

# Concordia Place After School Program General Information

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## Concordia Place

Board Chairman: The Reverend Nicholas J. Zook

President and CEO: Brenda Swartz

Senior Director of Programming: Kiki Collias

[www.concordiaplace.org](http://www.concordiaplace.org)

Months: September - June \*\* Days: Monday - Friday

Hours:

2:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. for children in grades Kindergarten and above

7:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M. on days when the schools we serve are closed (see Holiday schedule)

	3300 N. Whipple St. Chicago, Illinois 60618 (773) 463-1600 Fax: (773) 463-1690	3855 N. Seeley Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60618 (773) 935-3739 Fax: (773) 935-0414
Site Director:	Sarah Spraker <a href="mailto:sspraker@concordiaplace.org">sspraker@concordiaplace.org</a>	Amber Roberts <a href="mailto:aroberts@concordiaplace.org">aroberts@concordiaplace.org</a>
Children's ages:	5 – 13	5 -13
Program Capacity:	47 children	30 children
License & Accreditations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed by the State of Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services</li> <li>• Licensed by the City of Chicago</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed by the State of Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services</li> <li>• Licensed by the City of Chicago</li> </ul>

## 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 Action For Children
  - Member Kedzie-Elston Business Industrial Council
  - Member North Center Chamber of Commerce
  - Member Lutheran Social Services in America

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# Welcome to Concordia

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

Concordia Place's School Age program is high-quality with an emphasis on safety, education, and the development of positive social skills.

## **Where Everyone can Gather, Learn, and Grow**

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 convenient hours. Our after school programs are open when schools are closed, giving working parents needed assurance that their children are well cared for. We offer a sliding tuition scale with a weekly payment schedule (instead of a full semester of tuition in advance) that benefits more than 80% 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 or monthly themes, under the supervision of trained and qualified staff.

## **Our History**

In 1981, Concordia Lutheran Church responded to a request by three single-parents in the North Center community for help with child care by founding the Concordia Child Care Center. 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 is open when schools are closed, giving working parents needed child care.

In 1989, the Concordia Child Care Center expanded to include full-day Preschool for children ages three to five years old. This expansion not only serves the child care needs of working parents with preschool aged children, but also serves parents with both preschool and school age children.

In 2001, Concordia Lutheran Church purchased a vacant Catholic facility 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. This new facility at 3300 N. Whipple not only replicates our successful preschool and school aged programs, but also has expanded programs to infants, toddlers as well as teens, seniors, and adult learning.

## Daily Schedule

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Our after school program includes a variety of activities. We offer a combination of time for relaxation, quiet time for homework, and enrichment activities. A typical schedule for a day is:

3:00 – 3:30	Gym or Outdoor Activities
3:30 - 4:30	Snack - Group Meeting
4:30 - 5:30	Homework, Crafts or Indoor Activities
5:30 - 6:00	Cleanup - Free Play

A typical schedule for a full day is:

7:00 - 9:00	Free Play
9:00 - 9:30	Morning Snack
9:30 - 11:30	Group Planning Time/ Field Trip/ Indoor Activities
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 1:30	Quiet Time - Books, Games, etc.
1:30 - 3:30	Outdoor Games at Park Geared to Age
3:30 - 4:00	Afternoon Snack
4:00 - 5:00	Free Play
5:00 - 6:00	Cleanup and Outdoor Play

## Starting Checklist

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Use this checklist to help you and your child prepare for a wonderful experience!

Have you . . .

- Marked all your child's belongings with his or her name?
- Submitted all your forms including authorized people for pick up, birth certificate and health forms?
- Paid your registration fee, first week's tuition, and tuition deposit?

## Other Important Information

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Here are some guidelines you might want to share with your child about what to expect:

1. Each child is given a cubby where he/she can place a jacket, boots, and personal possessions. In order to prevent lost clothing, please see that all articles are clearly marked on the inside tag. Though we try and watch out for articles, staff members are not responsible for lost or misplaced clothing or other items.
2. The program is informal and very active. Children are encouraged to wear clothing that is not restricting. Gym shoes are preferable; we strongly discourage flip flops and dress shoes.

