



Head Start
Child Development Program

Parent Handbook

Head Start Child Development Program

State Subsidized Classrooms

Lakeport Head Start & State Preschool

Upper Lake Head Start & State Preschool

Meadowbrook Head Start & State Preschool, Clearlake

Nokomis Head Start/State Preschool & EHS/CCTR, Ukiah

Peach Tree Head Start/State Preschool & EHS/CCTR, Ukiah

Willits Head Start/State Preschool & Willits EHS/CCTR

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Approved by NCO Governing Board January 24, 2018

WELCOME

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to North Coast Opportunities, Inc. Head Start Child Development Program (HSCDP). This handbook was created to assist you in learning about our program and its requirements. HSCDP is a comprehensive, family focused child development program providing health, mental health, nutrition education, disabilities, and other services to families. Our program focuses on positive child and family outcomes and to prepare children for success in school and throughout life. Our goal is to provide a quality preschool or early childhood education experiences for your child, build a supportive and collaborative partnership with you, and provide you with critical information and other community resources.

We are confident that you and your family will have a wonderful experience at your NCO Head Start Child Development Program Center.

Sincerely,

Miriam McNamara, Program Director

OUR PROGRAM

The North Coast Opportunities (NCO) Head Start Child Development Program (HSCDP) was established locally in 1968. The HSCDP operates eleven centers throughout Lake and Mendocino Counties. Funding is provided by a Federal Head Start/Early Head Start grant and by State of California Department of Education contract funding for state preschool (CSPP) and state childcare (CCTR). Head Start and state CSPP funds are blended to provide extended day services to preschool children in 6 Lake and Mendocino County centers. Early Head Start and state CCTR funds are blended to provide extended day services to infants and toddlers in 3 Mendocino County centers.

Our mission is to empower children to reach their highest potential.

Our vision is to be well known in the communities we serve as a place where happy, healthy children are growing and learning.

The HSCDP does not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, or immigration status in determining which children are served.

We welcome children with special needs and provide accommodations as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Children with special needs are routinely integrated into all classrooms. We also welcome children that are not yet potty trained and diapers used in centers are provided free of charge.

At HSCDP every day is a celebration of life, children and families. We want every child and family to feel included in the fun regardless of religious background or home culture, therefore we acknowledge holidays but do not celebrate special holidays or teach holiday curriculum at our centers. In addition, federal and state regulations do not allow HSCDP to provide religious instruction or worship.

We honor parents as their child's first teacher. We have an open-door policy that welcomes parent participation in their child's classroom and provides many other opportunities for parent involvement in the program.

LOCATIONS (Extended day centers only)

Lake County:

Lakeport Head Start & State Preschool

License #173009608

864 Lakeport Blvd.
Lakeport, CA 95453
(707) 263-8213

Meadowbrook Head Start & State Preschool

License #173002579

6958 Meadowbrook Dr.
Clearlake, CA 95422
(707) 994-0854

Upper Lake Head Start & State Preschool

License #173001847

629 Second St.
Upper Lake, CA 95485
(707) 275-2721

Serving preschoolers 3-5 years old, M-F 8 am – 2 pm

Mendocino County:

Peach Tree Head Start/State Preschool & Early Head Start/CCTR

License #233008828

425A S. Orchard Ave.
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 463-8600

Serving preschoolers 3-5 years old, M-F 8 am – 4 pm and toddlers 18–36 months, M-Th 7:45 am – 4:15 pm & F 7:30 am – 1:30 pm

Nokomis Head Start/State Preschool & Early Head Start/CCTR

License #233002483

499 Washington Ave.
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 462-2671

Serving preschoolers 3-5 years, M-F 8 am – 2 pm and toddlers 24-36 months, M-Th 7:45 am – 4:15 pm & F 7:30 am – 1:30 pm

Willits Early Head Start & CCTR

License #233003724

Brookside Elementary School Campus
Spruce & Lincoln Way
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 459-1457

Serving infants & toddlers 3-36 months, M-Th 7:45am – 4:15 pm & F 7:30 am – 1:30 pm

Willits Head Start & State Preschool

License #230111196

Brookside Elementary School Campus
Spruce & Lincoln Way
Willits, CA 95490

Serving preschoolers 3-5 years old, M-F 8 am – 2 pm

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

5 CCR Section 18271

DESIRED RESULTS DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE: (5 CCR 18272)

HSCDP is committed to improving the school readiness of all children by measuring progress in cognitive, physical and social-emotional domains and developing individualized goals to move each child along the developmental continuum.

