

# **SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM** **FAMILY HANDBOOK**



Cohoes Community Center

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## WELCOME FAMILIES

Along with our staff we would like to extend you a warm welcome to the Cohoes Community Center's School Age Program. The School Age Program is a community of professionals who works in partnership with families, understanding that each family has its own unique experiences. We encourage an open dialogue with you about what is appropriate for your children. It is our hope that you and your child have an enjoyable education and care experience with us. Our staff is well prepared to provide a quality educational experience and ensure the highest level of care for your child. Our door is always open for you to share any joys or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,  
Jackie Gurbey                      Child Care Director  
Kathleen LaBombard          School Age Registrar

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Program Mission Statement**

We believe that each child is a unique individual. In partnership with families, we are committed to provide a safe, clean, and joyful, child oriented program and to promote the value of education and create a love of learning.

### **Program Philosophy**

The philosophy of all our child care programs is to provide quality, affordable child care for the families of Cohoes and its outlying communities. We are committed to providing a program that looks at each child as a unique individual and provides opportunities for each child to develop at their own pace. Our goals and curriculum encompasses the principles and guidelines that are outlined in the NAEYC (National Education of Young Children) and the Early Care and Learning Guidelines. Through our diverse, child centered program, we encourage and enhance all aspects of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, communicative and cognitive.

Our professional staff supports the growth and development of the children in our care by creating a safe, healthy and comfortable environment in which children can gain a positive sense of themselves, engage in learning activities based on individual and age appropriateness, develop friendships and learn to relate to others with empathy and respect. We believe that parents/guardians are the most significant adults in their child's life. Therefore, we strive to foster relationships between families and teaching staff based on mutual respect and open communication for the benefit of your child.

### **History**

The Cohoes Community Center opened in 1971 made entirely possible through the efforts of the community and its leaders. The largest and longest running program has been that of the Child Development Center (CDC). Initially begun by the Cohoes-Troy YWCA, the Child Development Center became a full partner of the Center in 1973, serving 35 children ranging in age from 18 months to 5 years of age. In the mid-1970's, the Center added a traveling summer camp, *Recreation-On-Wheels* (ROW) to provide summer care and recreational opportunities to grade school children. By the mid-1980's attention and concern regarding the well being of unsupervised grade school children, dubbed "latch-key children," after school gave cause for the CDC to create the School Age Care (SAC) program. Decades later, the programs of the CDC continue to thrive and serve an annual capacity of 388 children, throughout the City of Cohoes.

### **License/Standards**

The Cohoes Community Center's School Age Program is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. We are subject to their rules and regulations. Copies of the regulations are available at each site. If you have questions or concerns regarding our school age practices, you may contact:

Amy Powell, Registration Supervisor  
91 Broadway  
Menands, NY 12204  
(518) 426-7181

### **Programs Offered through the Cohoes Community Center**

**Day care** -This program cares for children 18 months -5 years. We operate September thru August, Monday thru Friday, 6:30am-5:30pm. We provide full and part time positions.

**Universal Pre-Kindergarten-** This program operates in collaboration with the Cohoes City School District for four year olds. This program runs September through June and follows the school calendar.

**Before/After School Care-**We provide am and pm care at our elementary school locations: Abram Lansing, Harmony Hill and Van Schaick. Am care is from 7-8:30, pm care runs from 2:30-5:30. School age care is also available at the Cohoes Community Center on snow days and vacation days off from school; half day care is provided at the sites. Pre-registration is required. Care for holiday vacations is open to families outside the district.

**Camp Discovery-**This is a full time camp offered during the summer months. It is available for children entering K thru entering 8<sup>th</sup> (up to age 13). The hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 7:00am-5:30pm.

### **Center Membership**

The Cohoes Community Center offers a discounted membership for day care and school age families:

Year Single adult \$150.00      6 month single adult \$100.00      Year family \$200.00      Inquire at the front desk.

