

# About Us

## *Our Mission*

To provide high quality, comprehensive services to all enrolled Pre-K Counts children and their families. By forming a partnership with parents, staff and community members, we offer services designed to promote the healthiest, safest environment in which children, families and staff can thrive and reach their full potential.

## *Our Philosophy*

Our Pre-K Counts Goals are as follows:

- Prepare and teach preschool children the school readiness skills needed to be ready for school success.
- Foster their intellectual, social and emotional growth
- Provide opportunities for the children and families in our program that will help them for future school and life successes
- Increase the chance of doing well in school, attending college or trade school and having success

## *What Can I Expect From A Pre-K Counts Classroom?*

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts classroom will:

1. Employ teachers with the education and expertise to teach young children
2. Allow children to participate in indoor and outdoor play daily
3. Use a research-based curriculum that will help your child grow academically and socially
4. Regularly review your child's progress and choose teaching and learning activities that are best for your child
5. Help you and your child adjust to pre-kindergarten and smoothly transition to kindergarten
6. Provide a nutritious lunch and snack daily
7. Be open for 180 school calendar days
8. Be open for 5 hours daily, Monday-Friday, from September to June

Please note: admissions, the provision of services and referrals shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, sexual orientation or sex. The most recent non-discrimination of services policy statement will be included in your welcoming packet for reference to our policies.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## *Definition of Services*

Our Pre-K Counts Program offers:

- Quality, tuition-free preschool education for children between the ages of 3 years and 5 years that meet the income eligibility guidelines set forth by the Pre-K Counts program. Families can be eligible if they earn up to 300% of the federal poverty level.
- The Pre-K counts program will be in session for at least 180 days per school year.
- Families enrolled in the Pre-K Counts program may enroll in wrap-around care, depending on space availability. Our Child Care is open 52 weeks per year for those families looking for additional or year-round care.

Please note that Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program does not transport children to and from their homes or afterschool activities.

## *Procedures for Admission*

1. Completed application. You can download the application from our website at [www.cynthiafranckschildcare.com](http://www.cynthiafranckschildcare.com) or pick-up a paper application from the center at 12134 Frankstown Road, Penn Hills PA, 15235.
2. Copy of your child's birth certificate
3. Income verification. Feel free to contact us with any questions concerning state requirements for income verification
4. Most current physical (must be less than 1 year old) and list of immunizations
5. All other paperwork required for admissions that will be included in your welcome packet. There may be additional paperwork for children enrolled in wrap-around care based on DHS Child Care regulations.

## *Wrap- Around Services*

Participation in the Pre-K Counts Program at Cynthia K. Franck's Child Care is free of charge for qualifying families who have been awarded a slot by the determining program. Families participating in our Pre-K Counts program can elect to enroll in wrap-around child care services either before, after or both before and after the Pre-K Counts session for a contracted fee if space is available.

Wrap-around care is provided through the Child Care and is subject to PA DHS Child Care regulations. We do accept ELRC funding for this program. Families are responsible for their share of the tuition and enrollment costs such as registration fees and deposits.

We have included information in your welcoming packet that goes over the basic policies concerning payments if you contract for wrap-around services. We accept cash, check or money order. Payments for wrap-around care will be in accordance with the Child Care's payment and termination of services policies.

*\*\*\*Please note: The Child Care does not provide "drop-in" wrap around care. This means you cannot drop your child off early or leave your child later in the care of the Child Care without contracting ahead of time to do so.*

### *Termination of Services*

Although we will work with families to avoid this step as much as possible, we reserve the right to terminate services if certain situations arise. When possible, we will give families notice beforehand that services will be terminated so that they can find alternative arrangements, unless the severity of the reason calls for immediate termination.

Some situations that may merit termination by the Pre-K Counts Program or wrap-around services include:

- More than 10 consecutive unexcused absences or more than 10% unexcused absences over the course of a school year
- Non-payment for wrap-around services may terminate your ability to utilize that service.
- Unsafe/inappropriate behavior by parents/guardians
- Disrespect/aggressiveness towards our staff
- Destruction of property
- Continuing child behaviors not helped even after employing every step of our Suspension/Expulsion policy through to completion

Because these issues are not the fault of either Cynthia K. Franck's Child Care, Inc. or Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program, please be sure that you are aware of the termination of services information concerning payments for wrap-around care in the unfortunate event of a termination of services.

