CentroNía

Educating children and youth and strengthening families in a bilingual, multicultural community.

CENTRONÍA
FAMILY HANDBOOK
Policies and Procedures for Center-based Programs
2026-27

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By the Senior Director of ECE Programs

**The information included in this document reflects the most current information, policies, and procedures established by CentroNía, which may be revised, modified, or changed, if necessary, with the authorization of the Senior Director of ECE Programs and the President and CEO.*

CentroNía, Inc.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCS	Child Care Scholarship Program (Maryland)
CFSA	Child and Family Services Agency (DC)
CPS	Child Protective Services (Maryland)
DOH	Department of Health
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EHS	Early Head Start
EPSDT	Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment
HS	Head Start
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education
OSSE	Office of the State Superintendent of Education (DC)
OST	Out of School Time
Pre-KEEP	Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program
ROCKS	Reading, Outdoor, Creativity, Knowledge and Self-Discovery
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WPA	Working Parents Assistance Program (Montgomery Co. Residents)
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan (ages 0-3)
IEP	Individualized Educational Program (ages 3-5)
SPED	Special Education Department

INTRODUCTION

We are happy to welcome all families and children in our region to CentroNía's diverse and dynamic early learning community. Our mission is to provide high-quality care and education for all children, regardless of their economic and social circumstances, because by "*educating children and strengthening families in a bilingual, multicultural community*" CentroNía supports the children's development and learning to ensure their future school readiness and success.

Guiding Principles of CentroNía

We commit to:

- A safe, nurturing, healthy, and accessible environment that serves children and working families
- Respecting and celebrating everyone's strengths, culture, and family
- Providing opportunities to engage and partner with parents to enrich the child's development and learning
- A comprehensive network of support for children, families, and staff
- Intentional high-quality interactions to support children's cognitive, social, emotional, and language development, and foster their optimal development

CentroNía Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs

CentroNía provides high-quality education and care through diverse early learning programs designed for pregnant mothers, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Our services are funded by local and state governments, federal grants, private and public foundations, corporate donors, parent contributions, and individual private contributions. Our programs are aligned to the best practices and established curricula that ensure that our children are ready to succeed in school. As a non-profit, community-based organization (CBO) that offers education and care to young children, CentroNía's ECE program is the beginning of the developmental journey that leads to the transition of our children into public, private or charter schools.

Licensing and Accreditation

Licensing refers to compliance with all laws and regulations related to operating a childcare center. Accreditation is voluntary and means that the facility and staff have met or exceeded high standards of quality. The CentroNía sites at Columbia Rd, Upshur St, Bunker Hill, and Stevens are licensed by OSSE (Office of State Superintendent of Education). Columbia Rd is accredited by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). The CentroNía sites in Takoma Park and Martha Gudelsky Child Development Center (MGCDC) are licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care (OCC). Takoma Park and MGCDC is accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Privacy and Confidentiality

CentroNía ECE Programs maintain confidentiality and respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we are required by law to share confidential information with pertinent agencies. Disclosure of children's records, beyond family members and program personnel having an obligation of confidentiality, requires familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).

ADMISSIONS POLICIES

CentroNía has an open and non-discriminatory admission policy regarding the children or parents' race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. The Admissions Office determines enrollment eligibility based on licensing, subsidy, and grant requirements, as applicable.

⚠ **Important: Parents must comply with the required documentation to ensure their child's participation in the program**

Enrollment

- Parents must show they meet the eligibility requirements—mainly family income and residency—which may vary by program at CentroNía
- Parents must submit all enrollment and medical forms before the child's first day at the center.
- An Initial Enrollment Fee (one-time charge) of **$75** applies to each child at enrollment, excluding those enrolling in Early Head Start, Head Start and any other subsidized programs.
- Parents must attend a **mandatory orientation meeting** with the Program Administrators and/or teachers
- Children will be allowed to attend the program when the following requirements have been fulfilled:
  - ✓ The child has been determined eligible for the program parents are applying for
  - ✓ Completion of all enrollment documents
  - ✓ Parents signed an agreement with CentroNía
  - ✓ Attendance at the initial orientation
  - ✓ Signature of Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Parents' Handbook/Agreement

Health Documentation and Requirements

To ensure the health and safety of all children in our care, CentroNía requires that families follow the guidelines from DC and Maryland including what is outlined below regarding health certificates, immunizations, oral health, and other medical screenings.

Health Certificate and Immunization Requirement

All families must comply with local health regulations and CentroNía's enrollment policies:

- **Enrollment:** A current health certificate, up-to-date immunization, and any other required health forms (e.g., asthma action plan, allergy, or food intolerance forms) must be submitted for all children at the time of enrollment.
- **Ongoing Updates:** After initial submission, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide updated immunization records after each well-child visit, along with any updated health forms as needed (e.g., asthma action plan, allergy, or food intolerance forms) throughout the school year.
- **Immunization Compliance:** In accordance with licensing regulations, children cannot attend care without proper immunization documentation.
- **Exemptions:** Children who have not received the required immunizations due to medical or religious reasons must complete the following two steps:
  - ✓ Submit a valid exemption or waiver form issued by the DC or MD Department of Health
  - ✓ Complete and submit the CentroNía Immunization Commitment Form
- **Early Head Start Requirement:** Families enrolled in Early Head Start must submit updated medical records after every well-child visit, as required by the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule.

Oral Health Requirement

CentroNía promotes oral health as a vital part of every child's overall wellness. To support healthy development, all families must follow our oral health requirements:

- ✓ Submit an Oral Health Assessment Form
- ✓ Updating this form every 6 months
- ✓ **DC programs** require all students aged 3 years and older to submit an Oral Health Assessment Form
- ✓ **For children in Early Head Start:** Dental care should begin by age 1 or when the first tooth appears, whichever comes first, in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Head Start standards.

Additional Medical Screening Requirements

To support your child's healthy growth and development, the following health screenings and check-ups are required based on age:

- ✓ **Lead Testing**: Must be completed twice before a child turns 2 years old
- ✓ **Dental Check-Ups:** Required every 6 months
- ✓ **Routine Well-Child Visits:** Must be documented at the following ages:
  - ➢ 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30 months
  - ➢ Annually starting at age 3 and older

Medication Requirement

If your child needs to have medication in the classroom, please ensure the following:

- ✓ All medications must be accompanied by proper documentation signed by a doctor.
- ✓ Children with asthma or allergy medications must have an **Asthma/Allergy Action Plan signed by both the parent/guardian and doctor.**
- ✓ For more information, refer to the "Medication" section on page 25.

Waiting List

CentroNía maintains a waiting list for families interested in enrollment. Space is offered based on the order on the list, with priority given to:

- Eligible at-risk families
- Siblings of currently enrolled children
- To begin the re-enrollment process for a child who has been previously withdrawn from a program, parents must submit a new application to the waiting list, with the understanding that enrollment remains determined by availability, waitlist order, and eligibility, and it is not guaranteed

Please note:

- The Admissions Office will contact you when space becomes available. Be sure to keep your contact information up to date.
- Families interested in **Head Start/Early Head Start** must submit proof of eligibility (e.g., proof of income and address) at the time of enrollment.
- **Categorically eligible families** (e.g., children with an IFSP, in foster care, or receiving SNAP) must also provide documentation of eligibility at enrollment

Withdrawal Policies

- Families must notify the Admissions Office **in writing,** at least two (2) weeks before withdrawing from CentroNía during the contract term
- **Early Head Start families** must notify the **ERSEA Coordinator** in writing with at least two (2) weeks prior to withdrawal from the Early Head Start program
- All decisions related to permanent dismissals are made in consultation with CentroNía leadership

Dismissal Policies

CentroNía is committed to supporting every child's success. However, in some cases, dismissal may be necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, families, and staff.