### **CENTER SCHEDULE/HOLIDAYS**

The School Age Program follows the Cohoes City School District's calendar and full and half day care will be offered except the days listed below:

NEW YEARS DAY	FRIDAY BEFORE LABOR DAY
PRESIDENT'S DAY	LABOR DAY
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	THANKSGIVING DAY
MEMORIAL DAY	FRIDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING
FOURTH OF JULY	CHRISTMAS DAY

### **WEATHER CLOSINGS**

It is our intent to keep our programs open for children and families. However, when severe weather occurs, we must think of the safety of our children, families and staff. If closing is necessary, this information can be obtained by listening to radio stations FLY 92, 810 WGY, 99.5 THE RIVER, B95.5 and by watching News Channels 6,10,and 13, WXXA Channel 8, Capital 9. We will be listed under school closings as the "Cohoes Community Center School Age Program". If the schools are closed but the Center is open we will offer snow day care at CCC.

### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

If it is necessary to close the school age program for emergency purposes throughout the day, families will be notified by telephone using the contact numbers you have provided us. It is imperative that contact people and phone numbers be updated throughout the year.

## **CURRIULUM**

Our programs are based on the concept of developmentally appropriate practice. A developmentally appropriate curriculum provides appropriate activities and materials to meet each individual child's needs. Lesson plans are created based on children's interests and developmental needs. We believe that children learn through play. Therefore, staff prepares the environment to learn through active exploration, interaction with adults, children and materials. Staff create experiences that engage children in purposeful and meaningful learning related to key curriculum concepts.

## **OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES**

### **Staffing**

The CCC employs qualified full and part time staff in our three sites. Each site consists of a Site Director, Assistant Director and Counselors. All employees must meet qualification requirements set forth by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. All staff are screened for criminal history through fingerprints and checked through the New York State Central Registry. Each staff member is required to complete a minimum of thirty hours of training every two years on a variety of topics to support quality programming as well as current health, nutrition and safety practices. All of our substitutes and volunteers are also held to these standards. Pictures and biographies of each staff member are displayed near the family bulletin board.

### **Communication**

In our School Age Programs relationships with children and their families is important to us! We are committed to maintaining open communication and working with you to provide a quality program for your child. We find that it is very important that parents and staff communicate openly and honestly regarding your needs and desires concerning your child. We have an open door policy which means you are welcome to visit your child at anytime.

We communicate with you each day through direct conversations; reminders and announcements as well as monthly newsletters and email correspondence. We also have a Family Bulletin Board to keep you up-to-date with program and community events, as well as a variety of topics related to children and families. Stop by and take a look!

Throughout the year we plan several Family Fun events. We encourage families to come and get to know other parents, staff and children in a relaxed social setting.

## **Fundraising**

Tuition does not fully support all of the costs of operating our child care program. Although it is not a requirement that families help us to raise additional funds, it is something we hope every family can do as best they can. This is not simply about giving money to our program. Our goal is to provide families with a variety of ways they can contribute depending on their resources, time and energy. Here are some of the ways that your extended family and friends can help support our program:

October- We ask families to sell tickets to our Giffy's Barbeque to your friends, family and coworkers. In addition, we have a fall festival the same evening with activities for the whole family to enjoy including a bouncy bounce, face painting, games, etc... free of charge.

April- We hold a Scholastic book fair and family fun night. Each year the theme is different, but we supply dinner, games, and activities for everyone to enjoy. We invite you to purchase books for your child to promote the importance of reading and an opportunity to engage in your child's interests and early literacy skills. All proceeds from the fair go towards new books for our classrooms.

## **Discipline/Positive Guidance**

The Center has a non-punitive approach to discipline. The program staff will set clear, reasonable and consistent rules and limits which are appropriate to the development of children. Children who are disruptive or need to regain control, are either redirected or removed from the situation and dealt with on a one on one basis. Logical consequences and problem solving are used to encourage the child to talk about their feelings. Staff acknowledges and respects the feelings of all children, regardless of their behavior. Positive language sets appropriate limits so children can feel secure:

(-) "Don't run"	(+) "Please use walking feet"
(-) "Don't throw blocks"	(+) "Blocks are for building"

The staff creates an environment where children are encouraged to make choices and develop skills. When misbehavior occurs, the child is given two options of appropriate behavior. When a child's behavior is "out of control" the child is allowed a short period of time-out to regain control. If a child exhibits consistent aggressive behavior that results in demonstrating a safety concern to themselves, to other children or staff, we reserve the right to suspend or dismiss your child from our school age program immediately.

