

# Cocos Lanford Creche

&

# Montessori School

Coco's Childcare



## Parent Handbook

## Cocos Lanford Creche & Montessori School

Lanford

Blackrock

Co. Dublin

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## WELCOME

Cocos Lanford Creche & Montessori School is committed to providing a high quality, accessible and affordable childcare service to the local community. All aspects of child development are encompassed in our curriculum in order to ensure the development of the whole child. We are notified to and inspected by Tusla - The Child and Family Agency.

Children are provided with opportunities to explore, be creative and develop social and co-operative skills in a safe, developmentally appropriate and nurturing environment.

Please let us know if there are any changes to the information provided by you so we can ensure our records are up-to-date. (e.g. your address, phone numbers, change in those authorised to collect your child).

We endeavour to be as inclusive as possible and therefore encourage parents to share with us any cultural festivals that you celebrate so that we can incorporate these into our curriculum.

The fundamental rights of each child who attends Cocos Lanford Creche & Montessori School are recognised:

- \*To be valued as an individual
- \*To be treated with dignity and respect
- \*To be in a safe and loving environment

Thank you for choosing our service.

*Sheena Clarke*

**Manager**

## **MANAGEMENT**

Our Service is managed by Sheena Clarke and Hollie Boucher (Assistant Manager)

## **Mission Statement**

At Coco's Crèche and Montessori School, we are committed to providing excellent standards of care for the holistic development of your child. Our mission statement is to prepare and provide the most natural and life enhancing environment for the child, observing the children and continually adapting the environment to support the fulfilment of the child's greatest potential - physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We strive to provide a happy, secure and caring environment, for the purpose of inner development and learning.

## **Aim**

Our ultimate aim is to provide a childcare programme, which promotes optimal development for each child, supports parents, upholds best practices of early childhood education and promote collaborations that help all children realise their potential.

## **Ethos**

The ethos of our service is very apparent to all who visit. Children, parents and staff will regard this service as an extension of the home. Creating a "home

from home" environment. We believe in ensuring that children who attend this service have the opportunity to experience:

- Spontaneous expression
- Esteem as an individual
- Dignity and autonomy
- Self-confidence and zest in learning
- A stable learning and caring environment
- Sociability, friendship and co-operation of others
- Equal opportunities irrespective of gender, race and disability
- Culture diversity
- Respect as a unique individual with rights

## REGISTRATION

At registration, you will be asked to complete a number of forms. Once payment has been received you will be asked to give an estimated start date. Three months prior to the estimated start date, a definitive start date must now be given in writing. The new date cannot extend beyond two weeks of the estimated start date. If such notice is not received the estimated date is taken as the definitive start date.

You will also be asked to read this Parent Handbook and agree to adhere to its content.

## OUR SERVICES

- We are open from 7.45am - 6.00pm
- We offer a service to children from aged 4 months to school age
- We are offering the FREE pre-school programme for children qualifying for the ECCE scheme ( extended to 2 years programme from September 2016)
- The Free Preschool programme operates over 38 weeks. A calendar will be given to parents at the beginning of the school year.

Please note: THE CALENDAR SUBJECT TO CHANGE due to inclement weather, in-service courses, family emergency, and other emergencies.

- Please be advised that the ECCE scheme will only be offered as part of the full day service and not as a stand alone service

### **Our Facilities:**

Home away from home, small built with spacious rooms and all three rooms are bright.

The environment is designed in such a way as to meet the developing needs of each individual child. The children are guided through a range of educational and play activities at their own pace. Our staff team create a positive and secure environment where children feel confident in exploring their surroundings.

### **OUR AIMS**

The aim of our qualified team is to provide a high quality, play based and child-centred approach to learning, where each individual child is valued for his/her uniqueness.

We believe our centre will provide a home away from home environment for your child, which is safe and stimulating, while offering parents every opportunity to be involved in the care of their children.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Our ethos and practice values diversity and promotes equality.
- We aim to select friendly, dependable and professional staff through our rigorous recruitment and selection policy.
- To ensure that the developmental, educational, emotional and social needs of each child are met daily.
- The voice of the child is heard, respected and contributes to our programme.