CentroNía reserves the right to dismiss a child with **two (2) weeks' written notice** for the following reasons:

- Special needs that **cannot** be reasonably accommodated under ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) guidelines
- **Ten (10) or more unexcused absences** without valid documentation (e.g., a doctor's note)
- Frequent **late pickups** (**three [3]** or more in a quarter)
- Frequent or ongoing illnesses that are **not properly managed by parents or guardians**
- **Missing or outdated** Health and Emergency Forms
- **Unpaid fees**, as outlined in the **"Overdue Accounts"** section
- **Non-compliance** with USDA, DC Department of Health (DOH), Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), or Pre-K program requirements

Immediate termination of a child's enrollment may occur for the following reasons:

1. Serious or ongoing behavioral challenges that do not improve, despite documented behavioral plans developed with staff and families
2. Violent, threatening, or disrespectful behavior by a child or parent toward CentroNía staff or other families
3. Falsification of any personal or enrollment information by a parent or guardian

⚠ **Reminder:** *To keep everyone safe, if an adult acts aggressively or disruptively, we may need to contact the authorities and report it as required. We always welcome open, respectful communication to help resolve any concerns before things escalate.*

GENERAL OPERATIONS

Hours of Operation

CentroNía serves children and families Monday through Friday with different schedules throughout the day, as established by contract or program operations.

- Sites are open from **7:00am to 6:00pm**
- Hours may change. Parents will be notified of any updates through letters, email, ClassDojo, robocalls, text messages, social media, and the CentroNía website.

Closings

CentroNía operates year-round and closes for:

- Federal holiday
- At least five (5) staff training days, including a full week in August for the new school year transition
- Additional closings may apply depending on program requirements
- Early closing days are scheduled for staff's professional development or administrative needs. Families must arrange alternate care.
- A yearly calendar with closing dates and key events is shared with families.
- Unplanned closures (e.g., weather or emergencies) may occur and impact program hours.

Emergency Closings

- CentroNía follows inclement weather notices and warnings from DC Public Schools (DCPS) and Montgomery County Public School (MCPS).
- Parents will be notified of closures through the CentroNia website and other media outlets.
- In daytime emergencies, staff will contact parents, update the website, and share information through local media.
- Parents must keep contact information up to date.
- If a child is **not picked up within one (1) hour after**, and no contact is made at closing time, CentroNía will notify **Child and Family Services** (**DC-CFSA**) or **Child Protective Services** (**MD-CPS**).

Delayed Openings

- If DCPS or MCPS have a **2-hour delay**, CentroNía will open at **10:00 a.m.**
- **Breakfast is not served** on delayed opening days.
- **Studio ROCKS** will not provide morning service (before school); families in Studio ROCKS must take their children directly to school.

Sign-In and Sign-Out

- Children must be signed in and out daily using **full first and last names** (paper or electronic)
- After the child has been signed in, the child must go directly to their classroom.
- After signing out, children are under the supervision of the parent or authorized adult.
- Unattended children wandering in hallways or playgrounds may be reported to **CFSA** as neglect.
- Children may not return to class after being signed out, except in cases* of:
  - ✓ Off-site special education services
  - ✓ Scheduled visits with a social worker

***Note:** *These exceptions must be coordinated with the Center Director.*

Diapering at Drop-Off

To help ensure each child begins the day healthy, comfortable, and ready to participate, families are asked to bring their child to the program with a **clean diaper**. Please check and change your child's diaper, if needed, before arriving at CentroNía.

Our staff will continue to monitor and change diapers throughout the day as needed and will always make every effort to ensure children leave the program with a clean diaper at pick-up.

Absences and Tardiness

Regular attendance is essential for your child's development and learning. Parents are responsible for ensuring their child arrives in the classroom by 9:15 a.m. for full participation in the day's program. **Children who arrive after 9:15 a.m. will not be admitted to the classroom.** For Studio Rocks participants, please refer to the "*Morning Drop-Off Services"* section on **page 35.**

If your child is **tardy** due to a **doctor's appointment remember:**

1. **Notify** the teacher at least one day in advance
2. Breakfast is served **only from 8:30- 9:00 a.m.**
3. Children may arrive **no later than 11:00 a.m., only with a doctor's note.**
4. If the class is outdoors, the child must wait with the parent until the class returns to complete drop-off.

If your child is **absent remember:**

1. A doctor's note is required after **three (3)** consecutive days of absence.
2. All absence-related policies outlined in the *"Health and Safety"* section must be followed
3. Any exceptions must be submitted in writing and must not disrupt classroom operations.

Late Pick-Up Policies and Fees

- Parents must notify CentroNía immediately if they run late.
- A **$5.00 per minute fee** applies **after 6:00 p.m**. Adults must sign a late pick-up form (late fees are based on electronic or paper timestamp).
- After **three (3) late pick-ups in a quarter**, families should refer to the Dismissal Policy section on Page 9-12. The Program Directors/Managers will address this issue with the families.
- If a child is not picked up one (1) hour after closing time, and there is no communication, CentroNía will notify Child and Family Services (DC-CFSA) or Child Protective Services (MD-CPS).

CentroNía reserves the right to terminate enrollment or extended care services if late pick-ups continue.

Authorized Individuals for Pick-Up

To ensure the safety of all children, CentroNía **requires** the following procedures for pick-up:

1. Children will only be released to adults listed on the enrollment forms under the adult authorized to drop off or pick up your child, unless a signed note from the parent/guardian is provided.
2. Authorized individuals must be at least 18 years old, unless enrolled in the Teen Parent Program.
3. A photo ID may be required at pick-up.
4. Emergency contacts must be local and have a working mobile number.

5. Children will not be released to transportation services without an authorized adult present.

⚠ **Remember** CentroNía **cannot deny release** to a parent or legal guardian with custody unless a **court order** is on file. If applicable:

- A certified copy of the order must be provided and updated as needed.
- CentroNía may request a **photo of any restricted individual by the order**.

Smoke Free Policy

CentroNía is committed to a smoke-free, healthy environment for all children, families, and staff, which means:

1. Smoking or vaping is **prohibited** in all indoor and outdoor areas, including playgrounds and entrances.
2. Exposure to secondhand or thirdhand smoke (including cannabis) poses serious health risks, such as:
   - Respiratory illnesses (asthma, bronchitis)
   - Delays in brain and behavioral development
   - Increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

Alcohol and Drug Policy

The use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances, including cannabis and alcohol, is **strictly prohibited on CentroNía property**.

- Parents and visitors must fully comply with this policy under DC and Maryland law.
- Law enforcement may be contacted if there is suspicion of drug or alcohol use on the premises.
- Children will not be released to any adult who appears disoriented or under the influence of controlled substances, drugs, or alcohol.

Guns and other weapons Policy

CentroNía is a gun-free zone. No firearms or weapons are allowed on the premises at any time.

Cell Phone Policy

For the safety of children and to support strong parent-staff communication, **cell phone use is not allowed** during pick-up and drop-off. Taking **photos or videos** of children or documents (e.g., sign-in sheets, cubbies) is prohibited without permission.

Photography Policy

Parents can indicate photo consent on the **Photo Consent Form** included in the enrollment paperwork during registration.

- Our communication team may take photos to document learning and activities, or for use in reports, collages, or displays. Teaching staff also take pictures as part of the assessment process, to document your child's development and learning process
- Any non-CentroNía entity in use of a child's image requires **separate written consent** from the parent.

Volunteer Policy

CentroNía encourages family and community participation.