### *Emergency Closures*

At times, one or more of Cynthia K. Franck's Child Care, Inc. centers or programs may be forced to close for reasons beyond their control. These can range from short term closures of only a few hours to a day (in the case of a weather event or utility disruption,) to longer term closures

lasting weeks to months (due to National Emergency or Pandemic declarations.) We wanted to give our families some information concerning our response to these events.

For short term closures:

- Our Pre-K Counts Program has its own academic calendar, which can be found on our website. Our holiday closings are shown on this calendar.
- We will follow the Penn Hills School District when determining to close our Pre-K classroom for inclement weather. Our Child Care service may or may not stay open on those days.
- Because there are other reasons for emergency closings, there may be times the Pre-K Counts Program and/or Child Care program may need to close when the Penn Hills School District does not. Please check KDKA for closing information in the case of a weather event or utility disruption.
- The Pre-K Counts classroom and/or Child Care reserves the right to close early, open later or close for the day due to weather conditions or community emergencies if staying open puts the lives of our staff, children or families at risk.
- Please refer to the Emergency Operations Plan paper in your initial parent packet for information on our site-specific plans for *immediate evacuation*, *in-place sheltering*, *evacuation* and *modified operations* in the event of an emergency that occurs during hours of operation.

For longer term closures:

1. Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program follows all local, state, federal and CDC instructions and guidelines concerning the implementation of long-term closures and Pandemic Response protocols.
2. If the closure lasts weeks or months, the Executive Administrative Staff will decide, based on circumstances and directives received from the regulatory and funding agencies with which we work, on how to move forward with the continuation of our Pre-K Counts Programming in order to complete the full 180 days of instruction.
3. Please note, as mentioned elsewhere, our staff, as representatives of the Child Care and Pre-K Counts Program, are not permitted to provide private child care for you during these Child Care closures.

**It is important that each family makes sure that the Child Care Pre-K Counts Program has the most up-to-date contact information.** This includes addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. We may use any or all of these means of contact to inform parents of policy changes and/or opening status. We may also post messages, online learning opportunities, links to resources or current response plans on our Facebook page or website.

Our goal is to keep our families and staff as informed as possible during uncertain times. Please be aware that these types of situations can change rapidly and repeatedly during their duration and may involve revising policies and procedures (either long term or short term) already in place as more information and/or operational regulations evolve.

## *Suspension/Expulsion Prevention Policy*

### Policy

We aim to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment that enhances the social and emotional growth of all children and leads to a feeling of being safe and secure while attending Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program. By doing so, all children can develop a positive attitude toward themselves and others through daily activities and interactions. In the event that, after all available services and supports have been provided, a child's needs cannot be met within our inclusive learning environment, an alternative care plan will be developed and implemented to assist the family in finding a program that better fits the child's needs.

### Rationale

Suspension and expulsion have been proven to be harmful to children's health, learning and social/emotional development.

### Responsibility and Accountability Procedure

1. Observe the child and the learning environment throughout the daily schedule and make notes of the child's strengths and concerns.
2. Use the Ages and Stages developmental screening tools to identify children with potential areas of concerns and making note of those concerns.
3. Meet with parents. Parental involvement is one of the most important factors. Work with parents to develop a plan that supports the child's growth and development.
4. If indicated, discuss early intervention services which aid in addressing persistent challenging behaviors.
5. If, after trying all of the above, suspension or expulsion is the last resort, for additional support please call The Connect Hotline at 1-800-692-7288.

## *Attendance policy*

In accordance with Pa Pre-K counts guidelines, all enrolling families must comply with Pre-K Counts attendance guidelines to maintain enrollment.

- All children enrolled in this program are considered full time and must attend 5 days per week for at least 180 days.

- Parents must inform the center of the reason behind any absences. The program may need to ask for proof of reason for absence in order to determine if an absence was excused or not.
- Excused absences are those for reasons such as illness, medical appointments, natural disasters or death in the family. There are some possible exceptions for extenuating circumstances that will be at the discretion of the Child Care's Pre-K Counts program or regulating agency.
- Unexcused absences are those for reasons outside of the definition of excused absences.
- If a student misses more than 3 days in a row without notice, the center will contact the family to find out the nature of the absences.
- If a student has 5 consecutive unexcused absences, the Child Care will meet with the family to establish a plan to minimize future absences.
- More than 10 consecutive unexcused absences or a total of 10% total unexcused absences during a school year will result in termination of Pre-K Counts eligibility as per PA Pre-K Counts regulations.

