

# Cream of the Crop Learning Center



*Parent Handbook*

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## Who We Are



*Cream of the Crop Learning Center has been located on Center Street in Deer Park for over 20 years. Cream of the Crop and COTC Inc. is owned and operated by Lobo and Dianne Del Sol.*



## **Our Mission**

*It is our goal to provide a happy, healthy, safe, and stimulating environment with many activities designed for your child, while under the loving guidance of adults who care. Your child will have opportunities to develop good cognitive skills, become a creative and sensitive individual, learn social competence, and develop a strong body, a sound mind, and a great spirit.*

*As your child's family away from home, we want your child to feel safe and secure, and we want you to feel welcome at any time. Your involvement in our program ensures a cooperative effort which leads to a positive impact on the development of your child.*

*Welcome to the Cream of the Crop Family!*

## Our Philosophy

Cream of the Crop Learning Center's philosophy is based upon understanding the importance of the developmental make up of children's growth. We follow the Early Childhood Developmental Philosophy to consider what is developmentally appropriate for children at each age. The curriculum reflects these needs by offering opportunities for creative expression, constructive play, social and emotional interaction, communication skills, physical development, practice in reasoning, and logical thought and the encouragement of decision making, risk taking, and responsibility. The primary arena in which learning takes place is play. Children learn by doing. Children are given the freedom to explore, experiment and make choices through carefully supervised work-play. Self-esteem and individuality are nurtured while providing children with a sense of belonging and acceptance.



## Goals and Purpose

1. To provide quality childcare for the community in a Christian atmosphere.
2. To maintain a safe, healthy, and stimulating environment for growing children.
3. To foster self-control, self-esteem, and a sense of competence in the child.
4. To use positive guidance techniques with the children.
5. To assist and encourage children's physical and emotional development.
6. To enhance the child's natural creative abilities.
7. To promote children's social skills through teacher-directed and self-selected activities.
8. To establish a foundation that promotes academic achievement.



# Operational Policies

## *Hours*

Cream of the Crop Learning Center is open Monday through Friday 5:45 AM to 6:30 PM.

## *Late-Pick Up*

We charge \$1.00 per minute for all children left in our care after 6:30 PM.

## *Holidays*

The center will be closed on the following holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Good Friday
3. Memorial Day
4. July 4<sup>th</sup>
5. Labor Day
6. Thanksgiving and the day after
7. Christmas Eve
8. Christmas Day

Any holidays falling on weekends will be determined on an as-needed basis.

Full tuition is charged for weeks that include a holiday

When DPISD is closed due to weather issues, we will be closed.

## *Tuition*

The tuition is due on Fridays prior to the week of care. You will be charged a late fee of \$20 for tuition not received by 6:30 PM on Friday.

We have several methods by which you can pay your tuition. We offer Tuition Express which allows us to automatically debit your tuition from either a bank account or credit/debit card. You can also pay in person at the office via card, check, cash or money order, online through My Procure, at the check-in computer, and by phone.

**There is a \$35 fee for all returned checks. After 2 returned checks, tuition will be paid with cash or money order only.**

## *Registration Fees*

There is a non-refundable, one time only registration fee per family.

## *Withdrawals*

We ask for a 2 week notice to be presented in writing or on our “Withdrawal Form” if you are going to need to remove your child from Cream of the Crop. If a 2 weeks’ notice cannot be given, the parent is responsible for paying the 2 weeks of tuition, regardless of attendance.

### *Vacation Credit*

Each family will be eligible after 3 months of consecutive enrollment for a 1 week vacation per calendar year. Tuition will be paused for one week. Other than the vacation week, tuition is due regardless of attendance.

Vacation requests must be turned in to the office 2 weeks prior to the requested date.

### *Arrival and Departure*

No child will be admitted prior to 5:45 AM. Parents must accompany children from the car into the building. Children must be escorted to their classrooms and left with the teacher. **It is a state law that all children are signed in and out by a parent/guardian each day.** Parents must sign children in when arrive and out when they leave from the front computer.

Our school day starts at 8:30 AM each day. If your child is going to be late for any reason, please contact the center by 9:00 AM.

At the close of the day, parents must come to the classroom to receive their children and their belongings. Parents should be aware of all notices on the child's hallway hook.

## *Release of Children*

Children will only be released to a parent or persons authorized by parents. Persons authorized to pick children will be required to present their driver's license for identification. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the authorized names current. Parents can review authorized persons from their My Procure Account.

We must have authorization from the parent in writing to allow anyone other than those listed on the pick-up form to pick up a child. If authorization is done over the phone, we will call the parent back to verify caller and call.