- We do this by conducting ongoing assessments using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) tool.
- DRDP profiles are completed three times on all children, beginning within the first 60 days of enrollment (usually around the end of October) and again in January and March.
- After each assessment data is aggregated and results are reviewed, analyzed and used by teachers to plan and conduct age and developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Parent/teacher conferences are held after each assessment to share information and to help develop goals for home and school that will support the child's growth, development and school readiness.

EDUCATION PROGRAM: (5 CCR 18273)

HSCDP is committed to giving all children opportunities to develop positive self esteem, social competence and a desire to learn. We use a comprehensive and integrated approach in developing and delivering education services that are aligned with all state and federal mandates. Each child is recognized for his or her individual uniqueness and the curriculum and is strength-based to insure that each child is acknowledged for their individual abilities and needs.

Curriculum: HSCDP provides safe, nurturing and inclusive learning environments that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, that are inclusive of children with special needs, that include predictable transitions and routines and that promote literacy and numeracy development. The California Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Framework, positive behavior supports and the Creative Curriculum for Preschool and Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers provide the foundational principles of our curriculum. Enhancements to the curriculum include:

- Food for Thought – a nutrition education curriculum.
- Second Step - a positive behavior support curriculum.
- I Am Moving I Am Learning - a gross motor curriculum.

Screenings: Within 45 calendar days of entry into the program, all children are screened using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) – a developmental screening tool and the Ages & Stages Social Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ:SE) – a social emotional screening tool.

- All information from screenings is shared with parents at teacher conferences.
- Screenings help teachers and parents identify strengths and concerns.
- Screenings help teachers and parents individualize activities to support the child's development.

ENVIRONMENTAL RATING SCALES: (5 CCR 18281)

HSCDP uses the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) to measure each classroom environment and evaluate what changes, if any, would be beneficial to children and staff.

- ECERS/ITERS observations are conducted in each classroom once a year.
- Staff members who conduct the observation are trained to use the rating scale.
- Results are analyzed by education supervisory and management staff.
- Action plans are developed for classrooms that score below certain numbers in each domain.

- Education supervisory and management staff provide additional training, instructional materials or assistance with schedule changes, supervision, space, etc. to improve the classroom environment if indicated.

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES: (5 CCR 18276)

HSCDP recognizes it is in a privileged position to instill good health practices that will be beneficial to the children it serves. In addition, we have the opportunity to educate parents and staff in healthy lifestyle and illness/injury prevention practices. Children cannot learn if their basic physical health needs are not being met. We work with the family to ensure:

- Well child exams and immunizations are up to date.
- Dental and audio/vision screenings are conducted in the classrooms and referrals for follow up treatment are made and monitored for completion.
- A lead test at 12 and 24 months or one before the age of 5 is administered.
- Daily health checks are conducted by trained staff to ensure the child is ready to learn.
- Children and families are educated on the benefits of positive health and dental health practices in the classroom, one on one with family services staff and during monthly parent meetings.
- Referrals to health and social services are provided to families based on needs identified during the screening process or family goal setting meetings.
- Each family is linked with a medical and dental “home” within 90 days of entering the program.

NUTRITION: (5 CCR 18278)

HSCDP promotes high standards of nutrition in all aspects of the program. Good nutrition is seen as a vital link to learning and overall health. Children, families and staff are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits:

- A healthy food policy was created by the Program Policy Council (PPC) that supports the inclusion of healthy foods in centers and at parent functions.
- Children are served breakfast, lunch and snack, depending upon their hours of attendance.
- Menus focus on fresh seasonal foods and offer a variety to introduce children to new foods in different ways.
- Menus are culturally and developmentally appropriate for the age of the children served and meet or exceed Child Care Food Program nutritional requirements.
- Meals are cooked on site for each classroom by trained cooks.
- Meals are served family style and children are allowed to choose the foods they eat.
- Staff or adult volunteers are at each table to model politeness and provide a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere to allow children opportunities for socialization and to develop healthy attitudes about food.
- The Food for Thought Curriculum is used in classrooms to extend learning about the foods that are served.
- Nutrition information is provided to all families through newsletters, recipes, monthly menus, parent education sessions and home visits.
- Colorful nutrition education information and menus are displayed in parent rooms reflecting the meals served and any current topics that promote healthy eating.
- Heights and weights screenings for children are conducted in classrooms twice yearly and parents are informed of any concerns and given information or referrals if indicated.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION: (5 CCR 18275)