- Volunteer opportunities are available during school hours, after school, and occasionally on weekends.
- Interested parents should coordinate with the Program Director/Manager.
- Volunteer hours for Early Head Start and Head Start families contribute to the program's in-kind support.
- Some volunteer roles may require background and fingerprint checks

Emergencies

CentroNía is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of every child and staff member. To do so we follow a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan aligned with licensing requirements in DC and Maryland including:

- ✓ **Monthly fire drills** are conducted for safety
- ✓ Staff are trained in emergency response protocols, including:
    1. Fire evacuation
    2. Bomb threats
    3. Evacuation and relocation
    4. Bus evacuation
    5. Lockdown procedures
    6. Violent incident response
    7. Child abduction prevention
- ✓ Staff are certified in **adult and pediatric First Aid/CPR** and medication administration
- ✓ Annual health and safety training ensures staff meet or exceed local licensing standards
- ✓ Each site is equipped with an **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** for emergencies

GENERAL POLICIES

Classroom Staff

All staff undergo a Comprehensive Criminal Background Check, Child Protection Registry, and a Mandatory Drug Test as required by our licensing agencies.

Classrooms are staffed with qualified Lead Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and support personnel to ensure we maintain the required adult-child ratios. These professionals meet or exceed the qualifications mandated by applicable programs and licensing agencies.

At times, CentroNía may utilize qualified temporary staff through an approved staffing agency to help maintain required staffing ratios and ensure continuity of care. All temporary staff are required to meet applicable licensing and program requirements, including required background clearances and onboarding procedures, before working with children.

Classroom Placement Policy

At CentroNía, we are committed to providing a high-quality early childhood education experience for every child. Classroom placement decisions are made thoughtfully by our administrative team, based on multiple key factors. We appreciate your trust and understanding as we make placement decisions with your child's growth and success in mind.

- Key considerations for classroom placement include:
  - ✓ Age group alignment
  - ✓ Developmental needs of each child
  - ✓ Classroom space availability based on site
  - ✓ Licensing requirements and classroom ratios
  - ✓ Overall needs of the program

Siblings, including twins, are typically placed in separate classrooms**.** This practice supports each child's individual development, encourages independence, and fosters social growth.

Teaching staff are qualified to work with their classrooms' age group. They receive ongoing professional development to ensure they provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environment in any classroom setting.

Grievance Procedures and Parent Concerns

Parents are encouraged to address their concerns about their child's care and issues related to the program by reaching out to either the child's teacher, the Program Director/Manager, or the Senior Director of ECE Programs as necessary.

In certain cases, CentroNía's President & CEO and/or the relevant licensing agency may become involved to ensure the matter is appropriately addressed.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

CentroNía staff are mandated reporters and must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect in compliance with applicable state and local laws.

To ensure staff are prepared to recognize and report suspected abuse or neglect, all employees receive annual training specific to their jurisdiction.

Definitions

- Neglect: A failure to provide for a child's basic needs, resulting in or posing a clear and present danger to the child's health, safety, or welfare.
- Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental physical injury inflicted on a child.
- Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act committed against a child or allowed to be committed by an adult.

If someone has knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child has been maltreated or is in immediate danger, they are required to:

1. Report the concern to their immediate supervisor or Senior Director.
2. Call the appropriate child protection hotline:
   - **District of Columbia**: 202-671-SAFE (7233)
   - **Maryland**: 240-777-4417

- Any concerns or information regarding suspected child abuse or neglect shared with a CentroNía teacher, administrator, or other staff member will be taken seriously and handled in accordance with the procedures outlined above. As mandated reporters, CentroNía staff are required to follow applicable reporting protocols when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, even if the concern is later withdrawn or the reporting individual requests that no further action be taken.

- All child abuse or neglect records are strictly confidential, in accordance with federal and state laws. When reporting abuse committed by a family member or caregiver, the identity of the reporter will be kept confidential from the individual(s) named in the report.

Inclusion

- CentroNía welcomes children of all abilities; this includes children with disabilities and special health care needs. We will make reasonable accommodations to respond to the characteristics and needs of every child, regardless of their capabilities. The special education team provides the procedures and resources to facilitate early intervention to promote each child's development and learning. As part of the educational program, children are screened and assessed to determine their strengths and identify areas of concern, which will be addressed through accommodation in the daily lessons and interactions.

- When children show specific needs that require additional support and resources, the referral process will help reach out for internal and external services to support the child, the family, and the classroom teachers. If CentroNía needs to contact external professionals to conduct observations and evaluations of a child, parents will be asked to sign a consent form. When the child's needs are beyond the scope of services provided at CentroNía, the ECE team may promote transitioning the child to a setting that is developmentally appropriate for them.

- If at enrollment, a child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children under age 3 or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for children over 3 years of age, it is strongly advice for parents to complete the developmental questionnaire included in the registration package and share it with the Admissions staff and/or ECE leadership team. Meetings with parents will be coordinated prior to enrollment to implement the plan. Parental permission will be required in order for all relevant service providers to be contacted for continuity of services between programs.

- If the IFSP or IEP cannot be implemented at CentroNía, the Multidisciplinary Team will advise and assist families in applying to a Local Educational Agency (LEA) (DCPS/MCPS/PGCPS) where the services can be implemented. If the parents still insist on remaining at CentroNía, they must understand and accept that CentroNía cannot fully meet the child's needs.

- If your child is receiving services, please communicate with your child's service coordinator/therapist when the child is absent.

Developmental Screenings/Assessments

CentroNía ECE Programs use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to assess the progress and growth of children. All information gathered is kept confidential, only used for analysis for the benefit of the child and program.

- **Screening tools used:**
  - ASQ-3 (Ages & Stages Questionnaire) → evaluates communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal-social skills.
  - ASQ:SE-2 (Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional) → focuses on emotional regulation, compliance, social interaction, and other social-emotional domains.
- **Screening process:**
  - Completed by both parents and teachers within the first 45 days of the child's enrollment.
  - If results show the child is developing within a typical range, no further intervention will be needed.
  - If developmental concerns arise, ECE staff will meet with the family to discuss a range of interventions and establish an individual action plan to monitor and support the child's progress.

If families choose to seek outside services, without the coordination of CentroNía, we will ask parental consent to:

- Participate in the external evaluation process
- Share and receive information between CentroNía staff and service providers

This coordination ensures teachers are informed and can implement appropriate strategies in the classroom to support the child's development.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

- CentroNía promotes positive discipline, guiding children to develop self-control and behaviors in the context of relationships with peers and adults to ensure the learning environment is safe and nurturing for all, with children, families, and staff understand the limits and boundaries of socially acceptable behavior, including:
    - Physical safety and emotional well-being of adults and children in our centers, thus building a community of learners
    - Consistent strategies to prevent challenging behaviors are in place
    - The development of strategies to respond to and solve conflicts
- Children are expected to follow teachers' directions and rules, resolve conflicts without physical contact, be respectful of adults and each other, use language, and respect the rights and property of others.
- The teaching team typically handles discipline first in the classroom. If concerns escalate and safety is an issue, teachers meet with the parents, Program/Site Director, or consultant to discuss the situation. Action steps could include, but are not limited to, conducting class observations and assessments. It is important to highlight that no staff member without proper training should restrain a child unless they are in danger to themselves or others.

CentroNía's Behavioral Management Strategies

At CentroNía, we believe effective behavior management in preschool involves creating a positive and supportive environment that encourages behavior while tutoring children's social and emotional skills. We employ consistent strategies to develop clear rules and expectations with teachers and children and promote positive behavior.

These strategies include:

1. **Establish Clear Rules and Expectations:**
    - We develop **clear rules and expectations** with teachers and children starting at the beginning of the school year.
    - We establish consistent daily routines to provide structure, predictability, and safety.
    - We communicate simple and age-appropriate rules using positive language, emphasizing what children should do (e.g., "Please Walk" instead of "Don't run")
2. **Consistency is Key:**
    - We consistently enforce rules and expectations across all situations.
    - This consistency creates a sense of security and predictability for children.
3. **Encourage Communication:**
    - We encourage children to express their feelings and communicate their emotions and concerns.
    - We help children communicate to the best of their ability.
4. **Positive Reinforcement:**
    - We use specific and descriptive praise to highlight desired behaviors.
    - We reward good behavior with positive reinforcement.
5. **Redirect:**
    - We ignore challenging behaviors that are **not** disruptive or dangerous.
    - Using redirection, we guide children toward more appropriate activities.