- We aim to deliver a quality preschool curriculum which addresses children's well-being, identity and belonging, communication and exploring and thinking, along the principles of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
- We aim to make our centre accessible to all members of the community, regardless of race, gender, family status, age, disability, or religious belief.
- We aim to work with 'Síolta' The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, by following its 12 principles of quality and the 16 standards within its framework.
- We operate within the Childcare (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and The National Standards for Pre-Schools.
- The environment is planned and well organised in a way that suits the different needs of individual children, while keeping in mind the importance of Safety and Hygiene
- Parents are actively welcomed at our Centre at all times. We endeavor to share information and communicate with parents directly, in order to give feedback at the end of each day and to ensure that they are made aware of on-going developments in policies and procedures.
- We wish to promote a positive atmosphere where children, staff and parents are treated with respect.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

To help us provide a quality, safe and happy environment we have developed a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. All staff are required to adhere to these policies and they are available to parents on request.

## **ADMISSIONS**

- Parents/carers are required to complete the registration form. Please complete this form fully. All sections should be completed and signed. Please

note that you must provide the dates of immunisations on the form. If you cannot access the dates you should confirm this in writing. If your child is not vaccinated you should put a note to this effect on the registration form. Children that have not been vaccinated attend at their own risk.

- Your place will not be confirmed until a non-refundable registration fee is paid and one month fees in advance.
- A waiting list is established when all places are taken up and the child at the top of the list is given first available place depending on availability for the type of place required.
- We operate an open door policy especially during the settling in period. The child may stay for a shorter day until the staff and parents agree the child has settled in.
- Children with additional needs and disabilities are welcome.
- Any fees paid prior to commencement are non-refundable if written notice of one month is not given
- We offer the free pre-school programme for children eligible for the scheme. Children outside this age range can avail of a place based on parents paying the appropriate fee.
- In the event of places being over-subscribed, the Manager reserves the right to select places in order of application.
- The main point of contact for parents is Sheena Clarke and Hollie Boucher
- Within the room setting each child is allocated a key person who will carry out observations on your child.
- We reserve the right to terminate our services due to extenuating circumstances

- Parents should familiarise themselves with our policies and procedures; they will be reviewed and changed accordingly to incorporate any new developments from the Tusla, the Child and family Agency.
- No uniform is required. Children wear suitable, comfortable clothes, ideal for art work and outdoor messy play. (No 'good' clothes please). Velcro shoes are preferable and crocs or flip-flops are not permitted.

The following are required with the child's name clearly written on all items

- A change of clothes at the beginning of the year. This can be brought in a bag each day when children settle
- Creams, wipes and nappies
- Wellingtons, coat, hat (if weather requires)
- Sun cream, sun hat (if weather requires)
- A small lunch box containing a healthy snack

**Make sure everything is clearly labelled with your child's name**

### **Procedures for Children with Allergies**

When parents start their children at the crèche they are asked if their child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the registration form.

**If a child has an allergy, a risk assessment is completed to detail the following:**

- The allergen (i.e. the substance, material or living creature the child is allergic to such as nuts, eggs, bee stings, cats etc).
- The nature of the allergic reactions e.g. anaphylactic shock reaction, including rash, reddening of skin, swelling, breathing problems etc.
- What to do in case of allergic reactions, any medication used and how it is to be used (e.g. EpiPen).
- Control measures - such as how the child can be prevented from contact with the allergen.

- This form is kept in the child's personal file and a copy is displayed where staff can see it.
- Parents train staff in how to administer special medication in the event of an allergic reaction.
- If a child is identified to have a nut allergy, other parents are made aware so that no nut or nut products are accidentally brought in, for example to a party.

### **Life Saving Medication and Invasive Treatments**

Adrenaline injections (Epipens) for anaphylactic shock reactions (caused by allergies to nuts, eggs etc) or invasive treatments such as rectal administration of Diazepam (for epilepsy).

#### **We must have:**

- A letter from the child's GP/consultant stating the child's condition and what medication if any is to be administered;
- Written consent from the parent or guardian allowing staff to administer medication; and
- Proof of training in the administration of such medication by the child's GP, a district nurse, children's nurse specialist or a community paediatric nurse.
- A copy of such proof may be required by our insurance provider for appraisal so that our insurance can be extended if necessary.