Parent engagement is the cornerstone of the HSCDP. One of our most important goals is to support parent/guardians as the principal influence in their child's life. Staff works in partnership with families to support their child's school readiness. Staff support parents in developing goals for themselves and provide information or resources in the community that will help them reach their goals. Through our family partnership agreement process HSCDP staff works to support family wellbeing, nurturing parent-child relationships, families as lifelong learners and educators, family connections to peers and community and families as advocates and leaders. We do this by providing:

- An orientation for parents that provides an introduction to their child's center and covers basic information in this handbook and about the program.
- **An open door policy** where parents are exposed to many opportunities for family participation such as volunteering in the classroom, attending and/or assisting with monthly parent events, serving on the Program Policy Council – which is the parent advisory committee that helps the program make decisions about the program, and the Health Services Advisory Committee – which consists of community health providers, parents and staff that discuss policies, procedures and resources for health services in the communities we serve.
- A family services staff person to assist each family with screenings, referrals, family goal setting, positive parenting, the family partnership agreement process to develop family life goals, and kindergarten transitions.
- Parent conferences with family services staff and teachers two to four times a year, held at home, at the center, or another location of the parent's choice.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: (5 CCR 18277)

HSCDP engages in a process of collaborative partnership with many community agencies. We recognize that community partnerships are vital to our mission of recruiting families most at need and providing referrals to enrolled children and families. Some of the ways we do this are by:

- Having a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with numerous community providers such as regional centers, county offices of education, local school districts, Child Protective Services, Healthy Start, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, WIC, Foster Grandparents, Rural Communities Child Care, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, First 5, county health and human service agencies, county special education local plan areas (SELPA's), etc. These MOU's spell out mutually beneficial services that each provide to the other.
- Inviting community members to sit on the Program Policy Council and the Health Services Advisory Committee.
- Recruiting children and families year-round by advertising in local papers, family magazines and on radio.
- Developing recruitment materials and distributing them to local agencies and locations such as laundromats, libraries, clinics and doctor's offices, markets, food banks and WIC offices.
- Staff attending and recruiting at community events focused on children and families.
- Encouraging parents to plan and conduct fund development projects for their child's center.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS: (5 CCR18279)

HSCDP is committed to program self-evaluation and ongoing continuous improvement to ensure we are not only in compliance with the many state and federal regulations we must follow, but that we also continue to find innovative ways to build upon the existing services we provide. Our annual self-evaluation components include:

- Administering the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) to all children within the first 60 days of enrollment and then two additional times during the school year.
- Measuring each classroom environment using the Environmental Rating Scale for infants/toddlers or preschoolers.

- Conducting an annual parent survey using the Desired Results Parent Survey.
- Training and then conducting a program self-assessment in mid-year with Program Policy Council (PPC) members, staff, board and community members participating.
- Data from the DRDP, ERS, parent surveys and the program self-assessment are entered into a data base and the results are analyzed by the PPC and education and other service area specialists and managers.
- Once the results are analyzed, staff develops goals, action steps and timelines that are reviewed by the PPC.
- Action steps and timelines are periodically monitored by managers and modified when necessary.
- A Program Self-Evaluation Report is then submitted to the CDE by June 1st of each year.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: (5 CCR 18274)

HSCDP is committed to providing high quality services to children and families by recruiting, hiring and retaining fully qualified teaching staff. Our staff development program includes the following components:

- There are written job descriptions for all staff that include minimum requirements for education and experience. Lead teachers, associate teachers and site supervisors hold the appropriate credentials or permits issued by the State of California.
- Upon hire all staff attend several orientations covering topics such as program overview, federal and state regulations, health and safety, child abuse reporting, blood-borne pathogens training, program service area overview and employee policies and benefits.
- All employees receive a written performance review within the first six months of employment and annually thereafter. Performance goals for lead teachers are based directly on results from observations of their classroom using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
- There is a staff training program. A staff-led training committee gathers input annually from various sources and develops training plans for each position category. Individual and group trainings are conducted weekly, monthly, and annually and are evaluated for effectiveness. Training plans are reviewed and approved annually by the PPC.
- Staff communicate by phone and email, a weekly memo packet, newsletters, calendars, weekly staff meetings, monthly group clusters for site supervisors, teachers, and family service workers, and a monthly employee committee meeting where a representative from each center meets directly with the program director.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES—PARENT SURVEY: (5 CCR 18280)

We conduct an annual parent survey. This survey asks for your feedback about the childcare and development program your child attends. The California Department of Education is very interested in how the program helps you to support your child's learning and development and meet your family's needs.