- We provide alternative options or suggest different ways for children to express themselves.
- Examples of redirection used in the classroom:
  - If a child is throwing toys, we might say, "Let's build a tall tower with the blocks instead," or "Would you like to draw a picture with me?".
  - If a child is grabbing a toy from another child. We might say, "It looks like your friend is using that toy right now. Let's find a different toy to play with while we wait our turn."

6. **Use Visual Aids:**
   - We use visual cues and charts to represent daily routines and expected behaviors.
   - We use visual schedules and reminders to help children understand expectations and transitions.
7. **Model Behavior:**
   - We demonstrate the behaviors we expect from the children.
   - We use role-playing and stories to illustrate positive behaviors and their outcomes.
8. **Provide Choices:**
   - We offer children choices within limits to foster independence and a sense of autonomy.
   - This approach helps children in preventing power struggles and encourages decision-making skills.
9. **Involve Parents:**
   - We communicate openly with parents to share insights into a child's behavior.
   - We collaborate with parents to implement consistent strategies at home and at school.
10. **Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution:**
    - We teach children problem-solving skills and conflict-resolution techniques.
    - Help children reflect on their behavior and problem-solving solutions to conflict when it occurs.
    - We encourage children to express themselves and find solutions together.
      - **Example:** If two children are fighting over a toy, we help them by asking, "How are you both feeling?" and "What could you do to solve this problem?" We then guide them to solutions like taking turns or finding another toy.
11. **Seek Professional Support:**
    - We involve specialists such as behavioral therapists or coaches for additional support and guidance when persistent behavioral issues arise.
12. **Social Emotional Learning Support:**
    - We support children with the Second Step Social Emotional Curriculum and Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. (CSFEL) resources and strategies

When a child is constantly displaying challenging behaviors, the following steps may be taken:

- Parents will be notified. Parents/guardians and staff will discuss how the child's behavior is handled at home and in other settings and how it can be best handled at the Center.
- CentroNía's staff in support with consultants will lead in developing a plan to address the child's behaviors, including age-appropriate strategies and skill development.
- Facilitate, with the family's consent, an external referral to early intervention or special education services and any other community resource.
- Coordinate the child's primary care provider for assessment for any related health concerns in collaboration with the parents /guardians/family and health manager/coordinator.

- Parents and staff will continue to share timely information about the child's progress and follow-up recommendations.

Supporting Safe and Positive Environment

- Parents/guardians will be asked to ensure that an authorized adult accompanies the child during field trips if they are unable to do so.
- Staff members will not use physical punishment (i.e., shaking, hitting, or threatening), nor will they grab, hold, or restrain a child unless they endanger themselves or others.
- Inappropriate handling of a child is not tolerated at CentroNía. This action will be a basis for immediate dismissal.

Program Dismissal

CentroNía reserves the right to remove the child from the Center under the following circumstances:

1. Continued disruptive or challenging behavior that jeopardizes the physical safety of the child, their classmates, and/or staff members.
2. An assessment by the SPED coordinator/consultants that all possible interventions and support aimed at providing a physically safe environment have been exhausted
3. The parents/guardians/family are **unwilling** to participate in:
    - mental health consultations that are provided through the program
    - mental health consultation that are independently obtained
    - mental health assistance available in the community
4. Failure to meet the mental health and/or social-emotional needs of the child as agreed by both the staff and the family AND that a different Program is better able to meet these needs has been identified and can immediately provide services to the child.

In any of the above cases in which termination is recommended, CentroNía will follow its established policies and procedures, which align with local, state, and Federal regulations. CentroNía staff will support the parents/guardians/family with referrals to community-based services, as needed, and the transition directly to the receiving Program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Accident or Injury

Ensuring the safety of all children is our highest priority. However, it is important to recognize that children may experience minor to major injuries during the day of care that may or may not require medical attention.

- **Minor Injuries:** For injuries that do not pose a life-threatening risk (e.g., bruises, small cuts, and scratches), CentroNía staff will administer basic first aid. Parents will be notified through class dojo or a phone call after the incident. Parents will also be provided with a Health Incident Report by the end of the day.

- **Major Injuries:** For life-threatening injuries or those that could cause significant disability (e.g., broken bones, internal bleeding, and head trauma), CentroNía staff will:
    1. Immediately call 911 for medical assistance
    2. Notify the parent or guardian
    3. Provide a "*Health Incident Report*" detailing the incident and response
    4. If ambulance transport is required, parents will be informed accordingly
    5. If a child is injured or caused injury to another child, parents will receive an "Incident Report" but will not disclose the names of any other children involved.

Hand Washing Procedure

Proper handwashing is critical to reducing the spread of infectious diseases. Staff members help children as needed to ensure thorough handwashing compliance. Children are instructed on correct handwashing procedures, and families are encouraged to reinforce these practices at home.

- Staff and children **must** wash hands**:**
    - ✓ Upon arrival
    - ✓ After using the restroom or diapering
    - ✓ After handling bodily fluids (e.g., blowing nose, coughing, touching blood/vomit)
    - ✓ Before meals and snacks, food preparation, or serving food
    - ✓ After playing outdoors or with shared materials (e.g., sand, dirt, water play)
    - ✓ After handling pets or contaminated surfaces
    - ✓ Before and after administering medication or helping with toileting
    - ✓ After handling garbage or cleaning

Infants Health and Safety

To help reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), CentroNía follows strict sleep guidelines per recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines. These practices are carefully implemented to ensure the safety of all infants in our care.

- Safe Sleep Practices implemented at CentroNía include:
    - ✓ Infants up to 12 months must sleep on their backs in a safety-approved crib.
    - ✓ Cribs must have a firm mattress with a fitted sheet; no additional items (e.g., pillows, blankets, toys) are permitted.
    - ✓ Infants should not sleep in car seats, bouncy chairs, swings, or other non-approved surfaces.
    - ✓ Sleeping infants must be visually watched at all times.
    - ✓ Room lighting must allow staff to assess infants' breathing and skin color.
    - ✓ Swaddling is not recommended; infants should wear one-piece sleepers.

- ✓ Caregivers must check that infants are comfortably clothed and remove any bibs, necklaces, or hooded garments.
- ✓ All bedding must be changed between uses.

- **Shaken Baby Syndrome:** CentroNía staff receive annual training on preventing head trauma and understanding brain development in infancy. Even mild shaking can cause serious, permanent brain damage or death in newborns, infants, and children younger than 3 years caused by shaking a child.

Daily Health Check

CentroNia conducts daily health checks upon the child's arrival. Teachers check in with the parent/guardian about any child's updates, including sleep, mood, and any health-related concerns.

Additionally, teachers conduct a visual health check of each child upon arrival and throughout the day. These daily health checks help teachers to identify any potential concerns related to the child's health, including signs of recent illness or injury (such as scratches, bruises, or cuts), or signs of behavior.

- If we observe a concern during the child's health check, the following steps will be taken:
  - The teacher will complete a written report and provide it to the Program Director to review and sign.
  - Depending on the report, parents/guardians may receive a phone call.
  - At pick-up, the parent/guardian will be asked to review and sign the report; a copy will be provided if desired.
- Parent/guardian signatures are **required** to acknowledge receipt of the report.