**All records are stored securely and confidentially**

### **ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

If your child is involved in an accident or incident a record will be written up and shared with you. You will be asked to sign these records. Staff members are trained in First Aid and will treat minor injuries. If a child needs to attend hospital a staff member will travel and parents will be contacted immediately.

## ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

### Attendance

It is essential to the efficient running of The Service that you inform management if your child is unable to attend the service. Please follow up with a telephone call to inform the Manager when the child will be returning. A register of the times and days that children attend is kept.

### Arrivals

- Parents must accompany their child to their room and make sure they have settled
- Parents must accompany their child on departure and ensure safety is a priority at all times
- Please ensure that all external doors are securely closed for the safety of all the children when you leave. You will be admitted to the service by a staff member
- If a child will not be attending we request that parents advise us.

### Collection Policy

- Parents/guardians must collect their child by the agreed collection time. Parents will be asked to give the names of at least two other people who are authorised to collect the child. If the parent is late arriving to collect the child the Manager will endeavour to contact the parent. In the event of being unable to contact the parent the Manager will contact the other named persons to collect the child.
- Children will not be released into the care of a person under the age of 18 years or to a person who appears to be incapable of caring for the child. Should this situation arise the staff will contact an authorised collector. If no one is available to collect the child then the Manager will contact the Tusla social work child protection team.

- We ask that parents do not collect their child from the service while under the influence of alcohol. This can lead to embarrassment and worry within the team. If parents feel that this situation may arise they should arrange for an authorised collector to collect their child.
- We **MUST** be informed, in writing, if anybody other than the persons named on the collection details are to collect your child. Your child will **NOT** be allowed leave without written permission from a parent)
- Please ensure that you park safely and do not cause an obstruction, even for a very short time.
- In the event of a parent collecting another child a prior arrangement must be made.
- In order to comply with childcare legislation which determines the staff/child ratios and in the best interest of the children (children can become distressed when no-one comes for them when all the others have been collected) it is important that children are collected on time from the service.

### **Late Collection of Children**

#### **Children must be collected promptly at the end of their session**

We understand that sometimes a parent is unavoidably delayed when coming to collect their child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible. Parents in this situation must contact the Manager to say that they will be late and arrange with staff what to do. Children are only released to individuals named by the parent.

**Late Collection Fees:** Management reserves the right to collect a late collection fee for persistent lateness. €1 for every minute (e.g. €5 for every 5 minute that you are late)

### **Early Collection of Children**

We ask that parents let us know if you will be picking up your child early so that we can have the child ready for you and to minimise disrupting the rest of the group.

### **Late Drop Off**

We ask parents to drop children off at the correct time to avoid disrupting the group once they have started and so that your child benefits from our full daily programme.

### **Separated and Divorced Parents**

Married parents are automatically joint guardians of their children. Neither separation nor divorce changes this.

- We cannot refuse either parent to collect their child unless a court order is in place.
- We ask that parents give us information on any person that **does not** have legal access to the child.
- Where custody of a child is granted to one parent, we would ask you to clarify the circumstances with us. This information will remain confidential and will only be made known to the relevant staff. If there is any legal documents i.e. custody order, barring order we would ask you to provide us with a copy to keep on file.

### **Attempted collection by a parent who has been denied access in a court order**

- A parent who has been denied access to a child through a court order will not be permitted on to the premises
- If the parent who has been denied access becomes threatening or violent and insists on removing the child from the service this will be viewed as trespassing. The service will in this event contact the Local Gardai.

By law, an unmarried mother is the sole guardian of a child born outside of marriage. Unless the mother agrees to sign a statutory declaration, an unmarried father must apply to the court in order to become a legal guardian of his child.

## CAR PARKING

- We cannot accept responsibility for cars parked, or damage done while parking.
- We ask parents to show consideration to our neighbor's and observe local speed limits.
- Parents must accompany their child into the service.
- We request that parents do not park in front of neighboring property or cause obstruction when parking.
- Parents are advised not to leave their car running while dropping off or collecting a child.
- We suggest that parents do quick drop off/and pick up to avoid road and parking congestion.