## **Educational Programs**

### *Inclusion Policy*

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program believes in supporting the inclusion of children of all and varying abilities by promoting their participation in our regular program and activities. We believe this consists of facilitating individualized accommodations and using evidence-based services and supports to help foster each child's physical, social-emotional, cognitive, behavioral, language and communication development. We also believe in fostering positive peer relationships between children. We will work to collaborate with families and any additional supports a parent and/or family have in place in order to accomplish these goals.

If your child has a TSS, we more than welcome them into the classroom.

If your child has an IEP/IFSP plan, the Pre-K Counts Program will also request a copy of it upon enrollment. This information will only be shared with the administrative staff and those working with your child. These forms enable us to properly care for your child and provide a quality educational experience. When an IEP/IFSP plan is being written, please include the childcare in the process so we can also work towards the goals designed for your child.

If your child has a therapist (speech, behavioral, physical, occupational, etc.,) they are more than welcome, with your prior permission, to visit and work with your child in the pre-

kindergarten classroom. Please be aware, though, that since your child is still in our ratios, the therapists may not take your child out of the room or away from the teacher's supervision.

### *Curriculum*

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program is dedicated to providing a nurturing, caring and responsive environment for our children that is facilitated through both intentional concrete sensory activities and their own active exploration of the world around them

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program uses a PA state approved curriculum, that is aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards, based on the Creative Curriculum, called Teaching Strategies Gold.

Our curriculum blends several different learning areas, such as math, literacy, science and social studies, around several multi-week themes. In addition, we also focus on social/emotional skills, like conflict resolution and empathy building, along with supporting emerging fine motor and gross motor skills.

### *Pre-K Counts Program*

Our Pre-K Counts Program strives to support children as they work towards acquiring several key skills recommended for school readiness. Since each child develops at his or her own individual pace, we are dedicated to helping our children work towards these goals by building on their own individual strengths through developmentally appropriate practices. We do this by providing a nurturing, supportive and responsive environment that encourages creativity, exploration and problem solving.

We plan our themes and any field trips/activities based on a combination of our chosen curriculum, the children's interests and the PA Early Learning Standards. We follow all PA state ratios on trips outside of the center.

### *Transitioning Policy*

When your child is ready to move on to kindergarten, we will spend some time helping him or her get ready prior to that move. We seek out information from the Penn Hills School District concerning transitioning events, kindergarten registrations and community engagement days. We help parents with securing transportation to and from the Child Care to the school if they remain in our before/after school program. We also try to transition our students into routines consistent with those they will find in kindergarten as they get closer and closer to pre-kindergarten graduation.

We will also be happy to transfer any of your child's records, upon your request, to his or her elementary school when your child transitions to elementary school. Please put the request in writing with a 2-week window for completion.

### *Child Observation, Assessment and Screening*

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program conducts several formal and informal child observations during the year. We will use these observations to inform our lesson planning.

We also complete a screening tool for all students within the first 45 days of enrollment. We use the Ages and Stages-3 (ASQ-3) Questionnaires. Your child's teacher will fill one out in the first 30 days after enrollment. We will then score them and go over the results with you. This gives us insight into where your child is developmentally and can help determine if there are any areas that may need some extra attention.

We may also, at times, utilize the Ages and Stages-Social-Emotional Questionnaire-2 in our screening process or to help give insight into the children's social emotional development.

We encourage all families to secure recommended vision, hearing and health screenings for their child and share these results with Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts program so that we can support families in moving forward with any additional needs their child may have.

## **Health and Wellness Policies**

### *Illness Policy*

The following are requirements of our Pre-K Counts Program in regard to keeping a sick child at home:

1. If the child has a communicable disease that has not been treated. Some examples are strep throat or pinkeye.
2. If the child has uncontrollable vomiting or diarrhea.
3. If the child has a fever of 102 degrees or more.
4. If a child has a lower fever than that but definite behavior changes, such as lethargy or trouble breathing, your child will be sent home. There is a sheet concerning our illness policy included in your enrollment packet with more information.
5. The Pre-K Counts Program will follow all local, state, federal and CDC guidelines in the event of a pandemic illness.

*Parents must notify the program if their child(ren) are not coming for any of the above reasons.*



THE PROGRAM HAS THE RIGHT TO DENY ACCEPTANCE OF A CHILD WHOM THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF DEEMS TOO ILL TO ATTEND ON ANY GIVEN DAY OR TO REQUEST THAT A CHILD BE REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM IF THE CHILD IS DETERMINED TOO ILL TO REMAIN.

