents, and other volunteers and representatives may form committees or task forces for activities, such as completing special projects, holding special events, or conducting fundraising efforts. These committees may exchange information, such as contact information or personal background. This information will be used only for its originally intended purpose. Committee members are prohibited from using any information gained for their personal use.

Access to Written Records

All records concerning children and families are maintained in locked files at the center. Only the directors, teachers and administrative staff have access to these files. Parents and/or legal guardians may also have access to their children's file.

Child enrollment records do not leave the locked files, except by an authorized staff for specific purposes. Records may not be removed from any Concordia premises except as required for legal purposes; in such instances, a subpoena is required for the removal of any records.

Document Retention

We have developed a document retention policy for our various types of documents based on IRS recommendations, industry standards, as well as adaptations from the 23 Illinois Administrative Code Section 375. When records are no longer active, they are archived and stored in a locked closet. After the document retention time has expired, the information is shredded by a professional shredding service.

Program Oversight and Governance

Concordia Place children's programs are directly administered by our Senior Director of Programming and each site has a Program Director. Any concerns about your child's program and care should be first discussed with your child's teacher and the appropriate Assistant Director. If you feel your concerns are not resolved, you may request a meeting with the Program Director and/or the Senior Director of Programming. If after speaking to the Senior Director of Programming, you feel your concerns are not resolved, you may meet with the President/CEO.

In addition, the Board of Directors governs all Concordia Place programs. Our Board consists of people who have demonstrated a passion for the Concordia mission. Parents whose children are enrolled in one of our programs, members of Concordia Lutheran Church, neighbors, and members from other community and business organizations are all eligible. They review organizational goals, funding, program policies, etc. Should you have a policy concern you wish to be brought before the Board, send a written request to Rev. Nicholas J. Zook, Board Chairman, at 3855 N. Seeley, Chicago, IL 60618. Board meetings are not open to the public.

Parents are encouraged to participate at Concordia. If you are interested in joining Concordia committees, we would be happy to discuss your participation.

Enrollment & Tuition Policies

Concordia operates with the following guidelines for eligibility and participation in the program. Parents and children are required to comply. These guidelines meet our State licensing requirements and our program goals.

Eligibility - Admission

Children must be between the ages of 2 and 5 years old for admission to our program at Seeley and between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years old for admission to our programs at Whipple.

Before your child begins the program, we must have specific forms on file. These forms are all reviewed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at each inspection.

- Children's Program Application
- Program Admission Form
- IDHS Certificate of Child Health Examination (to be completed by physician)
- Childhood Lead Risk Assessment Questionnaire (to be completed by physician as needed)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Enrollment and Application Forms
- Tuition Agreement Form
- Licensing Standards Receipt Verification
- Parent Manual Agreement
- Sunscreen and Diaper Ointment (if applicable) Consent Form
- Birth Certificate, original or certified copy

Please ensure these forms are provided to us before your child's first day of school as they are required for us to maintain compliance for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Your child's file will contain all of these forms and copies of any correspondence, including incident reports and observations. A child's parents or legal guardians have the right to examine your child's file upon request.

Registration and Enrollment

Enrollment during a program year

Concordia begins its new program year by the first Tuesday after Labor Day, and it runs for a full 12 months. Families may enter the program at any time during the program year. As openings are available during the program year, Concordia fills them from our waiting list to the first family who has submitted a complete packet of forms, paid their deposit, first week's tuition and registration fee, and is available to start on the date of the opening. **Concordia does not hold open slots.** Should a family not be available to start on the date of the opening, Concordia will offer the opening to the next family on the list.

Registration for a new program year

During registration for the next program year, currently enrolled families have first priority for openings, provided we receive a completed and signed tuition agreement for each child by the stated deadline along with a first week's tuition and registration fee. Each program year, there is a per child registration fee that is due in May. The fall registration fee will be waived for any family newly enrolled after January 1st of the current year.

Concordia applies the deposit of currently enrolled children toward their deposit to the next program year.

After we register current children, we open registration to new children. Concordia reserves an opening for a child for the start of the next program year when we receive a complete packet of forms, deposit, first week's tuition and registration fee.

If you register for a new program year but decide to not attend after the registration deadline, you forfeit your tuition deposit, first week's tuition, and registration fee.

Due at Enrollment: Registration Fee, Activity Fee, First Week's Tuition and Deposit

Due at registration is an annual registration fee, listed on the Tuition and Fee Sheet, per child. This fee covers application to the program. Also payable at registration time is the first week of tuition and a deposit equal to one week's tuition. For families who are on the IDHS Child Care Certificate Program or other subsidy programs the deposit amount is determined by the income level and our sliding tuition scale, not a co-pay amount.

The tuition deposit will be applied to your child's last week in the program provided that you give appropriate notice. See Withdrawal section below for more information.

Tuition

Tuition covers the cost of your child's enrollment for the whole program year and includes teacher salaries, classroom materials, snacks, meals, insurance, and equipment. To make our program affordable to families of all income levels, tuition is based on a sliding tuition scale adjusted by gross family income and size.

The tuition for the program is prorated into weekly amounts to ease payments for the parents. These weekly amounts do not represent either a per hour rate or a per day rate for the program, only a weekly breakdown of the total cost of the program. Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance. Therefore, full tuition payments are required, regardless of attendance. We cannot give tuition refunds for the days your child is absent. This includes days absent due to illness, vacation and days the center is closed.

We do not accept payments in cash. We accept payments by check, money order, or automatic transfers through our Vanco program. Vanco is an easy program that allows you to decide on what date and what amount you make payments. There are no costs at all to participate in this program. When you enroll in the Vanco program, you will receive a \$25.00 credit on your account. Please speak with the Accounts Receivable Manager to enroll.