## BIRTHDAYS

Parents may supply a cake and party snacks for their child's birthday.

The service will supply a cake for your child's birthday.

Parents will be required to send in a list of ingredients for homemade cakes as under legislation childcare providers are required to advise parents of allergens contained in food stuffs including homemade cakes.

Parents are asked not to give out birthday invitations in the service unless all children are included. This rule exists to save hurt feelings when a child notices

that invitations are being handed out and they didn't get one. Thank you for your cooperation.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

It is widely accepted that children develop holistically and to enhance their whole development we must provide them with a comprehensive programme that gives them active learning experiences. All children should be supported in their learning and their experiences extended in a variety of ways that are appropriate to their stage of development.

The Childcare (Preschool Services) Amendment Regulations, 2006 apply to the operation of a childcare service since September 2007. Part II Section 5 of the 2006 Regulations together with the Whole Child Perspective as set out in the National Children's Strategy are the references used in relation to child development.

The Service is committed to developing a curriculum that incorporates child development, creates a child centred play based environment, which enables young children to actively pursue their own learning. For more information please see our full policy.

## CHILD PROTECTION

We have a duty to care for every child attending our service. We will follow *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Our Duty to Care* published by the Department of Health and Children in this regard. A full and comprehensive child protection policy is available on request. This details our responsibilities and outlines the reporting procedures that we use if we are concerned about the welfare of a child. The Child Protection Designated Liaison Person is *Sheena Clarke*

## CHILDRENS BEHAVIOUR

At The Service we believe that children should be encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in a suitably planned environment. The children will know what is expected of them, and where clear limits are set, appropriate

to their age and stage of development and any special needs they may have.

- Children have a "say" and are involved in agreeing the rules and these are presented as a chart in the classroom
- We believe in children's ability to control their own lives, to make choices and accept responsibility for their actions
- We use a positive approach to behaviour management and encourage good behaviour
- We encourage children to respect themselves, each other and property. We aim to provide a happy, caring environment with challenging activities
- In the case of a particular incident or persistent unacceptable behaviour we always discuss ways forward with parents
- Any form of corporal punishment will never be used. Children will be respected at all times and will never be humiliated or isolated.

## CHILDREN'S CHARTER

- ✓ Children's welfare and their rights to secure, healthy and happy childhood are paramount.
- ✓ The experiences children receive in their early years are critically important in terms of future development.
- ✓ Children are entitled to expect that all adults will respect, uphold and preserve their rights and to ensure that their feelings and wishes are taken into account.
- ✓ Children should have the opportunity to make choices and develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions appropriate to their age.

- ✓ Children, parents and carers should not be discriminated against, particularly in relation to colour, age, race, religion, gender, disability medical conditions or background.
- ✓ Parents should be recognised and respected as children's first and continuing educators.

## CHILDCARE CURRICULUM

We are committed to offering the children in its care a comprehensive play based curriculum based on the principles of free play

*"Encouraging each child's holistic development and learning requires the implantation of a verifiable, broad-based, documented and flexible curriculum or programme"* Siolta - the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

### Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is play-based and will follow the child's interests to support their learning and development. Children are involved in all aspects of our planning. Through the emergent curriculum children will develop a strong sense of what they like, what they know and what they would like to know. In this way they develop a strong sense of self and positive dispositions towards learning. Children are encouraged to explore their environment, be creative and learn from each other. This is supported by practitioners in partnership with parents;

Through our curriculum we promote:

- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- A sense of responsibility and self-worth
- A sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Independence and adaptability
- Co-operation with others
- A sense of community respect for the rights and needs of others
- Concentration and persistence in completing a task

- Initiative and self-motivation

### **Aistear**

*Aistear* is Ireland's curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. It contains information for parents and practitioners that will help them plan for and provide challenging and enjoyable learning experiences that can enable all children to grow and develop as competent and confident learners in the context of loving relationships with others. *Aistear* describes the types of learning and development that are important for children in their early years, and offers ideas and suggestions on how these might be nurtured. We use the *Aistear* guidelines to help plan our curriculum.