### *Medication Policy*

At Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program, we will administer prescription and over-the-counter medications as needed in accordance with the below guidelines:

1. Parents are required to complete and sign a medicine request form if they desire to have medications given to their child.
2. All medicines must be in their original containers, clearly marked with the child's name. Any prescription medicines, including inhalers and nebulizer vials, must be in the original container with the prescription attached, stating the child's name and dosing instructions. (You may want to let your pharmacist know that you will be needing to leave items like inhalers and vials at both home and the center so that they can provide you with the proper packaging to do so.)
3. Medicine must be given to the administrative staff for safe keeping.
4. All medicine, lotions, chap sticks, hand sanitizers, cough drops, etc., must be kept out of reach of the children in a locked cabinet or in a refrigerator locked box. You cannot leave it in their cubbies or their back packs.
5. If you would like, you can leave an over-the-counter pain reliever at the program for emergencies. No medicine will be given to your child without your permission.
6. If you need to leave an inhaler or epi-pen on site, we need notice from your doctor that the need is a reoccurring one. They can either write and sign a note stating so or mark on your child's health assessment that there is a chronic need for the medication.
7. Our staff is not trained to do invasive medical treatments such as administering injections. They are also not trained or responsible for determining dosages for medications when one is not clearly stated on the packaging or indicated by a medical professional on the original prescription.
8. Please also note that we will not give more than the recommended dosage as indicated, even with parental insistence or permission. We are also unable to mix medication with food or drinks.
9. The program cannot accept expired medicine for keeping.
10. Please be aware that since we do not provide medicines ourselves, we do not have the cups or syringes that go with your child's medicine. Do not forget to provide one with the correct dosage amounts. Our staff is not trained to properly convert dosages to another system of measurement.

## CACFP Food Program

We provide our meals, at no cost to families, with funding through the CACFP (Federal Food Program.) Upon enrollment and every August thereafter, each family participating is required to complete enrollment paperwork concerning this program.

We follow CACFP guidelines to ensure your child is receiving everything they need in a meal to stay active and healthy. Our lunches always contain a *protein, carbohydrate and two servings of fruit/veggies along 1% milk*. We post monthly menus that include a mix of both hot and cold meals that contain all recommended components for a healthy meal.

We will also work with families to accommodate special dietary restrictions as much as possible under the CACFP guidelines. If your child is on a special diet, please speak with the Pre-K counts staff in order to come up with a plan to meet all of your child's recommended daily dietary requirements.

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts program will supply a morning snack and lunch daily.

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)*

*If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office or call (866) 632-9992 to request a form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or by email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

*Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339 or (800)845-6136 (Spanish.)*

*The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## Dress policy

In order for your children to be comfortable to fully enjoy and participate in their classroom activities, we ask parents follow a few general rules when dressing their children for the day.

1. All clothing should be marked with your child's first and last name.
2. We ask that your child wears closed-back and closed-toe shoes for safety and stability.  
NO SANDALS!

3. Children should be dressed for play. Clothes should be loose fitting enough to permit freedom of movement and completion of basic self-help skills.
4. Since we are not responsible for stained or dirty clothes, you do not want to dress your child in anything you do not want dirty.
5. Clothing should be seasonally appropriate. Be aware that the children go outside, weather permitting, even when the temperatures get cooler, per state regulations. If you do not have appropriate clothing for your child to go outside in, we will contact you to bring some in so that your child can fully participate.
6. You will need to bring in at least 2 extra full sets of clothing for emergencies. You may want to bring in even more for those recently potty-trained. Do not forget socks and, if possible, shoes too!

If you have forgotten additional clothes and there is need for a change, a call will be made to you in order for you to bring in the necessary items for your child. There is no borrowing of clothing from others.

The Pre-K Counts Program does not assume responsibility for any lost or stolen items brought to the program.

### *Toys from Home*

Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program requests that parents do not allow their child(ren) to bring toys from home. The program does not take responsibility for any items brought from home that are soiled, broken or lost while on the premises. We also cannot assure that these items will meet our regulatory safety requirements or that they not be accidentally intermingled with center toys and equipment. Additionally, it can be confusing for the other children in an environment where all of the other toys are for community play. No phones or other electronic equipment are to be brought into the classroom or childcare.

NO TOYS FROM HOME ARE PERMITTED except for the following:

1. Transition items needed during the first few days of enrollment.
2. The only exceptions for electronic devices would be for those used as documented educational or developmental supports (by a medical professional, IEP, IFSP or other treatment plan,) or for long-distance learning for school-aged children (through the school district) during an emergency school closure during the school year.