Illnesses Policy

A healthy environment is crucial for delivering high-quality care to children at CentroNía. To ensure their well-being and full participation, children must be in good health and able to engage in all aspects of our daily activities, including both indoor and outdoor programs. CentroNía works with families, with input from the child's physician, in the case of special needs and chronic medical conditions.

- Stay Home When Sick: Children should remain at home if they show any of the following symptoms within 24 hours:
  - **Fever**: A temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) taken with a thermometer on the forehead, especially if accompanied by a new rash, behavior changes, or other unexplained signs or symptoms.
  - **Vomiting:** More than two episodes in a 24-hour period.
  - **Diarrhea:** Watery, bloody, or significantly more frequent stools—specifically, three (3) or more loose stools beyond the child's normal pattern in a 24-hour period.
  - **Skin lesions or Sore:** Any open, draining sores that cannot be fully covered with a waterproof bandage.
  - **Rash:** A new rash that is red, bumpy, itchy, or patchy (including on the scalp), especially if accompanied by fever.
  - **Respiratory Symptoms**: Persistent or worsening symptoms such as cough, runny nose, sneezing, or body aches that are not improving and cannot be explained by a non-contagious condition (e.g., seasonal allergies).
  - **Need for One-on-One Medical Attention:** Any illness or condition requiring individual medical care during school hours.
  - **Undiagnosed Conditions:** Any medical condition that is diagnosed with a pending diagnosis or awaiting clearance from a healthcare provider.
  - **Unresolved Symptoms:** Any illness where symptoms have not improved or resolved.

By following these policies, we work together to ensure the health and safety of our school community while complying with the latest public health recommendations.

ILLNESS EXCLUSION POLICY

To protect the health and safety of all children and staff at CentroNía, certain symptoms or medical conditions require temporary non classroom participation. These measures are based on guidelines from the Maryland Department of Health, DC Health, and the Office of Head Start.

- The following conditions will result in temporary exclusion from classroom participation in any CentroNía setting if a child is observed with:
  - **Fever:** Any unexplained fever (greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) accompanied by a change in behavior or other signs and symptoms.
  - **Vomiting:** Two (2) or more episodes of vomiting.
  - **Diarrhea**: Three (3) or more episodes of watery or loose stools.
  - **Rash**: Any new rash accompanied by a fever.
  - **Skin Lesion:** Any draining lesion that cannot be covered or contained with a waterproof bandage.
  - **Cough/Shortness of breath**: Persistent or severe cough, with or without fever, or any signs of shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Temporary no classroom participation may also be recommended if:
  - The child is unable to comfortably participate in routine activities due to symptoms.
  - The care required for the ill child compromises the ability of staff to maintain the health and safety of other children in the classroom.

24 hours' illness rule will apply if child symptoms were reported at CentroNía

These procedures help reduce the spread of contagious diseases and support a safe, healthy learning environment for all children and staff. Your cooperation is essential and greatly appreciated. Below are the responsibilities of both CentroNia staff and parent/guardians.

CentroNía – Staff Responsibilities

- Notify parents/guardians or listed emergency contacts immediately if a health concern arises during the day.
- Complete a **Health Incident Report** and share it with the parent/guardian or emergency contact, detailing the situation and actions taken.
- Inform families of any **required next steps**, such as following up with a healthcare provider or providing a doctor's note for return.

CentroNía –Parent Responsibilities

Notify staff at drop-off if your child is showing any symptoms listed in the Illness Exclusion Policy.

- Respond promptly to a request to pick up a sick child. The child must be picked up within one (1) hour of notification.
- Provide updates on your child's health, including **doctor's notes** or other relevant medical information
- Submit a **doctor's note (medical clearance)** if your child is absent due to illness for **three (3) or more consecutive days**

Symptom-Free Return Policy (24 Hours must be followed)

To help maintain a healthy and safe environment for all children and staff, CentroNía follows a 24-hour symptom-free policy. Children who are ill must stay home and complete a full 24-hour period without symptoms before returning to the center. This time frame is required and must strictly be followed.

Below are the guidelines for the two common scenarios:

- ***Scenario 1*: Child Exhibits Symptoms at CentroNía**
    1. **Symptom Identified**: Staff has determined and documented the specific symptoms the child is exhibiting (g., fever, vomiting diarrhea)
    2. **Time of last symptom recorded**: Note the time of the last episode of the symptom.
    3. **24-hour clock starts:** The 24-hour clock begins from the time of the last episode of the last symptom, not at pick-up time or the next morning.
    4. **Return to Program:** The child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to CentroNía.
- ***Scenario 2:* Doctor Clears Child, but Symptoms Persist**
    1. **Doctor's clearance provided**: The child is cleared to return to school by a doctor.
    2. **Ongoing Symptoms**: Despite the doctor's clearance, the child continues to exhibit symptoms (e.g., diarrhea, vomiting, and fever).
    3. **24-hour clock restarts:** The 24-hour clock resets based on the most recent symptom.
    4. **Return to Program**: The child may return only after completing the required full 24 hours with no symptoms

Key Considerations

1. The 24-hour clock begins from the time of the child's last symptoms, whether it occurred at home or at CentroNía.
2. The child must be completely symptom-free for a full 24 hours before returning to CentroNía.
3. Even if a doctor provides a return note, **CentroNía reserves the right to delay re-entry if symptoms persist**, to protect the health of the entire school community.

Communicable diseases

Communicable diseases are illnesses that can be spread from one person to another through various means, including direct or indirect contact, droplets, airborne transmission, and vector-borne transmission. **CentroNía's health policies are designed to minimize the spread of illness and will be strictly enforced.**

As a childcare facility:

1. **Parents must report any diagnosed or suspected communicable diseases to CentroNía's Health Coordinator or Director/Program Coordinator immediately.**
2. Certain conditions require reporting to health departments DC/ MD. If your child has been exposed to any communicable disease during our care, parents will receive notifications about potential exposures.

CentroNía – Parent Responsibilities:

If your child has been diagnosed with, is suspected of having or has been exposed to a communicable disease **you must:**

1. **Report**: Immediately upon provisional diagnosis or the appearance of suspicious symptoms report it to your child's teachers, program director, or program coordinator.
2. **Keep Your Child Home**: Until they are no longer contagious or have been cleared by a medical professional, you must keep the child home.
3. **Seek Medical Attention**: If the child is experiencing symptoms of a communicable disease, you must seek medical attention.
4. **Inform us of any changes**: Be sure to inform us of any changes and updates regarding the child's medical conditions or diagnosis.

CentroNía-Staff Responsibilities

If a child has been diagnosed with, is suspected of having or has been exposed to a communicable disease while in our care you will receive a:

1. **Verbal notification:** We will contact you by phone or in person to inform you of the situation as soon as possible.
2. **Written Notification**: We will provide you with a written notification, which must be shared with your classroom parents via. ClassDojo, email or given in person. The written notification will include the following information:
    - ✓ Disease name
    - ✓ Symptoms
    - ✓ Incubation period
    - ✓ Precautions and next steps

Facilities are required to report certain diseases and conditions to the Department of Health. For some illnesses, only clusters — defined as three or more confirmed or suspected cases within a seven-day period —must be reported. However, other illnesses require reporting even when one case is identified.

CentroNía will take increased precautions and sanitation measures to contain known infections. A final decision to exclude a child from the program will be based on recommendations from DC/MD Health Departments including the well-being of all children and staff.

MEDICATION

This policy applies to all medications, including both prescription and over-the-counter remedies for your child. Only designated staff are permitted to administer medications. Before any medication or treatment can be given during care hours CentroNía **must:**

- **Receive** a written authorization or prescription from your child's physician or healthcare provider.

CentroNía Medication Responsibility

CentroNía shall not be responsible for the diagnosis and treatment of any child's illness based on previous parent communication.