### **Montessori**

The aim of Montessori Education is to prepare the child for life. The teacher introduces to each child the skills and qualities necessary to live life to the full in an independent, safe and happy way. It also develops the child to their full potential. In the Montessori classroom, the children explore the world through their senses and their own activity. They develop a love of learning and enjoy working, which hopefully will stay with them throughout life. Montessori is an education for life, a learning process environment. Montessori is about learning to balance responsibility with freedom of choice. It offers children the opportunity to realize their potential, in a non-competitive environment and seeks to promote in them:

- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- A sense of responsibility and self-worth
- A sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Independence and adaptability
- Co-operation with others
- A sense of community respect for the rights and needs of others
- Concentration and persistence in completing a task
- Initiative and self-motivation

### **COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

We love compliments! You are welcome to make any suggestions, comments or complaints to the Manager. We believe that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We

will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the service. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach. If this does not achieve the desired result you should put your complaint in writing to the Manager or the Board of Directors.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

We respect the right for all information, records and observations to be treated with respect and with due attention to confidentiality and privacy. Information will not be shared with third parties, unless required under law or Child Protection Guidelines. For more information please see our full policy.

### DATA PROTECTION

Under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 The Service has appointed Sheena Clarke as a "Data Controller" to manage the storage of personal information about staff, children and families in its computerised and manual records.

Name of Data Controller (person in charge of data)	Sheena Clarke
Name of Person(s) with access to children's files  Some children's files all staff will have access to. Others will only be accessible by data controller above	Sheena Clarke Hollie Boucher
Name of person with access to employee/student files	Sheena Clarke and Hollie Boucher
Name of person(s) with access to PIP files	Sheena Clarke, Hollie Boucher and Cara Tiernan

### FEES

Free Preschool Programme (ECCE)

We operate the Free Pre-School Programme in Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE Scheme) under the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Eligible children enrolled in full childcare services will receive free pre-school provision of 3 hours per day, 5 days a week over a 38 week period (term time).

#### Non ECCE Preschool Programme

Children, not eligible for the free preschool year will incur a fee of €1,300

- For all other fees the method of payment (monthly in advance)

Fees are as follows: €1,300 per month for Full Time Care

- No credit facilities are available. All fees must be paid in a timely manner
- A receipt will be issued upon request.

#### Reviewing Fees

- Fees are reviewed in annually by the management.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers will be informed by giving one months notice of the increase in fees.

#### Payments in relation to Holidays or Illness of the Child/Children

- Parents/Guardians/Carers will be required to pay for any days/ weeks that their child/children do not attend the Service.
- In the case of a long term, medically certified illness of a child, parents/guardians are advised to keep in contact with the Manager on a regular basis. Further arrangements will be discussed with the Parent/Guardian.
- There is no reduction in fees for Public Holidays.

### **Closure in Exceptional Circumstances**

In the event of the closure of The Service in exceptional circumstances, that is beyond the control of the Management i.e. adverse weather conditions

### **Late Collection of Child/Children from the Pre-school**

Parents/Guardians should note that due to legislative requirements under the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006 and *Children First - Child Protection Guidelines*. Two members of staff are required to be with the child/children.

- Parents/Guardians are advised to keep within their agreed time for collection of their child/children for the above reasons. The Service requests that all children should be collected by the designated time in order that the service may follow health and safety practices to ensure that the service may close safely.
- Please see the Collections and Arrivals Policy and Procedure

### **Non Payment of Fees**

- Non payment of fees may result in loss of place for your child.

### **FIRE SAFETY**

The following legislation governs fire safety The Fire Services Act, 1981, the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006 - Section 27, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

We will ensure that they comply with all the relevant legislation. We will also ensure we follow the 'Guide to Fire Safety in the Premises used for Pre-school Services' from the Department of the Environment. This is to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and parents who are in the service. The children will take part in regular monthly fire drills.

### **GARDA VETTING**

We will ensure that appropriate vetting of all staff, students and volunteers who have access to children is carried out. This requires getting references

from past employers and completing Garda vetting through the National Vetting Bureau (NVB).

## HEALTHY EATING

We are committed to promoting children's health and encouraging healthy eating habits.