Please note that Concordia Place is a non-profit organization. Your tuition payment covers only a portion of our program costs. We rely on individual contributions, in-kind donations, as well as grants from private foundations. We ask that parents participate to the fullest extent possible to help maintain the quality of our programs. There are numerous opportunities for parents to help such as purchasing tickets to fundraisers, donating needed items, or by making a general gift to our annual fundraising campaign. You may also add a gift to each tuition payment with a note of intent.

Some families choose to pay in advance in larger increments than a week. For example, some families pay on a monthly or quarterly basis. If you wish to pay your tuition in larger installments, please speak with the Accounts Receivable Manager.

Concordia works with parents to collect outstanding balances but reserves the right to use a collection agency as we deem necessary.

Payment Schedule and Late Fees

All tuition is payable at least one week in advance. The tuition for the week is due no later than Monday. Payments made after Monday are delinquent. If your child attends our Seeley center and is enrolled part-time, Tuesdays and Thursdays, tuition is due no later than Tuesday. Payments made after Tuesday are delinquent.

A \$5.00 late fee, per day, is charged for any payments made after the due day. After one week of delinquent tuition payments, you will be asked to withdraw your child from the program and you are still responsible for payment of any balance due and you forfeit your deposit.

Returned Check Fees

We charge a \$25.00 fee for any returned checks. After a returned check, you are required to pay your tuition by money order.

Other Charges and Fees

You are responsible for paying charges and fees described elsewhere throughout this manual, including, but not limited to, late pick-up, failure to sign-out, t-shirt and activity fees. These charges are payable in the week the charge or fee was incurred.

Withdrawals

If you registered for a new program year but decide to not attend after the registration deadline, you forfeit your tuition deposit, first week's tuition, and registration fee.

You may withdraw your child from the program by providing a **four-week written notice** to the front desk staff. You forfeit your tuition deposit if you withdraw without appropriate notice. Please ask the Assistant Director or the Program Director for the formal Notice of Withdrawal form and return it to the front desk.

Subsequent re-enrollment will entail an additional registration fee and all other applicable fees and deposits, providing that your account was left in good standing.

Tuition Determination

Tuition categories are determined according to the program your child is enrolled in, gross combined family income and size. Your tuition does not change based on your child's age, but based on when they transition to the next program. For each additional child in the family, a \$5,000 income consideration is given to determine the tuition category. Families with more than one child in the program will receive a 5% reduction, per week, on the total tuition for all children.

Once enrolled, you must provide a copy of your most recent IRS tax statement and/or proof of earnings. Parents are required to disclose changes of income to the Program Director and/or the Accounts Receivable Manager so that adjustments in tuition can be made where appropriate. Failure to report income changes that would increase your tuition responsibility will result in your legal liability for the unpaid balance of the entire period of your adjusted income.

IDHS - Action for Children

The Illinois Department of Health Services (IDHS) helps low-income families pay for the child care services needed to work or go to school (training) and other work related activities. The IDHS Action for Children program is a state run subsidy program which may be able to assist you with paying for child care costs with our center.

A few things to keep in mind if you decide to use Action for Children to subsidize your child's care with our center:

1. Our staff are knowledgeable in the procedures for Action for Children and can support you through the process. However, **you** are responsible for completing the application, submitting it to the IDHS offices, ensuring you receive a response and ensuring you reapply to continue receiving these services once your eligibility period ends.
2. Until Concordia receives notification of your approval for the Action for Children subsidy, you will be charged weekly according to our sliding scale.
 - a. If you are found **eligible**, we will change our invoices to reflect your co-payment from the beginning of your eligibility period.
 - b. If you are found **ineligible or you fail to complete the application**, you will be held responsible for all tuition under our sliding scale during the time your child attended our center.
3. You may either submit the application in person at the Action for Children offices, online, or by mail. Keep in mind that applications mailed take longer to process. For a timelier response, we advise you to submit your application in person and request a receipt as proof of all items submitted.
4. Concordia does not determine your IDHS weekly co-payment. This is determined solely by Action for Children as it is under their discretion. Any concerns regarding your determination must be directed to their offices.
5. You are responsible for an additional weekly fee, listed on the Tuition and Fee Sheet, per child in addition to the co-payment determined by Action for Children. These fees are not subject to our sibling discount.
6. It is solely your responsibility to ensure you have coverage through Action for Children. Concordia may send you reminders from time to time concerning your coverage as a courtesy but that is not our responsibility. Please be aware of when your eligibility begins and ends. You must reapply for assistance one month before your coverage period ends.
7. Irregular attendance or frequent or prolonged absences with no medical or approved reason may result in a family being asked to leave the program.

For more information or to download forms, please visit Action for Children's website at www.actforchildren.org.

Other Child Care Subsidies

Some families may be eligible for other programs which may be able to assist you with paying child care costs. For example, there are child care military subsidies. It is solely your responsibility to apply for any of these programs and ensure that you are eligible.

You are responsible for an additional weekly fee per child. This amount may be increased depending on the subsidy amount provided by the program so that the total amount Concordia receives corresponds to the program's sliding tuition scale using your income and family size. These fees are not subject to our sibling discount.

Gracias Program

We would like to thank you when you refer a family to our programs. For each family you refer, you will receive a one-time \$50.00 deduction from your tuition as a part of our Gracias Program. Once the referred family has been attending and paying tuition for a full month, we

will credit your account \$50.00. Please note that the referred family will need to include your name on the application page during enrollment.

PARENT MANUAL AGREEMENT

DATE: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

WE HAVE FULLY READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE FOREGOING PARENT MANUAL AND
AGREE TO ABIDE BY ITS TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

SIGNATURE OF PARENTS

MOTHER: _____

FATHER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Please sign and return this page only.