Medication administration for prescription or nonprescription medication **will not be administered to a child in our care unless:**

- ✓ The "***Medication Authorization Form***" is **completed, signed, and dated** by a parent or guardian to authorize the administration of medication.
- ✓ The completed form must be returned to the CentroNía Health Office. Medication will only be accepted at the center once it has been approved by a licensed health practitioner, including the administration of instructions and dosage.
- ✓ All Medications (prescription and non-prescriptions) must be delivered in a Ziploc bag or medication bag that includes the child's full name and date of birth.
- ✓ Parents or guardians must hand-deliver all medications to CentroNía's Health Coordinator or Program Director to complete the necessary paperwork and verify the medication delivery.
- ✓ Upon delivery at CentroNía, all medication must be counted by the Health Coordinator or Program Director in the presence of the parent or guardian. The total will be documented and signed by both the staff member and the child's parent or guardian.

Important Reminders

- Children are **not** permitted to transport medication between home, the center or between classrooms.
- No medication will be administered until all required forms are completed and signed by a healthcare provider then submitted to and reviewed by CentroNía.
- Parents are responsible for keeping all medication-related forms and supplies up to date
- Medication may be transported between home and CentroNía if the medication is not a standard order (temporary medication). In this case, the parent may drop off the medication daily, sign it in to CentroNía, and sign it out at the end of the day. *

> * **Exception:** Children with a completed and signed "*Self-Carry Authorization Form*" from a physician or healthcare provider (e.g. in cases for those with EpiPen, Insulin, or Inhaler) may carry their own medication

Prescription Medication Guidelines

The following forms are provided to be **completed** and **signed** by physicians or health care providers for CentroNía to receive and administer medication on site:

- ➢ **DC Sites: "***DC Medication and Medical Procedure Treatment Plan"* and over the counter forms
- ➢ **MD Sites: "***Maryland Medication Administration Authorization Form*" and over the counter forms

- Parents or guardians must deliver all medications to CentroNía. Before administering **prescription medication** at CentroNía the following steps **must** be taken:
  1. A prior dose must be given at home.
  2. Parents must inform the teacher that the child has received a dose of the medication at home and the time it was given.
  3. All prescription medications must have a readable and current pharmacy label. The label **should include**:
     - ✓ Child's name
     - ✓ Name of the medication
     - ✓ Dosage instructions
     - ✓ Specific time of administration during the care day

- ✓ Date the prescription was filled (must be within 1 calendar year)
- ✓ Name of the healthcare provider or physician
- ✓ Pharmacy name and telephone number
- ✓ Expiration date

*CentroNía's parents are **not** allowed to administer any prescribed medication in the classroom*

Non-Prescription (Over the Counter) Medication Guidelines

Before administering **non-prescription medication** at CentroNía the following steps **must** be taken:

- ✓ The form must be completed and signed by physicians or health care providers.
- ✓ Parents or guardians must deliver all over-the-counter medications to CentroNía Health Coordinator and program directors.
- ✓ Keep all over-the-counter medications in their original manufacturer's container.
- ✓ All bottles or boxes containing over-the-counter medications must be labeled with:
  1. Child's complete name
  2. Date of birth
  3. Class name or number
- ✓ Before administering over-the-counter medication at CentroNía, a prior dose must be given at home.
- ✓ The expiration date must be indicated in the original container.

* Parents are **not** allowed to administer any over-the-counter medication in the classroom*

Use of Topical and Basic Care Products

Diaper rash products, sunscreen and insect repellent are considered "Basic Care Products" and are categorized **as non-prescription medications.** If any of these "Basic Care Products" are provided by a child's parent/guardian, they **may be applied without prior approval** of a licensed health practitioner**.**

Important Reminders

- CentroNía staff are **not permitted to apply or use** any homemade, oil infused or scented products (commercially or home-purchased), dispensers, or comfort items on children in our care.
- All products must be in their original packaging with a clear manufacturer label, including the product name, ingredient list, and usage instructions.
- **MD Sites ONLY:** Parents/guardians must complete the *"Topical Basic Care Product Application Authorization Form"* prior to use.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a medication-related emergency:

1. Staff will follow established emergency protocols, including contacting 911 if necessary.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

3. Any medication error will be reported to the Poison Control Center for guidance and documentation.

These health policies are designed to protect the well-being of all children and staff and to help reduce the spread of illness. We appreciate your support in promoting a safe and healthy environment at CentroNía.

FOOD AND WELLNESS

CentroNía is committed to promoting healthy habits within our community. We follow consistent food and physical activity guidelines for staff, teachers, and parents to support the well-being of children's wellness and development.

Children Meals and Snacks

CentroNía follows USDA, state, and local dietary requirements through participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (**CACFP**). Each meal includes a variety of nutritious components, such as**:**

- ✓ Fresh fruits
- ✓ Vegetables
- ✓ Whole grains
- ✓ Meat (e.g., beef, chicken, tuna)
- ✓ Meat alternatives (e.g., garbanzo, lentils, beans, tofu)
- ✓ Milk:
    - Breastmilk / Iron-fortified formula
    - Whole milk (1-year-olds)
    - 1% low-fat milk (ages 2–10)
    - Soymilk (alternative)

CentroNía our meal practices include	CentroNía does not serve:
✓ In-house cooked prepared meals ✓ Ensuring water is always accessible to children ✓ A wide variety of food, we also recognize that children may need 10 or more exposures to accept new foods ✓ Offer vegetarian lunch options ✓ Participate in "Meatless Monday"	⊗ Highly processed foods (e.g., donuts, cookies, ice cream, cakes, pizza, chips) ⊗ Pork ⊗ Juices, flavored milk, and sugary beverages ⊗ Foods from vending machines or competitive food sales

All meals and snacks are offered and served in the classroom at the following scheduled times:

1. **Breakfast:** 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
2. **Lunch:** 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
3. **Snack:** 2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. *(Snacks must be eaten **only** in the classroom)*

Food Allergies, Intolerances, and Medical Conditions

- Families must submit a medical form for any food allergies, intolerance, or condition that affects a child's diet.
- A **licensed healthcare professional** (e.g., physician or nurse practitioner) must sign the form.
- The form must clearly explain the dietary restrictions and outline any accommodation needed.
- Medical documentation must be **updated as needed,** and at least **every 12 months**.
- **CentroNía is a Nut-Free Facility**. This includes plant/nut based dairy alternatives such as cashew, almond, and coconut for milk, cheese, or yogurt products.

Celebrations and Special Events

- Food is **not** permitted during birthday celebrations.
- Special Events (e.g., family engagement activities, graduations): Food may be allowed only if it meets CentroNía's Food and Wellness Nutrition Standards.

***This is a summary of the Food and Wellness Policy. For more details, please refer to the original policy available on CentroNía's webpage.**

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Curriculum

CentroNía DC ECE Infant and Toddler programs use *Frog Street curriculum while our Pre-K programs use the Creative Curriculum* to promote cognitive, social, emotional, language and physical development through exploration and play.

- CentroNía MD ECE Infant and Toddler programs uses the *Frog Street curriculum* while Pre-K uses the *Children Discover Their World* curriculum developed by the University of Maryland in line with MSDE requirements.
- The teachers foster children's school readiness by using developmentally appropriate materials, conducting activities and organizing the classroom environment to create daily routines that support their intellectual and linguistic development in both languages, English and Spanish, while nurturing their socio-emotional development. The development and learning goals appropriate for each level are posted in the classrooms and are available to parents.

Assessment

Teachers conduct ongoing formative assessments to track child learning and development, making use of each evidence-based curriculum's associated assessment tool. These include Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD, and the Early Learning Assessment (ELA). Teachers collect evidence of children's understanding and behaviors to plan individualized support. This information is shared with parents during the Parent-Teacher Conferences to keep them updated on their child's progress, including strengths and areas for improvement.