### **Children are always supervised when eating and drinking snacks or meals**

- Each child should bring in healthy snacks
- Children are encouraged to feed themselves as appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Allergens in food we provide will be listed as under Food Information for Consumers (FIC) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (S.I. No. 489 of 2014)
- Children with allergies and special diets will be carefully supervised.
- We do not allow fizzy/fruit drinks, sweets, popcorn, chocolate, crisps, nuts or nut spreads.
- Some children are allergic to peanuts/nuts. We request that parents do not include these in their child's snack.
- Refrigerators will be maintained in a safe hygienic condition and fridge temperature monitored and recorded.
- Children will be encouraged to help tidy up after snack time.
- Healthy eating is promoted through an arrangement of activities for the children including play, stories, music, outings, cookery etc

## ILLNESS

You have entrusted your child into our care and we aim to ensure this environment is as healthy as possible and we want to minimise your child's risk of infection.

We encourage you to get your child immunised according to the HSE recommendations.

Children with the following cannot be admitted to the service:

- Acute symptoms of food poisoning/gastro-enteritis.
- An oral temperature over 37.5 degrees C. Children that have a temperature will not be allowed to come to the centre and will be sent home. If a child develops a temperature while at the centre and it will not come down the parents will be called and the child will be monitored and temperature recorded until their arrival.
- An earache.
- A deep, hacking cough.
- Severe congestion.
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing.
- An unexplained/contagious rash.
- Vomiting (in last 48 hours). Children who vomit in the centre and are sent home will not be allowed back into the centre until at least 48 hours has passed
- Diarrhoea (in last 48 hours).
- Complaints of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms
- An infectious /contagious condition.
- A child who is on an antibiotic for less than 24 hours

If a child becomes ill at the service parents will be contacted so that the child can be taken home. If, for some reason, the parent cannot collect they should organise an authorised adult to collect their child.

All children must provide up to date record of immunisations

Should there be an outbreak of any infectious disease or incident you will be informed.

### **Head Lice**

Head-lice are very common amongst children. All parents should check their child's head regularly for lice. If there is an outbreak you will be informed.

## **INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

We are committed to:

- Providing all children with the opportunity to access our service regardless of their ability but within the expertise and resources available and in accordance with the best interests of the child
- Respecting the rights of all children to participate in a quality children's programme.
- Providing a family-based approach which recognises that parents know their children best and want the best for their children
- Recognising that families are different and unique
- Recognising that all children learn in different ways and at different rates

## **MEDICATION**

**We will administer 'Calpol' and 'Nurofen' if a child has a temperature with the prior written permission of parents. This permission slip will be signed before the child commences in the service. This anti-febrile medication will only be administered in emergency situations. We will always endeavour to contact the parent/guardian if a child is ill so the child can be collected.**

Prescribed Medicines must only be brought into the Centre for administration by the staff when it is essential. This means where it would be detrimental to the child's health if it were not to be administered.

## **NATIONAL STANDARDS**

We operate within the Childcare (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006 and The National Standards for Pre-Schools (2010). Copies of both documents are available at the service for parents to read.

### **OBSERVATION / RECORD KEEPING AND ASSESSMENT**

Observation is a useful tool, which enables the assessment of a number of aspects of the early years setting that are directly relevant to the planning of the curriculum. In order to plan, prepare and organise for good quality care, adults need to observe children, review and evaluate the curriculum regularly and maintain systematic records.

By observing how children respond to activities staff will be able to evaluate if the activities and resources they have provided meet the needs of all the children and helps them to plan a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum. Observations also enable staff to provide challenges and extensions so that each child is able to progress. All observations / records / assessments will be treated with confidentiality. Sharing observations with parents/carers strengthens the partnership between the home and the service, giving understanding and information and allowing staff and parents/carers to do their best for each child. Your children's records are available to view upon request.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is essential to early childhood development. Children learn social skills by interacting with other children, with adults, and even with objects and natural materials found in the environment. The outdoor environment exposes children to opportunities to explore, question, and develop theories about how things work. Negotiation, language, and cooperation are all skills that develop through a well planned outdoor curriculum. Outdoor play, physical activity and fresh air are important to children's overall health and wellbeing.