HOW TO QUALIFY FOR THE PROGRAM

ELIGIBILITY:

Applies to Head Start/State Preschool and Early Head Start/CCTR extended day classrooms only. Age and income eligibility will be determined as follows:

Age: For proof of child's age we require one of the following documents:

- Copy of birth certificate
- DSS Passport to services
- Baptismal certificate
- Copy of Medi-Cal card
- Copy of any other legal document containing child's name and date of birth

Eligibility criteria: Eligibility is based on 1) family being a current cash aid recipient, or 2) family being income eligible, or 3) family is homeless, or 4) family has a child who is at risk of abuse or neglect or is receiving child protective services through the county social services department. Enrollment Coordinators will assist you individually with specific documentation that is required for your particular circumstance. Examples include:

- Income for month preceding application, including but not limited to gross wages including overtime, tips, bonuses, child support. Also gambling, lottery winnings, disability or unemployment or workers compensation, or portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes as tuition, books, or supplies. Income documentation will be required for each adult living in the home that is counted in family size.
- Current cash aid recipient - Notice of Action from welfare department, receipt, Passport to Services, etc.
- Homelessness - referral from emergency shelter or your written declaration of homelessness and a statement describing your living situation.
- Child Protective Services - statement from local county welfare department dated within 6 months that includes specific information.
- At risk of abuse or neglect - a statement from a legally qualified professional licensed by the State of California to provide legal, medical, health or social services, including probable duration of the at risk situation.

Family Size: In order to determine eligibility based on income, family size must also be determined. Family consists of parents (biological, adoptive, stepparent, foster, relative, legal guardian, domestic partner of the parent or any other adult living with the child that has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child), and children for whom the parents are responsible who comprise the household in which the child applying for services lives. At least one of the following documents will be required for each child living in the household. Enrollment Coordinators will assist you if you have any questions.

- Birth certificate
- Child custody court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster Care placement records
- School or medical records
- County welfare department records
- Other documentation that is reliable and indicates the relationship of the child to the parent

Additionally, if you are the only parent signing the application and the child's birth record indicates the child has another parent whose name does not appear on the application, you self-certify the presence or absence of that parent by initialing item 1 in Section V on the second page of the CD9600 application for services, and by checking the single box at the top of Section I.

NEED FOR CARE:

Applies to Early Head Start/CCTR classrooms only. Once a child is determined eligible, then the hours of need for care must be determined. Documentation for at least one of the following must be provided. Enrollment Coordinators will assist you with filling out forms that are required for your particular circumstance.

- Employment (if days/hours of need for care cannot be determined from pay stub, enrollment coordinators will obtain verification from employer with your permission. If self employed a declaration of days/hours of need with supporting documentation will be required.
- Actively seeking employment– no more than 5 days a week for less than 30 hours per week –a parental declaration required.
- Seeking permanent housing– no more than 5 days a week for less than 30 hours per week.
- Training toward vocational goal (must be for vocational trade – not just degree programs) CD9605 form required – can include travel and study time - enrollment will assist with service limitations.
- Parental incapacity will be based on statement from health professional. CD9606 form required – enrollment will provide guidance.
- Child receiving Child Protective Services - need for care hours will be determined by written referral.
- Child at risk of abuse or neglect - need for care hours determined by written referral.

FAMILY FEES:

Applies to Early Head Start/CCTR classrooms only. Some families with children enrolled in state subsidized childcare may be required to pay a fee. Fees are based on family size and income. Family fees, if any, will be at the current State government-prescribed rates and will be detailed separately on the CD9600 Enrollment Contract.

Family fees are waived for Child Protective Services and at-risk families for a maximum of 12 months if requested in the written referral by the CPS worker or qualified professional. Fees are also waived for families receiving CalWORKs cash aid.