- Teachers maintain and share children's work samples, photos, and anecdotal records that reflect the children's ongoing growth and development in language/literacy, math, science, social studies, physical, and socio-emotional areas. This information is used to make decisions about curriculum and teaching and to demonstrate the programs' achievements.
- Assessment information is only shared with administrators, teachers, parents, OSSE (Office of the State Superintendent of Education), and MSDE, as required.

Your Child's Day: Daily Schedule

- A variety of learning experiences are provided by teachers to promote intellectual, linguistic, and physical engagement based on teachers' knowledge of children's needs, interests, and curricular objectives.
- The daily schedule for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers includes a predictable routine, with the flexibility to respond to the needs of the children and changes in the environment. ***It is important that parents support the daily schedule by bringing the children by 9:15 a.m. every day to help them develop self-regulation and auto-control as they develop their independence and autonomy.***
- The daily learning experiences are divided into large and small group activities that address the curriculum content and skills that the teachers have planned. The daily schedule is posted in every classroom and available to parents.
- **Infants Daily Report:** Upon arrival, the parent/guardian must complete the Infant daily report indicating the last diaper change and the last bottle, so teachers can guide the child's day. At the end of the day, you should receive your child's daily report, which covers, but is not limited to diaper changes, feeding, nap times, in need of clothes, etc.). If you do not receive the report, make sure to ask the teacher for it.

Meals

- Breakfast is served from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and snacks from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Snack **must** be eaten in the classrooms.
- Children receive breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack in a "family style" format.
- Monthly menus are posted in each classroom and available to families via CentroNía website. Families must inform any food medical restrictions and allergies, following CentroNía Food and Wellness Policy, to ensure alternative choices are available for their children.
- Children or parents **cannot bring food from outside**, including other classrooms.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important learning opportunity. Children participate in outdoor activities each day, except in extremely inclement weather. The children frequently take walks around the grounds and/or neighborhood and can use developmentally appropriate playground equipment in our facilities or nearby parks, when accessible.

- Every child participates in outdoor experiences and if a child is too ill to go outside, then he or she is too sick to be at the center.
- As necessary, outdoor play may be staggered to ensure adequate distancing and minimize interaction between different classes.

Rest Time

Rest time is an important part of the children's routine to give their bodies the time to recharge after an active morning. We encourage a full nap, but for children who may have difficulty falling asleep, will be encouraged to rest quietly (with a book). Teachers provide a quiet atmosphere by darkening the room and playing soft music.

- In accordance with state regulations, rest time lasts from one to two hours, depending on the age and developmental needs of the children.
- Parents must provide cot sheets and blankets, which should be taken home on Fridays to be laundered over the weekend and returned on Mondays.

Extended Care

Even though CentroNía is open from 7:00am to 6:00pm, children's day is divided according to their program requirements. This means that some children may need care before and after regular program hours. The Extended Care service is provided to eligible children and is arranged through the Admissions Office.

Clothing

It is important that children are dressed comfortably for space and the weather, please use the following guidelines:

- Clothes should be durable and washable for easy movement and exploration
- Children should have accessories to dress appropriately for the weather such as jackets, rain boots, etc.
- Clothing should promote independence: elastic waistbands and simple fasteners on clothes to facilitate toileting, shoes with Velcro, etc.
- Shoes should protect feet; no flip-flops, open-toed shoes, or sandals are allowed

- Parents are responsible for making sure their children always have an extra change of clothes and shoes. If a child has an accident and does not have a change of clothes, families are expected to bring a change of clothes within one (1) hour of being notified or give approval to use clothing available on site.
- Depending on the classroom or outdoor activity, children's clothes can get dirty or stained.

Field Trips

- Off-site trips that are relevant to the children's interests and curriculum content are planned.
- Parents will receive information in advance and signed permission slips are required for every child.
- Teachers will inform the parents of spaces available for adults and when parents need to attend.
- Children who show challenging or defiant behaviors may need additional support during the field trip, and the parent or authorized adult may be required to accompany the children. If an authorized adult cannot accompany the child, they should be kept at home, as no staff will be available at the site to supervise them.

Labeling

Label all your child's personal items (clothing, jackets, personal belongings such as sheets, blankets, etc.) with permanent ink. CentroNía is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

Toilet Training

All children **must be toilet trained before entering the Pre-K program** (by the time they turn 3 years old). Toilet-trained children are expected to be able to do the following on their own:

- Decide when they need to use the toilet
- Pull down and up their own pants/skirt/underwear
- Have sufficient aim to keep clothing and floor dry
- Get their body onto a child-sized toilet
- Wipe/clean themselves with toilet paper
- Toilet training is an important milestone in the development of every child. Parents should start the process at home and notify the teachers to support the child at school.

Please note: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we will admit and accommodate children with disabilities for whom toilet training is delayed or inhibited.

Children 3 years or older (preschool children) should come to school in regular underwear, not diapers or Pull-up type training pants. To enhance children's independence, please dress your child in clothes they can manage on their own, such as elasticized waistbands. Refrain from sending children in belts and overalls unless your child is proficient at removing them and putting them back on.

We expect that preschool children will have occasional accidents. We will keep a record of the accidents, inform the family of them, and discuss what might be causing them. If accidents continue to occur, a meeting may be scheduled with the family to discuss goals and suggest prevention methods that can be put into place, such as scheduling frequent bathroom trips. If accidents continue and are excessive, the policy below will be followed: If accidents continue during the first two weeks, a meeting will be held with the Center director, and a plan will be put in place.

Toys and Personal Articles

To protect learning time and prevent the loss or distraction caused by personal belongings, children should not bring toys, jewelry, money, candy, or electronic devices to school.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Parent Involvement

We highly encourage parent involvement throughout the school year. Reach out to your teacher or Center Manager/Director and ask how you can volunteer in the classroom.

Classroom Visits

Parents are welcome to visit the classroom two months after the school year has begun, and enrollment has been completed.

- We welcome parents; parents must abide by CentroNía' s policies. Parents are required to be respectful to teachers and the classroom routines.
- Parents who want to provide volunteer service in the classrooms need to communicate with the teachers and the program leadership.
- Parents must exhibit calm and respectful behavior during their visits to the center to model this behavior for all children in the center.

Communication with Families

- Throughout the school year, parents will be notified of CentroNía community events, workshops, emergency messaging and weather closures through robo texts, calls, and emails. CentroNía will contact parents through the specified number **(844) 721-5379.** Please make sure this number is saved in your contacts and phone. To ensure your contact information is up to date, contact the CentroNía Admissions Team.
- Parents can find essential information on the sites' bulletin boards, monitor screens, and in the classroom information area. For CentroNía wide information, parents can check the website www.CentroNía.org
- The different ECE Programs will communicate dates and events every month, and the CentroNía Family Center will share resources and classes for parents as they become available.
- The teachers and educational leadership at CentroNía welcome parents to share their concerns and ideas to enhance and improve our programs. Since teachers have very busy days with the children, we ask parents/guardians to request appointments, allowing teachers to make the time and give parents the best attention possible.
- The Program Directors/Managers can also help you if there is any concern regarding your child's experience at CentroNía.
- Parents are encouraged to download ClassDojo to be up to date with classroom activities and important communications between the school and home.

Teacher-Parent Conferences

- Teacher-Parent Conferences are an essential component of our program, designed to foster a strong home-school connection that supports each child's development, growth, and success. These meetings are scheduled **2–3 times per year**, which are coordinated by classroom teachers offering flexibility to accommodate the needs of each family. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend these scheduled meetings or request additional conferences as needed.
- Families may also initiate a conference at any time by contacting their child's teacher or the Center Director or Program Coordinator.