**NO GUNS, WEAPONS OR OTHER TOYS OF DESTRUCTION ARE TO BE BROUGHT TO THE CLASSROOM OR CHILD CARE.** They will be confiscated and returned to you upon departure.

# Safety Policies

## Drop Off and Pick up Policies

We hope that each parent will bring his or her child into the child care during the weeks prior to starting to visit. We ask for you to stay with your child in their room for at least an hour to acquaint both you and your child with the routine and the caregivers.

1. *You must wait until your scheduled arrival time before dropping off your child*
2. *If you are not contracted for wrap-around services, you may not drop your child off early just because you have time constraints. If you need to utilize our wrap-around care, even for a short duration, please speak with the administrative staff to see if any arrangements are possible (wrap-around care has a fee for usage and is subject to availability.)*
3. *We ask parents and authorized pick-up people to be off of their cell phones when picking up or dropping off. It is extremely important that you walk into the room and speak with your child's caregiver. This is for the safety of everyone involved and ensures the teacher knows your child is now entering or leaving his or her care.*

### Drop off:

- Parents must walk their child(ren) into the childcare per state law.
- Parents must sign in at the computer.
- Parents must walk their child(ren) to their designated room(s).
- Parents need to tell the Director or Primary Staff person of any changes to their child(ren's) pick up routine.

### Pick Up:

- Parents need to come into the childcare to pick up their child per state law.
- Parents need to sign their child(ren) out.
- Parents must come into the child's room to see the teacher and pick up any notes or belongings that are intended to go home that night.
- If a designated person is picking up your child(ren), we need notice prior to their arrival. This can be done either when dropping off or by phone.
- The designated person must present valid photo identification.
- The designated person must be at least 16 years of age.
- The parent or the designated person must pick up all items belonging to the child that are intended to go home daily.
- The parent or designated person must have a car seat or booster seat as appropriate per state law.

- The Pre-K Counts Program reserves the right to deny any person the right to pick-up a child if that person appears to pose a threat to the safety of that child. This includes, but is not limited to, any person appearing to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

### *Custody Agreements and Child Release Policies*

In accordance to Section 3270.117 of the PA Child Care Regulations, we must release a child to either biological parent unless we have a court order on file at the facility prohibiting us from doing so. In order to enforce this, we will need a copy on file of any court order, PFA or custody agreement you may have that limits or denies a biological parent's access to your child(ren.)

All personal information you share with the center is kept confidential. Only information pertinent to the safe and appropriate care of your child(ren) will be shared with those that need to know to it, which may include administrative staff, those in direct care of your child or those staff responsible for operations at departure times.

### *Supervision*

The Pre-K Counts Program takes every step possible to provide the best supervision for the children in our care. To do this, we stay aligned with Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts child-to-staff ratios. Teachers do headcounts frequently throughout the day, especially when they move between areas or take the children outside. Please make sure when you drop off or pick up that you speak to your child's teacher so that he/she is aware your child is either entering or leaving their care

### *Transportation Safety*

Most, if not all, transportation for Pre-K Counts field trips will be through outside transportation companies in regulation school busses.

When transporting children, whether for field trips, to/from school or for emergency purposes, the Pre-K Counts Program follows all applicable state mandated ratios and safety restraint laws for transportation at all times.

### *Confidentiality*

We, at Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program want you to know that we take the confidentiality of your information seriously. All our staff signed a detailed confidentiality agreement upon initial employment that explains what information is confidential, under what

circumstances they may share information and with whom they may share it. Any personal information you provide is only shared on a need-to-know basis with the appropriate staff. We are also obligated to share information we obtain with our regulatory agencies if asked to do so.

At times, you may request for us to share information about your child's academic or behavioral history (when trying to apply for developmental or behavioral supports or completing an IEP) or your financial information (for Section 8 paperwork or other assistance programs.) You may also want to give a therapist, BCE or TSS permission to visit at the center and discuss your child's progress with his or her teacher. In all these cases, and any others that may arise, we will need prior permission from you, preferably in writing, to share the requested information.

### *Family Engagement Outside of the Centers*

Our staff follow strict guidelines in terms of appropriate contact with families outside of the Pre-K Program and Child Care environments. This is both to protect your confidentiality and to promote the equal treatment of our families.