3. We provide a mid-afternoon snack to all children in the school age program. Children should not bring their own food. If food is brought, it will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. We allow exceptions for special events and birthdays but they must be approved by staff in advance. In keeping with our Peanut Safe policy, **you must ensure that all the food items you bring to the center are peanut free.** For more information on our peanut policy, please refer to the Medical and Health section of this manual. No chewing gum is allowed.
4. Our program offers lots of games and toys for a variety of interests. Children should not bring toys, sports equipment or other such belongings to the program. Often these things from home are lost, broken, or the cause of unnecessary arguments. This can be avoided by leaving personal possessions at home. The staff members are not responsible for any personal items. Please be especially careful of choke-size items and sharp jewelry.
5. We ask that your children not bring money as it can be disruptive. In the case that it is necessary, a child should ask the office staff to keep it until the end of the day. If you must speak to your child, we ask that parents call the office. It is disruptive to the group and office staff for children to use the phone. Children are allowed to call only for very important reasons. If your child carries a cell phone, it must be used for emergencies only.

## **About Our Program**

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The Concordia after-school program provides a safe and enriching environment for children ages 5-13 whose parents are either working, in school, or, for other reasons, require after-school care for their children. Based on respect for the child as an individual, Concordia strives to expose children to a variety of experiences and to help them learn to accept themselves, as well as others. To accomplish these objectives we need not only the consent, but also the participation of parents.

A planned yet flexible curriculum encourages the children to develop in every way; emotionally, intellectually and physically. Program activities are geared to the ages of the children. We use teacher-directed and child-initiated activities that build both mental and motor abilities, teach social skills, encourage positive self images and develop self-discipline. We use staff-child ratios appropriate for the age of the children.

Generally, our program practices social skills development within their groups. Our goals include helping school age children learn how to work with others, take on responsibilities, and develop social skills. We have regularly scheduled group discussion times, have each group devise its own rules of conduct, and participate in decision-making.

Individual development is also encouraged through activities that enhance social, motor and intellectual skills. We provide experience in a variety of activities with the opportunity for children to pick among several offered activities.

## **Program Goals and Philosophy**

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 well being.
- 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.

## **Tutoring**

Help with homework is always available during the school year.

## **Special Programs and Field Trips**

Special programs and field trips (whether off-site or in-house) are an important part of the after school program. We periodically invite guests to lead special activities at our centers or take children on field trips. We provide adequate, responsible adult supervision for these excursions through staff and adult volunteers. Parents will be asked to cover the cost of field trips during the school year.

## **Parents Are Welcome Too**

Parents are welcome to come and spend time at the program. You are welcome to come on field trip days or participate in our other activities. Adult visitors/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
- Participate in Parent Club

## **Communications**

The Parents' Bulletin Board is a vital source of information for you: articles, messages, and other information relevant to parents. Please check the Parents' Bulletin Board daily. You will receive a monthly newsletter via email and, in addition, we put individual communications about your child in your child's mail slot.

## **Parent/Teacher Communication**

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

## **Parent Feedback**

We conduct a yearly Program Evaluation to solicit parent input and include parents in our program improvement efforts. Once the evaluations are complete and compiled, we provide parents a summary of the findings.

## **Parent Club – You are already a member!**

By getting involved in the Concordia Parent Club, parents benefit from social and educational events. Concordia leadership benefits by hearing parents' ideas and concerns. Together, parents and Concordia leadership form the Concordia Parent Club. You do not need to do anything to join – by enrolling a child at Concordia, you are already a member!

Parents from each room may volunteer to help organize and/or lead the Parent Club activities. They also serve as representatives and help generate ideas. For each event, we seek parents to volunteer.

The Parent Club has organized social events, such as morning coffee hours. The Parent Club uses input from the fall parent survey to identify areas of interest for educational topics. The Parent Club has hosted a Sibling Rivalry discussion group and an informational session on the



application process for kindergarten in Chicago Public Schools, including magnet schools and other special programs. Contact your program director for more information.