We also encourage children to solve their own problems under the guidance of the site staff. Staff help children develop active listening skills, negotiation skills, and to make good choices. The philosophy behind problem solving is to teach children responsibility. The kids do what kids do but they also take responsibility for their actions. When children fight over a toy, they are encouraged to negotiate, which requires listening to another child's feelings. Each child is considered a unique person with feelings, preferences and rights that must be respected.

We will follow the rules of the Three B's (Be Safe, Be Responsible, and Be Respectful). Children are given several chances to correct behaviors before the follow steps:

Step #1	Incident Report is completed by a staff members and your child will be asked to complete a "Think Sheet"
Step #2	Both forms are signed by Parent/Guardian
Step #3	If behavior continues we will have a parent conference

## **Confidentiality**

The following guidelines are set forth to provide safety and security for all children and families enrolled in our program:

1. All staff will exercise extreme caution to insure that information concerning children and/or families is shared only with staff members and not with or in front of non-staff members. An exception will be made in the event of suspected child abuse or neglect.
2. All information received by staff from and/or concerning families is confidential to our program.
3. No Visitors other than the child's immediate family are permitted in the building without signing in.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

To minimize the spread of infections, the staff and children wash their hands several times throughout program. Staff

members are certified in 1<sup>st</sup> Aid and CPR. Staff must use gloves when handling food or blood, and helping with toileting. Tables and program furniture are disinfected with a cleaning solution the school provides. Toys are washed and disinfected regularly. If your child has an allergy please notify on your registration packet.

### **Sick Policy**

The following guidelines have been created to protect your child and all other children and staff in the program. It is the responsibility of the Site Director to make the determination based on their knowledge and best judgment. We appreciate your cooperation in complying with these guidelines.

Illness/Infection Symptom	Should child Stay Home?	When can child return?
Chicken pox	Yes	24 hrs. after all lesions have scabbed over
Conjunctivitis/Pink eye	Yes	24 hrs. after the start of medicine w/doctor's note
Cold	No (without fever) Yes (with fever)	Refer to fever
Coxsackie virus (Hand, foot & mouth)	Yes	May return after fever subsides and they have no open blisters
Croup	Yes	After illness subsides w/ doctor's note
Diarrhea (two or more stools)	Yes	24 hrs. after normal bowel movement
Fever (100 degrees F under the arm)	Yes	Free of fever for 24 hrs. and fever reducing medicines have not been given in the past 8 hrs.
Fifth Disease	No (without fever) Yes (with fever)	Refer to fever
Head Lice	Yes	Nit and Lice free- must be checked by staff
Impetigo	Yes	24 hrs. after treatment w/doctor's note
Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis A	Yes	Health Dept. clearance
Pertussis (Whooping cough)	Yes	May return after 5 days of antibiotic therapy w/ doctor's note
Pneumonia	Yes	May return w/ doctor's note
Ringworm	Yes	24 hrs. after treatment w/ a doctor's note
Roseola (Sixth disease)	Yes	After illness has subsided w/doctor's note
Skin rashes Undiagnosed	Yes	w/ note from doctor that it is non-contagious
Strep throat	Yes	24 hrs. after treatment w/ doctor's note
Vomiting	Yes	24 hrs. after last bout & able to eat solid foods

### **List of Possible Exclusions**

### **Administration of Medication**

The School Age Program does not administer medications with the exception of emergency medication such as an EpiPen or nebulizer/inhaler. Any emergency medication must be in its original package with the child's information and accompanied by a medical consent form completed by the child's physician and parent.