1. As representatives of Cynthia K. Franck's Child Care, Inc. and Pre-K Counts Program our employees are not permitted to babysit or otherwise work for our clients' families.
2. Staff are not permitted to visit our clients' homes or attend our clients' personal family events, at home or elsewhere, such as birthday parties, celebrations or direct sales parties (like Pampered Chef, Lularoe or Mary Kay.)
3. Staff are not permitted to individually participate in any school or activity fundraisers the children may have.
4. Our staff are not permitted to "friend" families on social media or to post pictures of, or information about, your children on their personal social media, such as Facebook or Instagram.
5. Our staff are not permitted to contact you through phone, email or other social media to talk and/or share information "after hours."
6. Our staff are not permitted to use their personal phones to take pictures of the children unless they receive prior administrative permission (for a project or to document an event for the center's use.) If you would like your child's picture taken (for a holiday party or first day of school, etc.,) you are more than welcome to leave a camera with your child's teacher or the administrative staff to do so.

### *Mandated Child Abuse Reporting*

All of our staff and facility persons are classified as Mandated Reporters under PA CPSL regulations. Under 3270.19 of the PA Child Care Regulations, if any staff person has reason to

believe a child enrolled has been abused, it is their responsibility under law to report the suspected abuse to ChildLine, then follow up within 48 hours with a written report to the CPS unit investigated the report.

All Cynthia K. Franck's Child Care, Inc. and Pre-K Counts Program staff are required by law to obtain certain clearances in order to be employed by the centers. These clearances are explained under the staff requirements section of the handbook. Each clearance must be renewed every 60 months in accordance to PA CPSL regulations. All staff must also take a 3-hour Mandated Child Abuse Reporting class within their first 90 days of employment, to be renewed every 60 months as well.

## **Family Communication**

### *Daily communication*

Information about your child's day will be posted daily for parents, along with individual notes as needed. These postings include information about daily meals and activities. Please check your child's cubby daily for individualized information or notices.

We try to communicate with parents in a variety of ways beyond just notes in cubbies. Some of these include verbal conversations, individual notes, signs posted by the sign-in computer, Facebook posts and soon, through email. Please be sure to put the email you would want us to use to inform you of any happenings on your emergency contact forms.

Any childcare closings or delays will be on KDKA. If the Penn Hills School District closes for inclement weather, our Pre-K Counts classroom will also be closed for the day.

There is more information about emergency closings in your welcoming packet if you are contracted for wrap-around care. If your child attends full day on a day our Pre-K counts classroom is closed, please be aware that you may accrue additional tuition charges depending on your contract with the Child Care.

### *Family Participation*

We, at Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program, welcome and encourage our families to participate in our programs as much as they are able. This can be as simple as keeping the lines of communication open with your child's teacher or dropping in to read a story.

We believe we are in this together with our families, working as a team to provide the best quality environment for your children. We welcome you to join us anytime to visit with your

child's class. Even if you are unable to take time during the day to visit the center, you are still an important part of our Pre-Kindergarten family! There are several ways parents can participate in our programs, both in person or through sharing information (such as sharing family or holiday traditions with the staff and children either in person or through books, food, pictures or recommendations for websites.)

### *Parent/Teacher Conferences*

One of the best ways to participate in your child's educational experience is to attend your child's Parent/Teacher conferences. As a participant in the Pre-K Counts program, we offer at least two parent/teacher conferences each school year that families are expected to attend.

During these conferences, we let you know what our goals for your child's learning experience are and what we are doing to move towards them. In the fall, we discuss what we are working on over the next several months and help connect the dots between activities and your child's developmental growth. In the spring, you can see the progress your child has made throughout the year and how that will prepare them for the next step in their journey. It is also a good time for you to share your questions and concerns, your expectations and your pride in your child's accomplishments.

Additionally, we believe parent/teacher conferences are a perfect opportunity to provide parents with helpful information on other topics relevant to their children's health and developmental stages, ranging from biting behaviors in toddlers to informational resources on immunizations and common childhood illness.

### *Family Resources*

At Cynthia K. Franck's Pre-K Counts Program, we aim to support our families in and out of the classroom environment. This includes making both informational and community resources accessible to families in times of need.

We have, over the years, collected articles and information on different topics, ranging from childhood health/illness to developmental milestones to talking to children after a traumatic event. If you feel that you or your family need information on a particular subject, please feel free to ask if we have, or know of, resources that may help.

Each center has a list posted of area stakeholders that families can contact for information in their communities. We have also used *The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework* tool to guide us when putting together resource binders for our families. These binders contain information on local, regional and state agencies or services that you can contact to help support the unique needs of your family.