## **Food**

### **Meals & Snacks**

Our program ensures children receive healthy snacks and meals. Our program includes a mid-afternoon snack. On a full day, during the school year, the children are served a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. We serve healthy foods, avoiding "junk" food and sweets. Each week's menu is posted on the Parents' Bulletin Board. Children will be served 1% milk daily. Non-dairy milk may be brought by the parents for a child upon receipt of a physician's note.

### **Peanut Free**

Concordia Place has a Peanut Safe Policy. The snacks and meals provided by our program do not contain peanuts. For more information on our Peanut Safe Policy please refer to the Health and Medical section of this manual.

### **Outside Food Prohibited**

All meals are provided by the center. Out of respect for the other children in the classroom, we ask that you comply with this request and not bring food from outside. Exceptions will be 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. Parents, who have a doctor's note to bring outside food, must provide nutritional food, which excludes "junk" food, sweets, desserts, sugary beverages, candy, or other food products lacking nutritional value. Families are permitted to bring a treat or snack for children in the classroom to celebrate a special occasion. All foods must be store-bought and in their original container. To be served to the children, the Program Director or Assistant Director must first verify that the food does not contain nuts and was not potentially contaminated by nuts.

### **Child and Adult Care Food Program**

Concordia Place is a member of the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which subsidizes us in serving nutritious food to 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.

## **Program Guidelines**

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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**

Our after school program is geared for children in grades Kindergarten through early middle school. Children who are not yet 6 years old must be enrolled in Kindergarten, and children can remain in our program through the age of 13.

Before a child begins the program, we must have specific forms on file:

- Children's Program Application
- After School Program Pick-up Permission Form
- Consent Form (signed by each designated pick-up person)
- IDHS Certificate of Child Health Examination (to be completed by physician)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Application and Enrollment Forms
- Tuition Agreement Form
- Licensing Standards Receipt Verification
- Parent Manual Agreement
- Sunscreen Consent Form
- Birth Certificate, original or certified copy
- Hearing and Vision Screening Release Form

These forms are all reviewed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at each inspection. Your child's file will contain these forms and copies of any correspondence, including incident reports and observations. You have the right to examine your child's file upon request.

### **Discipline Procedures**

#### **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 Program Director. A conference with a parent may be called, to discuss the best approach to help your child redirect their behavior.

## **Suspension**

A child whose behavior is uncontrollable may be suspended from an activity or the program for a specific amount of time. Uncontrollable behavior includes, but is not limited to, fighting, hitting, swearing, running away and refusing to obey program rules. Parents will be notified of this unacceptable behavior and advised that, if problems persist, the child could be suspended from 2 to 5 days. Further, if all our staff's attempts and suspension fail, the child may be dismissed from the program.

## **Termination Procedures**

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 is being effective

If Concordia feels it cannot meet the needs of a child, the child is removed from the program.

## **Dismissal**

Concordia 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.
- Where 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.

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/prolonged absences without a medical/approved reason

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

We expect our school 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, 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
- aggressive, rude or inappropriate behavior toward any center children, staff or other visitors
- behavior that endangers any center children, staff or visitors
- 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 blogs

### **Anti Bullying Policy**

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

We realize that efforts to stop bullying must involve the entire center community, beginning with a center policy that states clearly that bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated by anyone regardless of age, gender or position.

Acts of bullying will not be ignored; adults will take the lead in confronting bullying behavior in a non-bullying manner. All adults will speak up whenever and wherever they see bullying occur, parents will speak with their children regularly about bullying, teachers will incorporate anti-bullying into the curriculum, and adults will check their own behaviors for bullying characteristics.

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. Children will be encouraged to tell an adult if they see or experience bullying. The child being bullied will have 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 their plan for how they will manage their feelings in the future.

## **Program Hours**

The School Age Program begins daily when the first school lets out and closes at 6:00 p.m. During summer and school holidays the program is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please make sure that your child arrives by 9:00 a.m. during the summer and on school holidays. This is necessary because the days' planned activities start at this time and field trip arrangements and bus schedules cannot be altered to accommodate latecomers. In addition, latecomers are extremely disruptive to the group.