- Fees are charged per family, not per child. If the family has more than one child in a state subsidized childcare program, the fee shall be assessed and collected based on the child who is enrolled for the longest period of time.
- Fees are charged and collected in advance of services, and no adjustment shall be made for excused or unexcused absences. If the parent(s) work on a fluctuating schedule, the fee may be estimated in advance and then adjusted the following month. Any credits will be applied to the subsequent billing period.
- Parents will receive a bill on the 20th of each month in advance of childcare services to be provided the following month. Fees are to be paid in full by cash or check by the 1st of the month and are delinquent by the 7th of the month. If fees are not paid, a Notice of Action (NOA) will be issued for delinquent fees and childcare services will be terminated 14 days from receipt of the NOA unless fees are paid in full.
- If necessary, a parent may request a reasonable payment plan for payment of delinquent fees by contacting the EHS Enrollment Coordinator. A written, signed payment plan will be developed. Childcare services will continue provided future fees are paid in full when due and delinquent fees are paid according to the payment plan. If a parent misses a payment while on an agreed upon payment plan, a NOA will be issued for violating the parent fee policy and child care services will be terminated 14 days from receipt of the NOA unless all delinquent fees are paid in full.
- Upon termination of services for nonpayment of delinquent fees, the family will be ineligible for future state subsidized childcare services until all delinquent fees are paid in full. Additionally, the delinquent account may be turned over to a collection agency.

Diaper Policy. The program provides diapers for children enrolled in the program while they are in attendance.

- Families will not be charged for or be required to provide diapers for their child's use while attending the program.

HOW FAMILIES ARE SELECTED

NCO HSCDP actively recruits for families year-round and accepts walk-ins at all Head Start/State Preschool and Early Head Start/CCTR sites and at the Ukiah central administrative office. A waiting list is maintained year-round to fill vacancies as they occur.

Services for extended day classrooms are funded by federal and state contracts which define rules for eligibility. A Priority Rating Scale based on these federal and state criteria is developed annually with input from the Program Policy Council and the community assessment. Priority ranking for selection in a Head Start/State Preschool classroom or an Early Head Start/CCTR classroom include but are not limited to:

- Child Protective Services recipient or referral
- Child at risk of abuse or neglect as determined by written referral from a licensed professional
- Eligible four-year-old children
- Eligible families with the lowest gross family income relative to family size

Children with diagnosed disabilities and homeless families are also given priority. Information from the child application is used to develop points that are then entered into a data base. The data base is used to produce a waiting list in order of ranking. In the case of identical rankings, the age of the child (4-year-old vs. 3-year-old for State Preschool), exceptional needs and earliest application date is considered.

As classroom openings become available, children with the highest points are matched to the appropriate classrooms and the family is notified for completion of required pre-enrollment paperwork.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Application for services: The first step in the application process is to fill out the Head Start/Early Head Start Application. Applications are available on the NCO website (www.ncoinc.org) or at the Head Start Central Office, 550 N. State Street, Ukiah, or at any of the Head Start/Early Head Start centers in Lake and Mendocino Counties. The application itself lists the documents required to determine eligibility and can be delivered or mailed to any Head Start/Early Head Start center or the Central Office.

- Once the application is turned in an enrollment coordinator will mail you a letter to verify receipt of the application and to request any additional documentation if needed.
- All enrollments are coordinated through the Central Office in Ukiah, however eligibility interviews can be conducted by appointment at any of the Head Start/Early Head Start centers.
- Ideally a pre-enrollment packet is completed in person with an enrollment coordinator or other designated staff, however, it may be conducted by phone if it is a hardship for the parent(s) to meet in person.
- Once the pre-enrollment paperwork is complete the child is placed on the waitlist according to priority points and the parent is notified of the application status by letter.
- When there is an opening in your preferred classroom or geographical area, an enrollment coordinator will telephone you to assist in completing the enrollment process. If the enrollment coordinator is unsuccessful in contacting you after three attempts a letter will be sent requesting you contact enrollment by a certain deadline. If you do not contact enrollment within the stated time, the enrollment coordinator will move on to the next eligible child on the waitlist.
- If the placement for the child is for a CDE subsidized extended day classroom additional paperwork will be required as follows: A CD9600 Confidential Application for Child Development Services & Certification of Eligibility, a CD7617 **Notice of Action** (this is issued for all changes to services such as approval, denial, termination, delinquent fees, etc.

and establishes the parental right to appeal); a CD800 Fraud Policy and other documentation that may be required to determine need for care hours and/or parent fees. These enrollment forms are required by the CDE and are in addition to the Head Start/Early Head Start Application and other paperwork. The enrollment coordinator will provide all documentation necessary and will walk you through this process and the documents will be signed by both yourself and the enrollment coordinator before your child may begin attending school.