### **Topical Ointments**

These include anything that goes on your child's skin (i.e.Sunscreen, bug spray, first aid ointments, diaper creams, etc.) We require a parent signature for the day we dispense the medication. However preventive medications only need a new note every six months.

### **Accidents/Injuries**

The staff takes every precaution necessary to assure the safety of your child. Should an accident or injury occur, the staff is trained in first aid and CPR and first aid kits are available at each site. Families will be immediately notified of any injuries or accidents that staff feels may need medical attention. An accident report is given to families at the time of pickup to be signed and a copy of the report is put in your child's personal file. Upon enrollment of your child, you must provide emergency contacts, which hospital to transport to, and who the child's pediatrician is. In case of a serious accident or injury, the following procedures will be established:

- \*EMS will be contacted
- \*Parent/ Guardian will be contacted
- \*If the parent/guardian can't be reached, emergency contacts will be called
- \*If emergency transport is necessary, the child will be transported to the chosen hospital
- \*The site director will accompany your child along with their personal information

### **PICK UP/DROP OFF PROCEDURES**

#### **Sign-in Procedures**

Families must accompany their child into their designated site and sign them in with the child's name, time and the adult's initials on our daily attendance form.

#### **Sign-out Procedures**

The SAC closes promptly at 5:30 pm. At the end of your child's day, families are required to sign children out on the daily attendance form with the time and the adult's initials. Your child will only be released to adults (at least 16 yrs old) who are on your authorized pick up list. Everyone who is authorized to pick up your child must present photo identification. We can not release any child to an adult without proper identification. Families with specific custody arrangements must provide a copy of official court documents for the site to follow. SAC staff are not authorized to allow changes to official court documents.

#### **Late Pick-Up**

The SAC Program will apply a late charge to families who pick-up their child after 5:30pm. A fee of \$1.00 per minute after closing time will be enforced. Arrival time will be determined by the time on the SAC clocks. If the staff has not been contacted by 5:45pm the following procedures will apply:

1. Call authorized emergency contact numbers.
2. Call the Cohoes Police Department for assistance.
3. Call the Central Registry Hotline (800)635-1522 if no contact is made by 6:00pm.

#### **Non-Custodial Parent**

If a non-custodial parent is not involved with the child's upbringing, a copy of family court papers is required to be submitted at the time of enrollment. Without an official custody order or restraining order on file, the program legally must grant both parents access to their child. Please keep this information current throughout the year.

#### **Joint-Custody Parents**

When parents have joint custody of the child/children enrolled in our program, we require an official custody order on file before enrollment. Parents may request the School Age Program to furnish each parent with information regarding their child/children while in our program. Parents may also request in writing separate financial accounts. Please keep this information current throughout the year.

#### **Fire Drills/Evacuations**

The School Age program conducts mandated unannounced monthly fire drills. If families are present during a fire drill, they should listen carefully and follow the lead of the staff. Evacuation routes are posted in each area and throughout the building. We also must practice Shelter in Place drills twice a year, drills will be announced to parents the day before.

#### **Security Provisions**

When entering the School Age Program Site, all visitors are required to sign in with the Site Director.

#### **Child Abuse/Maltreatment Reporting**

The employees of the SAC program are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when they are presented with a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment. The employee is required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or maltreatment to the New York State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

### **MEALS/NUTRITION**

We participate in the New York State Department of Health, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program provides us with information and guidance for well balanced nutritional meals to support and encourage healthy eating habits. As part of our participation in CACFP we are required to provide all children with a nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. Our menus are reviewed and approved by CACFP. Copies of the menu are sent home monthly, posted in each site. Please share any special dietary needs or concerns your child may have and provide us with a note from your child's pediatrician.

### **Children's Birthdays**

Your child's birthday is a special day. To celebrate you may send in a treat for the site to share during snack time at 3:00. The snack you bring in must be on the Safe Snack List, you can find this list on the Cohoes City School Districts website.