In case of absence, the Program Director should be notified by 1:00 p.m. during the school year and by 9:00 a.m. during the summer and on school holidays.

## **Holidays**

Concordia is closed in observance of these holidays (and in some instances, the observation date will differ from the holiday):

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Thanksgiving           | 6. New Year's Day   |
| 2. Day after Thanksgiving | 7. Good Friday      |
| 3. Christmas Eve          | 8. Memorial Day     |
| 4. Christmas Day          | 9. Independence Day |
| 5. New Year's Eve         | 10. Labor Day       |

## **In-Service Days**

One day per quarter, the center is closed for staff training, program assessment, and other operational needs. We publish these days on our annual calendar. Child care will not be available on these days, and parents must make other arrangements..

## **Health and Safety**

### **Pick-Up Policy**

- 1. 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 out a child will result in a \$5.00 penalty assessment. Multiple incidents of failure to sign out a child could result in a dismissal from the program.
- 2. Pick Up Time:** You may pick up your child at any time during the day, although we provide the schedule so that, if possible, you can plan around the program schedule. If you need to pick up your child before 4:30, please let us know in the morning so that we can

make arrangements. Some days the children are at the park or on walks and do not return until later in the afternoon.

- 3. Late Pick Up:** We ask parents to strictly adhere to the 6:00 p.m. pick-up deadline. If, for some reason, you are delayed, please call to inform us. While we understand that emergencies do arise, if you are delayed and unable to pick up your child before 6:00 p.m., then you are solely responsible to make other arrangements for your child to be picked up. Our staff members will not hold your child responsible for the situation and any discussion of the situation will only be with the parent/guardian and never with the child.

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 beginning at 6:01pm for the first fifteen minutes plus one dollar each minute thereafter. This is payable with your next tuition payment. Continuous tardiness will necessitate your child be withdrawn from the program.

- 4. 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, 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.

### **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 1 year old when your child first starts and must be updated every 2 years. We will notify you when a current medical form is needed.

Proof of annual hearing and vision exams is also required. These exams may take place at your child's elementary school, in which case you will be asked to sign a release form stating that these exams have been performed.

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 degrees F or greater
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Any unexplained rash
- Nasal discharge accompanied by any of the symptoms of coughing, fatigue, fever of 100 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.

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. 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 after only 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, pin worms, viral infection, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc. Notification is important for the health of all the children in our program.

The State of Illinois, Department of Children and Family Services, requires that all members of day care institutions look for, and report to the State, evidence of any and all cases of suspected child abuse. We are therefore obligated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the State.

### **Peanut 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 parents to comply with our peanut policy by not bringing in treats for parties that contain peanuts, peanut products or that have 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.

### **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 note from you **and** a note from the doctor stating the nature of the illness, type of medication, amount of medication to administer, and the times to be given. Please hand the prescription to the Program Director or Head Teacher, with instructions attached. Medicine is placed in a locked box in the refrigerator or in the medicine 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 and will be given a copy of the report.

## **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident, we will contact the parents. Concordia 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. Concordia carries liability insurance for its operations. In the case of medical emergencies or accidents, the family's insurance is the primary coverage.

## **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.
- Total Evacuation – total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility.

**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 Bell Elementary School at 3740 N. Oakley, St. Benedicts Catholic School at 3901 N. Bell, and the Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club 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 a pre-recorded telephone call informing you of the situation.

We use the contact information you provided on your form 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.

Please read the security procedures for your child's program site.

#### **Whipple Site**

The Whipple site uses a badge reader system to help prevent unauthorized persons from entering our building 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 for internal doors, permitting them only to access those program areas in which their child is currently attending. Each family will be issued up to two badges without cost. You may purchase additional badges for \$10. 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 for \$20. If you lose a badge, IMMEDIATELY notify us so that we may inactivate your badge. When you withdraw your child from Concordia, you must return all the badges you have been issued. You will be charged the lost badge fee for each unreturned badge.