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily curriculum. We aim to ensure that children play outdoors every day. Our intention, through our outdoor programme is to enhance gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance and body awareness. It also gives children opportunities to socialise freely and use imagination and initiative. See also RISKY PLAY

### **RISKY PLAY**

A natural part of children's physical play involves engaging in play that is

challenging and somewhat risky. Providing opportunities for all children to encounter or create uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential hazards as part of their play is extremely beneficial to children's development. This does not mean putting children in danger of serious harm. Good risks and hazards in play provision are those that engage and challenge children, and support their growth, learning and development. These might include being in touch with the natural environment and loose materials that give children the chance to create and destroy constructions using their skill, creativity and imagination. Bad risks and hazards are those that are difficult or impossible for children to assess for themselves, and that have no obvious benefits.

In our setting we are aware of and alert to possible dangers, while recognising the importance of encouraging young children's sense of exploration and risk-taking. We maintain children's safety, while not unduly inhibiting their risk-taking.

### **Clothing**

It is important that children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activity. Parents are asked to ensure their children have the appropriate attire for the weather including hats and coats. Spare clothes and sun cream must be supplied by parents and everything should be labelled.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

We occasionally routinely take photographs or recordings of the children and these may be displayed within the service.

- If you **do not** want your child's photo to be taken please let us know
- Parents are only permitted to take photos or video record their own child at the discretion of the Manager
- You will be asked to sign a photo consent form upon registration

### **RESPECTING INDIVIDUALITY**

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity:

- ✓ We encourage children to celebrate difference and multiculturalism
- ✓ We encourage children to show respect for all cultures, religions, races, abilities, disabilities, and genders
- ✓ We help children to become empathetic and considerate to their peers
- ✓ We foster a sense of fairness and respect and we will challenge any discrimination
- ✓ We nurture each child's identity and self-concept
- ✓ We try to use our curriculum and equipment to encourage acceptance of all others, irrespective of cultural background
- ✓ Children will be discouraged from gender stereotyping
- ✓ Boys and girls are to have equal opportunity, and be actively encouraged to use all activities.
- ✓ Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/carers or staff/volunteers is unacceptable in our service
- ✓ We aim to show respect for and awareness of all major events in the lives of the children and families in the service and in the wider society.

## SECURITY

- Parents are requested not to admit anyone else into the service whilst entering or leaving unless they know them and to check that all doors are securely closed behind them, at all times
- Safety checks are done regularly to ensure that no child can leave the premises undetected

- We ask that all potential collectors be introduced to the Manager and key workers in advance
- If a child is being collected by anyone other than the parents or usual designated person, the staff must be informed. Please inform the person collecting your child that they will be required to provide identification, to confirm who they are. This is to ensure our children's safety
- Parents are asked to make sure that the gate is closed securely when bring and collecting their child.

## SETTLING-IN

Settling in period for Cocos Lanford Creche & Montessori is three days. The first day is for one hour the second day is for two to three hours and the third day is half a day where your child will have a sleep and dinner.

We hope that your child settles well in our service. In some cases this is the child's first experience away from parent(s), family members and home. It is our aim to make this transition from home to our centre as smooth as possible for you and your child. Parents are welcome to stay with their child while they are settling, and the length of each session will increase gradually over the first week to allow your child to adjust to their new environment.

- When you are leaving your child during the settling-in period, we would encourage you to say goodbye and go. An extended goodbye can distress children.
- We would discourage you (the parent/guardian) from "sneaking" out. Regardless of how upset your child is sneaking out only adds to their anxiety, increases fear of abandonment, and breaks down the child's sense of trust.
- Parents should be prepared to stay for the first session, if necessary. Staff will advise you on this matter.
- Children must be collected promptly at the time arranged with the room leader. Otherwise they may become anxious and be upset when you leave them the following day.

You are welcome to contact us at any time, if you have any anxieties or concerns.

These guidelines aim to help children and parents settle in happily to our centre, thus enabling the children to gain maximum benefit from their experience!

### **STAFF AND MANAGEMENT**

We have a rigorous recruitment and selection policy and all staff have been through Garda vetting. Our staff will work to ensure a very high standard of care for your children and have relevant childcare qualifications and experience. We encourage ongoing professional development for our staff to ensure that they are up to date with current legislation and quality practices.