### **Snack**

The School Age Program provides snack daily. The snack is prepared at the Cohoes Community Center and transported to the site. We serve our snacks "Family" style. The "family" style meal service is when you put serving dishes on the table and allow the children to choose from the food on the table. "Family" style allows the children to learn about healthy food choices, empowers them to decide how much of a food they would like to eat, and allows them the opportunity to practice motor skills, sharing, table manners, etc... Snack is provided but if your child does not like what is on the menu they can bring their own.

### **Full Days and Half Days meals**

Half Days we require your child to bring his/hers lunch we DO NOT PROVIDE lunch on half days of school but snack will still be provided. On Full Days at the Cohoes Community Center children will be provided with three meals prepared by the CCC kitchen staff. Your child is still welcome to bring their own lunch if they do not like what is on the menu.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Supplies/Clothing**

**CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH PLAY!** We encourage them to explore their environment through a variety of activities. Therefore, we ask that children be dressed in comfortable, easy to wash clothes when coming into program. For the safety of your child, we ask for you to provide sneakers or shoes with closed fronts and backs that allow them to run, jump and climb every day. All children will go outside daily unless raining, snowstorm, or the temperatures rise above 90 or below 30 degrees. In winter months, we may ask that you provide boots, mittens/gloves, a hat, and snowsuit/snow pants and a jacket. Please make sure that all clothing is labeled with your child's name. The School Age Program staff **cannot** be held responsible if items are misplaced or stolen.

### **Home Toy Policy**

If your child does choose to bring a home toy to school we ask that you limit the use of particular toys at the site. The uses of guns, swords or other toys that can be used as a weapon are discouraged. Also the use of makeup or hair accessories is also discouraged. In order to prevent any choking hazards please do not send your child to school with any money/change or hard candy. Please do not send your child to school with home toys that have great sentimental or monetary value. The SAC Staff **cannot** be held responsible if items are broken, misplaced or stolen.

### **Photographs/Publicity**

Upon registration of your child into our program, we will ask you to sign a release form for your child's picture to be taken. With permission, pictures could be used for our website, Facebook page, brochures, newspaper, or television as well as part of our program display.

### **Media Policy**

To support young children's need to be active we developed a program policy which limits the use of electronic devices. We are asking that families discourage their children from bringing electronic devices to the program. If your child has a cell phone we are asking them to keep it off and refrain from taking pictures during program hours. Cell phones should be kept in their school bag and again the SAC Staff **cannot** be held responsible if items are broken, misplaced or stolen.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Current emergency contact information must be updated immediately throughout the year. Please give updated information to your site director. If the SAC program does not receive the updated information in a timely manner, you may jeopardize your child's health and safety.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **Tuition**

The person signing up the child for the school age program is the sole person responsible for payment of the established weekly parent fees. The AM/PM fee is \$95.00 per week, AM Only is \$40 per week, and PM Only is \$85.00 per week. Add on fees for Half Days and Full Days range from \$17.00 to \$26.00 depending on your weekly service. Full week vacation fee is \$165.00 for the whole week or \$35.00 per day.

- Upon enrollment all families are required to pay a two week security deposit, a minimum of one week in advance and a \$10 registration fee (Registration fee applicable to new families only)
- Families must choose a payment schedule of weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. The advanced payment must reflect the chosen payment schedule. ***(Example: If your weekly parent fee is \$95 per week and you choose the bi-weekly payment schedule you must submit an initial payment of \$380: a \$190 two week security deposits and \$190 for two weeks of care).***
- Parent fee statements are sent out at the beginning of each month.
- Monthly and weekly childcare rates are not reduced for weeks containing scheduled holidays, or closures due to weather.
- Families are still responsible for payments when their child does not attend on a scheduled day.
- Reimbursements for illnesses, hospitalization or surgery will be reviewed on a case by case basis with approval from the Executive Director.
- Payments must be received by the Thursday/Friday **before** the next billing week. All child care fees are due in advance of service.
- Checks/money orders should be written to the "Cohoes Community Center" and it must include the child's full name and program in the memo of the check. There is a \$35 fee for all returned checks. We reserve the right to request cash, money order or credit card payments after two returned checks.
- If payments are not received, the Day Care Director or Child Care Registrar will contact families to discuss delinquent accounts. If payments cannot be made in a timely manner your child care will be terminated, your security deposit will be applied to the outstanding balance and you will be responsible for the remaining balance. The Cohoes Community Center will review accounts that are delinquent. Unpaid accounts will be turned over to a collection agency if not settled within 30 days of termination and are subject to small claims court.