HOW TO CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM

Abide by NCO HSCDP policies, procedures and requirements: To continue receiving services for your child you must abide by all policies, procedures and requirements. Head Start/Early Head Start services are provided free of charge to families. The only fee for services, based on family size/ income, may be for childcare services received for providing extended day services to infants and toddlers. Most of the HSCDP policies, procedures and requirements are based on regulations required by our funding sources and we are held accountable for the federal and state funding we receive. Also, because we provide referrals and services for the whole family as well as the child, the more information you can provide us, the better we will be able to serve you. All information given to us is kept completely confidential and will not be shared without your written permission.

Notification of changes:

- **For Early Head Start/CCTR extended day infant/toddler classrooms:** Your family shall meet all eligibility and need requirements for 12 months before having eligibility or need recertified and shall not be required to report changes to income or other changes for at least 12 months. Your family may voluntarily report income or other changes. This information shall be used, as applicable, to reduce your family's fee, increase your family's services or to extend the period of your family's eligibility before recertification.
- **For Head Start/CSPP extended day preschool classrooms:** Your family is certified as eligible at enrollment and remains eligible for the current school year.

Recertification:

- **For Early Head Start/CCTR extended day infant/toddler classrooms:** After initial certification and enrollment your family must be recertified for eligibility and need at least once each contract period at intervals not less than 12 months.
- **For Head Start/CSPP extended day preschool classrooms:** There is no requirement for recertification during the current school year. If the child is age eligible to attend preschool the following year, a new CDE9600 Application will be completed and eligibility will be determined at the beginning of the new school year.

Payment of family fees – applies to Early Head Start/CCTR extended day infant/toddler classrooms only: Head Start/Early Head Start services are provided free of charge. However, family fees for state subsidized childcare may be assessed based on adjusted monthly family income, family size and certified need for full time or part time services.

- There are no fees for CPS or at-risk families if they are waived in a written referral by a legally qualified professional or the CPS worker for a maximum of 12 months.
- There are no fees for families receiving CalWORKs cash aid.
- Fees, if any, are assessed based on the most recently approved fee schedule issued by the CDE.
- Failure to pay fees on time or to miss payments on an agreed upon payment schedule may result in termination of services for a child in the extended day program.
- Please see Family Fees section under How to Qualify for the Program for more information.

PROGRAM & GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE POLICY – CENTER BASED OPTION

Purpose:

- To encourage regular attendance and participation by children and families, assisting them in gaining the full benefits of the Head Start/State Preschool and Early Head Start/Child Care Center Programs.
- To maintain 85% or better average daily attendance rate each month, as required by Federal Performance Standards and State Funding Terms & Conditions.
- To ensure full use of Head Start/State Preschool and Early Head Start/Child Care Center enrollment slots.

Policy: There will be no more than ten (10) unexcused absences allowed per year. Exceptions to this are for excused absences defined as:

1. Illness or quarantine of the child.
2. Illness or quarantine of the parent/guardian.
3. Court ordered visitations (require Court Order documentation in file).
4. Family emergency (including illness of sibling, hospitalization of family member; death in the family; unanticipated transportation problems, such as car breaks down; severe emotional trauma/upheaval of child or parent; natural disaster or catastrophe, such as severe weather, house destroyed by fire, etc.; or any unexpected, unusual emergency situation that would reasonably interfere with a child's ability to attend school).
5. Outbreak of contagious disease, the child has not been immunized and the child is excluded from attending.
6. Best Interest Days - these are entitlement days that may be used at the discretion of the family for personal reasons that are in the best interest of the child – **limited to 10 per year** - (except no limit for children who are recipients of CWS or considered "at risk" of abuse or neglect).

Families are required to call the center when their child will be absent or late.

- After two (2) consecutive unexplained absences, a home visit will be made and documented. The purpose of this visit is to check on the welfare of the child and family, provide support services and to emphasize the benefits of regular attendance.
- Home visits may also be made for chronic excused absences, such as extended illness, recovery from accident or surgery of the child or parent. The purpose of these visits is to provide support services and/or home activities for the child and to maintain a connection with the family.
- An Attendance Agreement will be developed after 4 unexcused absences, or if a child's attendance is not within the attendance policy guidelines. If the Attendance Agreement terms are not met, attendance does not improve, and other program options are not available, the child may be returned to the waiting list.

CHILD INJURIES

Every child enrolled in NCO HSCDP has an I.D. and Emergency Information form (**LIC700**) and a Consent for Medical Treatment form (**LIC627**) on file. This information is to be updated when a change occurs. It is the family's responsibility to inform the program of any change.

In January the FSS or teacher will confirm that the information on these forms is current. If changes are needed before January, please contact your site to update your information.