**If a child is not to be released to a parent listed, it must be pursuant to a custody order and a copy of the court order must be given to the office. If this document is not in the child's permanent file, we will be obligated to release the child to either parent.**

## *Sick Policy*

Children will not be allowed in care if any symptoms of illness are apparent. If your child becomes ill while in care, your child will be immediately isolated from the other children and you will be contacted. Your child will not be able to return to the center until they have been free from any symptoms for at least 24 hours, unless a note by a doctor is given that they are able to return.

## *Medication*

We will administer medication to your child with proper signed medication forms only. All medications must be clearly marked with your child's full name and must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication will be administered ONLY in accordance with the label directions. Non-prescription medications must be brought in new, unopened containers, marked with the child's name and be dated on the day the medication is brought in.

## *Emergency/Accident Procedures*

In the case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact either parent. If the injury is serious, we will call for a paramedic immediately. In cases of small accidents (scraped knees, etc), the staff will administer first aid treatment. All such accidents will be reported on an accident report form and have the parent sign when they arrive.

Since emergency situations can never be expected, it is imperative that all home and office numbers are kept current. You can verify contact information and emergency contacts through your My Procure Account.

Tornado and fire drills are practiced routinely. If we need to evacuate the facility, we will go to the City of Deer Park Civic Center on San Augustine.

## *Discipline and Guidance*

The purpose of all guidance at Cream of the Crop is to help children become increasingly self-managing and socially responsible. We are committed to helping children learn to express and manage their feelings, cooperate with other children and negotiate their own conflicts. Only positive, non-punitive disciplinary methods are used, the staff fully recognizes the limitations of a young child's ability to manage emotions and control reaction. When restrictions are necessary, they will be clearly define and consistently maintained. At NO time will a child be physically punished, threatened, or intimidated.

All guidance and discipline will be consistent with the purpose of development self-confidence as well as self-control. This is accomplished by providing a nurturing and accepting environment with teachers who are firm, but fair and sensitive to all the needs of each individual child.

In some instances, in order to help a distressed child regain their self-control, they will be removed from the situation and allowed private time to quiet themselves before a reassuring adult seeks to help them reenter the classroom activity. Likewise, there are occasions when behavior warrants denial of a child's participation in an activity or outing. We reserve the right to make these decisions as needed.

## *Nutrition*

The center provides breakfast, served between 5:45 AM and 8:00 AM daily.

**No breakfast may be brought into the center after 8:00 AM. Please feed your child before arriving if they will be checked in after 8:00 AM.**

A morning and afternoon snack is provided and lunch is served at 11:00 AM daily

On Fridays, each child must bring a sack lunch from home. This must be food that does not need to be heated. This is a requirement for all children ages 12 months through 12 years.

## *Rest Time*

Children will lay down from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM each day. Parents will provide mats which will be sanitized on a daily basis. Your child may also bring a small blanket and travel pillow.

**Please be considerate of the scheduled nap time for your classroom and try to avoid bringing your child in during that time. It can be very disruptive for the other children trying to sleep.**

## Our Programs

Cream of the Crop provides various programs that range from Infants through 12 years of age.

At our center, we teach the children to say the Blessing or prayer before eating their snacks or lunch. This begins in our infant room and continues through our afterschool program.

Our curriculum is created in house and can be modified for all age groups. We focus on all learning areas, including but not limited to, days of the week, weather, holidays, language arts, nursery rhymes, music and movement, arts and crafts, manipulatives, large and small motor development, math, shapes, letters, numbers, and handwriting.

### *Infants – (0-12 Months)*

A nurturing environment with attention to the needs of each individual child is the basis of our Infant room. We have a maximum capacity of 10 infants with 2 teachers. We provide a daily Cuddle Gram that provides essential information about your child's day and communication between the teachers and the parents.

We also provide a comfortable chair for any nursing mothers to use. We provide a formula of our choice, but you may bring your own or provide expressed breastmilk for your child.

### *Piglets – (12-17 months)*

Our Piglets are pre-toddlers, ages 12 months to 17 months, and are the youngest group in our Winnie The Pooh classroom, having just graduated from the infant room. We have a maximum of 5 children in this room. We like to keep our class sizes smaller and allow for more individualized development and one-on-one attention. This class follows a loosely written, teacher-directed schedule allowing for play based learning. The pre-toddlers learn to self-feed and use a 'sippy-cup' and to sit at a table together at meal and snack time.

### *Roos – (18-24 Months)*

Our Roos are toddlers, ages 18 months to 24 months. We have a maximum of 9 children in this room. We like to keep our class sizes smaller and allow for more individualized development and one-on-one attention. This class follows a loosely written, teacher-directed schedule allowing for play based learning. The pre-toddlers learn to self-feed using utensils and are transitioning from a 'sippy-cup' to a small Dixie cup.

### *Tiggers – (2 – 2.5 Years Old)*

Our Tigger classroom houses our youngest group of 2 year olds. This room is designed with a nurturing and enriching environment that provides a structure that allows students to grow and learn while feeling safe and comfortable. Students are given daily opportunities to explore and learn through age

appropriate toys and projects. Children in the Tigger Classroom are encouraged to try and use their words to express their needs and wants. The activities in the Tigger room are developed to create learning experiences and social experiences through play, projects, and activities.