**FAMILIES RECEIVING SUBSIDIES:** A School Age slot will not be held until we receive a voucher from your caseworker. Once the voucher is received, families will then be given 5 business days to pay the two week security deposit, a minimum of one week in advance and a \$10 registration fee.

- Parent fee statements are sent out at the beginning of each month.
- Payments must be received by the Thursday or Friday before the next billing week.
- Checks/money orders should be written to the "Cohoes Community Center" and it must include the child's full name and program in the memo of the check. There is a \$35 fee for all returned checks. We reserve the right to request cash, money order or credit card payments after two returned checks.
- If parent fee is not paid by Friday, a phone call will be made to you reminding you that a payment must be made.
- If no payment is received, you will receive a letter stating that you must have your past due balance to avoid termination of care.
- If payment is not received by the due date set forth, your child/children will be terminated from the program(s) effective that immediately, your security deposit will be applied to the outstanding balance and your account will be reviewed by our accounting office.
- The Cohoes Community Center will review accounts that are delinquent. Unpaid accounts will be turned over to a collection agency if not settled within 30 days of termination and are subject to small claims court.

### **Forms of Payment Accepted**

Payments will be accepted at site on Fridays by check only, you must hand your payment to the Site Director or Assistant only. Cash and credit card payments can be made at the Cohoes Community Center at any time during regular business hours. We also accept credit card payments by phone. We accept payment in the form of personal checks, money order, cashier's check, cash, debit, Visa, and MasterCard. When paying in person, please be sure to ask for a receipt and put the child's name on the payment.

### **Sibling Discount**

If you enroll more than one child into the daycare and or school age program (attending at the same time), there is a 10% discount applied to the oldest child. We reserve the right to eliminate discounts with a 30 day notice.

### **Tuition Refund**

The Cohoes Community Center does not refund tuition fees for sick days. Reimbursements for illnesses are allotted if hospitalization or surgery occurs. Credit will be applied with the proper documentation from your child's physician up to a total of one consecutive week of care. We reserve the right to change this policy with a 30 day notice.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

If families chose to withdraw their child from the program, a two-week written notice by the parent/guardian is required to be on file. If a proper two-week notice is not given the school age program will retain your security deposit.

### **Sick Policies for Families Receiving Subsidies**

If your family receives subsidies from the Department of Social Services, your child is allotted up 24 sick days every 6 months (Jan. - July). Should your child exceed the allotted absences offered by DSS, your account will be charged up to \$38.00 per day per exceeded absence. If you sign up for holidays/half days/vacation weeks and do not attend you will be charged the full cost of care.

### **Workforce Development Institute**

Do you need help paying for your child care? The Workforce Development Institute provides education, training, and economic and development programs that support working families across New York State. The Child Care Facilitated Enrollment Program was created through the initiative of organized labor and is funded through the NYS Senate. It provides child care subsidies for children under 13 years of age to income eligible working families in the Capital Region. Contact the Troy office at 518-272-3500 to complete a Prescreening/Intake.

# **SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM**

## **Family Handbook Acknowledgement**

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center.

This handbook maybe updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We welcome and encourage comments or questions on any issues addressed in this handbook. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received and reviewed the Cohoes Community Center School Age Program Family Handbook. It is my responsibility to follow all policies and procedures set forth in the Family handbook. I understand that the handbook may not cover every issue that arises and as a result creates the need for open communication between school age staff and families.

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**Parent/Guardian Signature**

**Date**

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**Child Care Director/Administrator**

**Date**