A minimum of one person per classroom who is trained in CPR and first aid will be on site at all times children are present.

“In the event of a life-threatening emergency, staff will call 9-1-1 and then call the parent.”

- Any child injury/accident will be documented by the Injury Report (**H618**).
 - The Injury Report (**H618**) is a two-part NCR form. The pink copy will be given to the parent/guardian.
- For minor injuries, this report is filled out in detail including the child's first and last name, the site, the circumstances of the accident/injury and what care was given. The incident is explained to the parent or guardian that same day when the child is picked up.
- In the event of a more serious accident, staff will notify parent/guardian immediately. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, staff will call the names listed on the I.D. and Emergency Information form (**LIC700**) and continue to attempt to reach the child's parent(s).
- If the need for emergency care arises, trained staff will administer first aid and call 9-1-1.
- If the parent will be seeking medical follow-up for the child, the staff person who observed the accident/injury or the site supervisor will fill out and sign Section A of the Special Risk Accident and Sickness Claim form and give it to the parent/guardian.
- If the parent/guardian decides not to take the child to the doctor, dentist, or hospital it must be indicated on the Injury Report (H618).
- The site supervisor reviews each Injury Report to ensure that the forms have all been filled out properly and that proper procedures have been followed.

CHILD PICK-UP/DROP-OFF POLICY

- Children may only be signed in or signed out and released to their parent/guardian or to an authorized representative who:
 - is at least 17 years of age
 - complies with all State and Federal laws (auto, car seat, etc.)
 - is able to care for the child's health and safety if the child cannot be left at the center after the health check
- Children are not signed in until the health check is completed and passed.
- Responsible adult dropping off/picking up the child must sign child in or out using full signature and exact time of pick up or drop off.
- Staff may release the child to someone other than the parent/guardian or authorized representative on the Identification and Emergency Information form with written permission or in case of extreme emergency, a telephone call from the parent. The designated person must show photo identification and be **17** years of age or older and the child must know the person. Staff will not release the child to anyone but the designated person.
- Once the child is signed out, the parent/guardian, authorized representative, or designated person is responsible for his/her supervision and safety.
- Because these are required Licensing regulations ensuring the safety of your child, not abiding by the above requirements may be cause for the program to end your services.

CHILD SAFETY & SUPERVISION POLICY

HSCDP children will be closely supervised at all times and a safe environment will be provided and maintained to ensure their safety. At no time will a child's rights be violated or will a child be left alone.

In order to sustain a safe environment, the staff of HSCDP (including all FSS, cooks, specialists, CDS's, managers, and directors) will provide care for and visual supervision of children at all times. All staff will provide and maintain a safe environment to prevent situations that may lead to injury, harm, children leaving facilities unnoticed, and/or a violation of a child's personal rights. Staff will facilitate, introduce, and reinforce safety practices at their program site(s) (including both indoor and outdoor environments) with children and parents.

Staff and parents will ensure ongoing active and positive supervision and monitoring of children. Active and positive supervision involves:

- Standing in a strategic position in order to observe all children.
- Scanning indoor and outdoor activities and moving around to monitor students.
- Establishing clear and simple safety rules.
- Being aware of potential safety hazards and reporting them immediately.
- Respecting and promoting the unique identity of each child.
- Following program confidentiality policies.
- Ensuring that no child is ever left alone or unsupervised while under our care.
- Using positive methods of child guidance to ensure that a child's personal rights are never violated.
- Knowing each child's ability. Focusing on the positive, rather than the negative, to teach a child what is safe and appropriate.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Staff members involved in providing services to families **will obtain written consent** before disclosing any information to other agencies and professionals (with the exception of Child Protection Services and Law Enforcement). Head Start Child Development staff will exercise utmost discretion and respect for families and each other. Written and verbal information will be disclosed after receiving **written** parental consent for compelling professional reasons that will increase family functioning or the quality of services provided.

Program volunteers **DO NOT** have access to children's files. Under **NO** circumstance will a volunteer be allowed access to the files of children, families or employees. Recording child or family information into files is not to be assigned to a volunteer.

- Written records on individual children and families are maintained at central office and on site in a locked cabinet.
- Parents/guardians have access to all of their child's records and may request copies of records by completing a Record Request form (ENR130). Only program generated information will be released.
- Anyone reviewing a child's file will sign the File Review Log (ENR105) indicating the date and reason for reviewing the file.
- All staff receive training on the confidentiality procedures included in the disclosure of records and record maintenance and security procedures.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND LANGAUGE POLICY

HSCDP will follow the OHS Multicultural Principles to ensure all enrolled children receive effective services no matter their ethnicity and/or home language. HSCDP staff, whenever possible, communicates with children and families in their home language.