### **STAFF RATIOS**

The adult/child ratios are governed by the Childcare (Preschool Services) Regulations, 2006. The Childcare service will follow the adult/child ratios as defined in the above Regulations.

Children under 1 ratio is 3- 1 member of staff

Children under 2 ratio is 5-1 member of staff

Children under 3 ratio is 6-1 member of staff

Children under 5 ratio is 8-1 member of staff

ECCE ratio is 11-1 member of staff (this only includes morning secession)

### **WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

- We have an "open door" policy where families are always welcome but where the needs of all of the children in our care are always the first priority
- We will give you regular information about your child's progress and welcome your contribution - please share information with us
- We will hold meetings at times suitable to you and have a comments and complaints policy if you encounter any problem

- Please tell us of any difficulties that your child is experiencing at home such as bereavement, illness, relationship breakdown, a new baby - all these can change a child's behaviour and we want to help
- If a parent needs to be contacted in relation to a concern about behaviour we will do this in a helpful rather than a complaining manner and we will together try to resolve the situation
- Regular exchange of information with parents is important. Parents must inform the Manager of change of personal details (e.g.) new house, job, phone number.
- Employees, students or volunteers may not use social networking sites to befriend parents or accept requests to become a friend from parents who use the service or to exchange any information about the service or children attending the service or colleagues working at The Service.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SERVICE**

Parents/Guardians sign up to agree in the Parents Fee Agreement Form that they will:

- Give notice, in writing that the child/children are leaving the Centre
- Give us one month's notice or pay one month's fees.
- The Management of The Service also reserves the right to request that the Parent/Guardian withdraw their child/children from The Service if they are not 'settling in' or adapting to The Service. The Management agrees to give two week's notice of this to the Parent/Guardian so that they can make alternative arrangements.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS**

In early years services we all have our roles and responsibilities regarding our behaviour towards others including the parents of the children we care for. In our service the parents also have responsibilities regarding their behaviour towards the children, workers, volunteers and students in the setting. We

expect parents to support the respectful ethos of our service by setting a good example in their own speech and behaviour towards all members of our childcare service.

Everybody in the service must be valued, respected and their involvement in the daily lives of the children be recognised.

Parents of children involved with our work are also informed of our guidelines, Policies and Procedures.

The following guidelines set out the expected behaviour of Parents/guardians and other persons that may collect or drop off a child to our service:

- Never discuss other parents or children in front of the children.
- Inappropriate social conversations are not permitted on the premises.
- Refrain from bringing family pets/dogs into the services premises or grounds (even if on a lead).
- Parents should be courteous to other parents, staff and children.
- Parents must supervise their children on our premises when collecting other children or visiting the service.
- Parents must supervise their children around parked cars and grounds once their child has been collected.
- Parents should direct any comments or complaints to the Manager and we will aim to resolve any problems following our complaints policy.
- Parents should correct their own child's behaviour, especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour.
- Parents should respect the pre-school environment, including keeping the pre-school tidy by not littering.
- Parents should follow the parking rules when delivering and collecting children from pre-school.

In order to support a peaceful and safe pre-school environment, our service cannot tolerate:-

- Bad language
- Disruptive behaviour which interferes with the operation of the service.
- The use of loud and/or offensive or racist language or displaying temper.
- Threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them and physical punishment against your own child on our premises.
- Damaging or destroying our property.
- Abusive or threatening emails, phone or social network messages
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs or accessing our premises whilst intoxicated.

The above behaviours on our premises will be reported to the Manager and may result in the prohibition of an offending adult from entering our grounds or premises in order to safeguard our service and our pre-school community.

I agree to follow this Code of Conduct for Parents

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

—

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**And finally...**

*We would like to thank you for choosing us for your child's early education and we assure you of our best attention at all times*

**PLEASE SIGN & RETURN THIS SLIP TO THE MANAGER**

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I have read the Parents Handbook and I agree to abide by the conditions therein.

Child's name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Date commenced at The Service \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Name(s) (Block Capitals) and signature(s):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_