### *Disney – (2.5 – 3 Years Old)*

Busy, controlled, chaos. That's what you'll see when coming into a class of two year olds. The centers and activities are more defined than in the toddler class, but play still defines all they do. Circle times are long in the morning allowing for more time for literacy and group music activities.

Potty-training is a big part of this program as children show readiness. Parents are requested to provide a 'pull-up' type diaper or training underwear to allow for ease of self-help. Teachers are cheerleaders for this process and we celebrate every success!

Introductions are made of letters as they naturally occur in the environment and labels are found everywhere. It is in this room that we begin to show how written word becomes spoken word. Language is strongly encouraged with more running conversations throughout the day. Self-control is also a large part of the curriculum that we teach with our Disney Class.

### *Dino-Mites (3 Years Old)*

Preschool is an exciting adventure in your child's life and our teachers are prepared to foster your child's early academic experience. Our curriculum supports children by building their confidence in our classrooms through hands-on exploration while developing independence. Our teachers are committed to creating a safe and secure learning environment where children feel comfortable to explore and take risks. Our daily schedule provides flexibility and consistency, as well as a good mix of physical play, social/emotional development, and early academic lessons.

Our comfy atmosphere provides your child's "home away from home" by fostering friendships, supporting emerging emotions, building healthy beginnings, sparking curiosity, and promoting language development.

### *Dr. Seuss (4 – 5 Years Old)*

Our Pre-K program adheres to the TEKS program that is used in DPISD. We have a Pre-K Graduation at the end of each school year and all children attending Kindergarten in the fall will be invited to join us in this celebration. This is the last year before the formal education begins and we fill it with developmentally appropriate kindergarten readiness activities. It is important that we not DO kindergarten in this class, but are intentional in

firming the foundation for kindergarten to be built upon.

We work to stay current with what skills and abilities kindergarten teachers are looking for in incoming students. Literacy centers and lesson plans are deliberate as we include letters and sounds in this curriculum.

In our Dr. Seuss Room, children are encouraged to explore, create, and learn independently as well as in a cooperative setting. Activities take place in individual, small, and large group settings. Some are teacher directed, others are student lead. Each week, our curriculum includes sight words, number recognition, counting, letters, reading, shapes, and colors. We continue to build upon the lessons learned in our Dino-Mite room, as the children begin to write letters, numbers, and their names free hand without the need for tracing.

Hours of observation take place in this environment as we maintain the commitment to provide each child what they need to be a successful learner. We respect all learning styles and know that there are no two children that learn at the same rate.

### *COTC Clubhouse (Afterschool 5-12 Years Old)*

We provide before and after school care for children age 5 through 12. Children who are dropped off before 7 AM, are transported by van to local elementary schools. At the end of the day, our vans

return to pick them up. Upon arrival, children are given outside time to play and explore while waiting for all of the children to arrive.

**You must notify the office of any transportation changes prior to 2:00 PM or a fee of \$5 will be applied to your account.**

All of our school children are broken down into smaller groups so as to allow for more age appropriate play and more one-on-one homework assistance from our teachers. Our teachers work with each child daily to make sure homework and reading assignments are completed.

Ages 9-12 have their own club, referred to as the "Liberty Kids". This group frequently participates in advanced activities from learning about maintenance on a vehicle to movie appreciation, various sports, learning about our great nation, and erecting a Liberty Pole on July 4th.

We also provide a Summer Camp program that runs from the first Monday after the end of the school term until the Friday before school begins again in the Fall. We take weekly field trips, engage in games, crafts, and activities, and work on STEM learning throughout the summer.

## ADA Compliance Statement

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), Titles I and II of the ADA of 1990, and Sections 503 & 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Cream of the Crop will not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or family, because of a physical or mental impairment with regard to any position or program for which that person is qualified.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the American with Disabilities Act, you can contact the US Department of Justice at 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383 (TDD). You can also find resources through the ADA Homepage such as technical assistance materials, enforcement information including settlement agreements, links to other Federal agencies and updates on new and pending ADA requirements:

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

We love each and every child as if they were our own. We shower them with love and attention and make them feel like they are in a home-like setting. We pride ourselves on not being a “big-box” daycare and are able to provide personal care for each child.

We know that there are many options available when it comes to the care of your child. We would just like to take this opportunity to say “Thank You!” for choosing Cream of the Crop.

We are proud of the services and care that we offer to our families, and we are so happy that you have joined our COTC family. Cream of the Crop has an “open door” policy. As a partner in the care for your child, we are always interested in your comments regarding the care and education that your child receives. Our goal is to work with you to make your experience here and your child’s experience the best!

### **Contact Us:**

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