#### **Seeley Site**

Our Seeley site is equipped with an external camera used to monitor persons entering our program areas. Only recognized persons to the program are allowed access through our front door. Those individuals which staff does not recognize will be asked to identify themselves and give a reason for their visit before they are let in the building.

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 that present no danger to children are permitted in our center. Gerbils, hamsters, and guinea pigs which appear healthy may also be kept in the center.

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.

1. Domestic animals, birds, or fowl are not permitted at any time in areas where foods are prepared and maintained.
2. A responsible staff person is assigned to take care of any animal or pet on premises.
3. The center is 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 include preventing exposure to pests and pesticides. While pesticides protect children and property from pests such as insects, weeds, and rodents 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 include a variety of non-chemical and chemical methods.

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

- Ensures that pesticides are applied by certified pesticide applicators or registered technicians.
- Bases pest management decisions on the results of regular inspections. The facility avoids routine use of pesticides not exempted below.
- 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 their imaginary, dramatic play, children also enjoy costumes, clothing and shoes in small sizes for girls and boys, purses, and small business jackets.

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.
- Please check that the books are in good condition and do not have missing/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 weapons or other such items.

### **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:

- Emotional maturity
- Willingness to cooperate with the program's objectives
- Respect for children and adults
- Patience and flexibility
- Physical and mental health
- Good personal hygiene
- Academic requirements set by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

## **Non Solicitation**

Concordia recruits and trains teachers and staff to the highest measures of quality to 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 effects the quality of the care we provide to the families enrolled here. For a period of not less than 6 months subsequent to leaving our program, families agree that they 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 six months preceding the date the family leaves the program.

## **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 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. The lists will not be given to parents or any one 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 child's file.

Child enrollment records will 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.

### **Mandated Reporting**

Staff members are expected to communicate with parents and supervisors regarding any concerns about a child's well-being. 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. The Children's Program Director and Executive Director will be notified by the reporting staff for the appropriate follow-through. In the process of investigating such reports, the authorities may have access to the child's records on file at the center.

### **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 the 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.

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

# Tuition, and Fees Policies

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## **Registration and Enrollment**

### **Enrollment during a program year**

Concordia Place's School Age Program begins its program year each September on the first Tuesday after Labor Day and it runs through the end of the Chicago Public School's school year. We also offer a full-day summer camp for the full summer, which is covered in a separate parent manual. See the program director if you are interested in enrolling your child in summer camp.

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

After we register current families, we open registration to new families. 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 any family registered for a new program year but decides to not attend after the registration deadline, they forfeit their tuition deposit, first week's tuition, and registration fee.

### **Due at Enrollment: Registration 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, insurance, and equipment.

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. Parents are required to pay the weekly amount (one week minimally in advance) regardless of the total number of days for that week that the child attends the program. We cannot give tuition refunds for the days your child is absent. This includes days absent due to illness and vacation. Families must pay for every week that their child is enrolled in the program.

**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 your Program Director or the front desk staff to enroll.

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 Board of Directors reviews the tuition scale, and any changes are published two months in advance.

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 Program Director.

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. A \$5.00 late fee, per day, is charged for any payments made after Monday. After one week of delinquent tuition payments,

parents will be asked to withdraw their child from the program and are responsible for payment of any balance due on tuition for the time their child was enrolled in the program.

### **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**

Parents 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 any family registered for a new program year but decides to not attend after the registration deadline, they forfeit their tuition deposit, first week's tuition, and registration fee.

Families may withdraw their child from the program by providing a four-week written notice to the front desk staff. Families who withdraw their child without appropriate notice forfeit their tuition deposit.

Withdrawal and subsequent re-enrollment will entail an additional registration fee and all other applicable fees and deposits.

### **Tuition Determination**

Tuition categories are determined according to gross combined family income and size. 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 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 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. **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 or mail in your application. Keep in mind that applications mailed take longer to process. For a timelier response, we advise you to submit your application in person.
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 it 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.

For more information or to download forms, please visit Action for Children's website at [www.actforchildren.org](http://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 extend the opportunity to you to refer a family to our programs. In return for referring a family, you will receive \$50.00 off of 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.

# PARENT MANUAL AGREEMENT

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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.