- Parents are notified about the conferences through our Class Dojo app, flyers, and verbally two weeks prior to the date of conferences. Parents can sign up for the date and time convenient to them on the **sign-up sheet that is located in their child's classroom**. These conferences provide an opportunity for families to engage directly with teachers to gain insight into their child's progress and development.
- During these conferences, teachers also share evidence of children's development and learning, offering valuable insights into their progress in concept acquisition, language learning, and overall growth. These meetings serve as a platform for open communication and collaboration between parents and educators to:
    - ✓ Understanding more about your child's development and learning
    - ✓ Observations and assessments
    - ✓ Discussing general and age-appropriate developmental milestones and concerns about diverse learning abilities, special needs, and school readiness
    - ✓ Presentation of internal, local, and natural referral processes and resources
    - ✓ Creating and following up on child, parental, and family goals
    - ✓ Additional topics that will continue to support each child's success
- Before the Parent-Teacher Conferences, parents can request:
    - Additional people at the attendance of the meetings (family members, special education workers, CentroNía leadership, etc.)
    - Separate conferences for divorced or separated parents.
    - Virtual/remote conferences (phone calls, video sessions, etc.)
    - Early morning/late afternoon conferences
- To actively participate in the conferences, please:
    - ➢ Schedule a time that is appropriate for your needs
    - ➢ Arrive on time
    - ➢ Stay focused
    - ➢ Be prepared with proper note taking
    - ➢ Take note of your own observations
    - ➢ Ask questions
    - ➢ Do follow-ups
- We welcome the opportunity to support you and your child as they learn and develop, building school readiness skills that will support their formal school experience in the future.

Language and Accessibility

Conferences are conducted in **English and Spanish** with bilingual staff available. For any other language needs, **translator services** will be arranged upon request. Families are asked to notify us in advance so we can accommodate accordingly.

Screen Time Policy

CentroNía follows the recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and Maryland State Department of Education Office:

- ✓ **Children under 2** should have no screen time.
- ✓ **Children aged 2 and over** should watch less than **30 minutes per week** at childcare and less than **2 hours per day** total.
- ✓ Allowing no more than **15 minutes of educational computer time per day**.
- ✓ Not allowing any screen time during meals and snacks to prevent obesity.

- ✓ Having **zero screen time** (TV, video, computer, and smart devices) for children under the age of two.
- ✓ Allowing a maximum of **30 minutes total per week** of educational and age-appropriate screen time (television, video, DVD, and smart devices).

Facilitated Learning Experiences

Screen time will only be used as part of a facilitated learning experience, meaning there will be adult interaction before, during, or after media use to ensure it is directly related to the lesson plan. Teachers will engage with children by discussing content, asking questions, and providing activities that extend learning beyond the screen.

CentroNía's classrooms does not have televisions. Classrooms are equipped with no more than two PCs available for teachers use.

TRANSITIONS

General Transitions Throughout the School Year

- Transitions are coordinated according to the program the child attends. These include age-level transitions, from home-based to center-based, and transitions when leaving the program.
- CentroNía is a community-based organization that operates year-round. We align with public school's calendar (DCPS and MCPS) to better meet the needs of families.
- While the school year ends in late June, CentroNía continues to offer services through the "summer" period, providing more activities that take advantage of the weather.
- Teachers plan and coordinate classroom and program visits to help children prepare to transition as they move to a new classroom or site.

Kindergarten Transitions

Since our ECE Programs are offered from birth to age 5, we help parents and children get ready for transitioning to kindergarten. Parents are informed of the different school options available. In addition, parents are informed of the kindergarten application and enrollment processes. Teachers and Family Engagement staff may assist parents in completing school applications.

End of Program Celebration

CentroNía conducts an age-appropriate end-of-program celebration for children. The purpose of this ceremony is to celebrate a milestone in your child's lives and enjoy a special time in the company of their teachers and family members.

STUDIO R.O.C.K.S. – SCHOOL AGE: OST PROGRAM

Studio R.O.C.K.S. (Reading, Outdoor, Creativity, Knowledge and Self-Discovery) provides before-and after-school services to students from Pre-K (age 4) up to 4th grade (age 10**)** during the regular school year. Full-day programming is also offered during DCPS school breaks at our Columbia Road site. This program is available to children enrolled at **HD Cooke Elementary School and Harriet Tubman Elementary School.** For families in the DMV area (District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia) we offer seasonal camps —winter, mid-winter, spring and summer —for children ages 4-10 (Pre-K - 4th grade).

Studio R.O.C.K.S. provides enriching programming that supports academic growth, self-discovery, and creative exploration in a bilingual, multicultural environment. The program also enables parents to pursue work or educational goals, confident that their children are in a safe and stable environment under the supervision of caring adults.

Morning Drop-Off Services

Parents must drop their children off at the assigned morning location between 7:00 a.m. to 7:55 a.m., with a 5-minute grace period until 8:00 a.m.

Remember:

- Students **should not** enter the building walk or classroom alone.
- After 8:00 a.m., students will not be permitted to enter. Parents arriving late are responsible for taking their child directly to their school.

Afternoon Pick-Up Services

Students who do not attend morning services must participate in the afternoon session to be marked as "present" for that day. Students should participate in the morning or afternoon activities to be marked as "present" for that day.

- If a student is picked up during transition (e.g., in front of CentroNía or on the street before entering the building), the child will be marked as absent, as they did not fully participate in the program
- To ensure a meaningful experience and adequate participation in program activities (including homework help), parents are encouraged to pick up their child **after 5:30 p.m.**

Child Release Policy

- Children will only be released by CentroNía staff to adults authorized on the enrollment form "*Authorized Adults for Pick-up and Drop-off*".
- Exceptions require a signed written note from the parent prior to the child's departure.
- Under no circumstances will children be released to unauthorized individuals or anyone under the age of 18.

Full Day Service

All day services will be provided to students enrolled in the Studio R.O.C.K.S. year-round program during DCPS closures (e.g., parent-teacher conferences or professional development days).

Early Dismissal

When CentroNía closes for early dismissal before 3:00 p.m., Studio ROCKS program will **not** offer pick-up or afternoon services. Parents must arrange to pick up their child(ren) directly from their DCPS school on these days.

Seasonal Camps

Winter, Mid-winter, spring, and summer camps are offered during DCPS seasonal breaks operating from **8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.**

- Children ages 4-10 (Pre-K - 4th grade) in the DMV area are welcome to join the waiting list. Admissions will contact families if space becomes available, based on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Students attending camps must arrive no later than 9:00 a.m.**
- Parents are expected to participate in a camp orientation if a date is provided.

Behavior Notice for Field Trips

Studio ROCKS program, we strive to maintain a respectful, safe, and positive environment for all students during program activities and field trips. To ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment; especially during our yearly camps and field trips outside of CentroNía premises, we expect all students to follow teachers' instructions and always demonstrate respectful behavior.

If a student displays **defiant or disruptive behavior**, a **behavior report** will be issued. Examples of defiant behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Refusing to listen or follow the instructions of their teachers
- Arguing with a teacher in a disrespectful manner
- Using inappropriate language or cursing
- Bullying *(picking on or name calling another child)*
- Physical Harm *(Fighting, hitting another student or teacher)*
- Running Away from their class

Students who ***accumulate two (2) or more behavior reports in the same week*** will be required to have **one parent *(mother or father only)*** attend that week's field trips with them.

If a parent is unable to attend, the student will not be permitted to participate in the field trip.
This policy helps ensure that all students remain safe, respectful, and accountable for their actions during program activities.

Community Resources

- The following list provides information about resources and services available to children and families in our community. You can also access a digital copy of the community resource list online on our website.
- CentroNía may occasionally receive donations that are distributed to families. When donations are available, they will be distributed equitably based on availability and needs. In cases where we do not have enough resources for all families, staff will refer families to local community agencies and partners that offer additional support.