Staff will offer age appropriate experiences for children in our program to learn about other people and cultures than their own, including how people live (food, eating, clothing, shelter), communicate (words, print labels, stories, songs in a variety of languages) and create (art, music, movement, games, rhymes).

Classroom environments will be set up to reflect the cultures of the children enrolled in the program, as well as those encountered in the surrounding community, with photographs of families in the classroom and around the world, and common household objects from different cultures.

Childhood routines, discipline practices and parents' learning goals for their children will be discussed and incorporated into individual and group curriculum.

NCO HSCDP is committed to:

- Communicating with the parents/guardians in a language of their choice by staff or a volunteer proficient in the languages used by the families.
- Sharing with parents/guardians, the importance of parental support in the home-language as the child's exposure to English increases.
- Seeking the feedback of parents/guardians in the improvement, development and use of culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments of multilingual learners: HSCDP will continue to seek the feedback of parents/guardians at the Program Policy Council (PPC) and other venues regarding the improvement, development and use of assessments adapted to Multilingual Learners.

Parents/Guardians will be involved in suggesting menus that incorporate a variety of cultural foods and meet the requirements of the USDA Child Care Food Program.

DAILY HEALTH CHECKS

When you arrive at school, together you and the teacher will do a quick health check with your child. The daily health check will help protect your child, other children and staff from illness and is a routine way of welcoming your child to the center. During the health check:

- Please share with the teacher how your child has been feeling and share any other health-related information that will assist the teacher in taking the best care of your child.
- You must stay with your child until the health check is complete – this is a California Licensing requirement.
- Health checks are conducted in a manner that respects your family's confidentiality regarding health issues.
- Following the health check accompany your child to the classroom, help get him/her settled and sign the child in for the day.

NIT FREE POLICY

- Head lice infestation is a common occurrence among preschool children. There are daily checks for head lice. When a child has contracted lice, the parent/guardian is called to pick up the child. The child must be treated and nit free, before his/her return to class.
- Families are informed when there is an outbreak of lice at their child's center.
- NCO HSCDP has a "No Nits Policy". This means that children are not readmitted to school until all nits have been removed. Information on treatment and prevention is available at your site. Multiple occurrences of head lice

infestations do not require a CPS report. Families of children with multiple occurrences and/or reoccurrences will be referred to another community agency, such as Healthy Start, for assistance in head lice and nit removal.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

In emergency situations, staff members are prepared to act quickly to ensure the health and well-being of each child. The staffs that are knowledgeable and well-trained in health emergency procedures are prepared to protect children in their care.

- Prior to the start of school, the Site Supervisor develops the Emergency Disaster Plan (**LIC610**) with the site staff.
- Health and Safety Code 1596.876 requires an Earthquake Preparedness Checklist (**LIC9148**) be included as an attachment to the Emergency Disaster Plan (**LIC610**).
- Both forms are posted in the classroom and are accessible for the public to review.
- A Floor Plan with clearly marked exit routs is posted near to Emergency Disaster Plan (**LIC610**) and Earthquake Preparedness Checklist (**LIC9148**).
- The Earthquake Preparedness Checklist form (**LIC9148**) is a useful tool for site staff to ensure that all precautions have been made to ensure that the site is ready in case of an earthquake emergency.

Before a Disaster

- Teachers, other staff and volunteers are trained on the procedure.
- Rooms are checked for hazards using Earthquake Preparedness Checklist form (LIC9148).
- Emergency food and other supplies are available on site.
- Children have fire drills every month and earthquake safety drills every six months
- In case of fire, children learn evacuation procedures.
- In case of earthquake, children learn proper drop and cover procedures.
- Children will be guided to the safest location for protection.
- Children will learn proper evacuation procedures for each emergency situation.
- Teachers will be responsible for keeping children safe and protected in the event of a disaster.

After a Disaster

- Staff will follow the current Emergency Disaster Plan (LIC610) that is posted at each site.
- Site staff will stay with the children until all children have been released to a parent or an authorized person.
- Site Supervisor will only release children to parent or authorized person on the child's I.D. and Emergency Information form (LIC700). Parent or authorized person must sign-out the child.

If necessary, teacher with children will relocate to prearranged evacuation site. If children and staff must go to the Relocation Site, a sign will be posted on the outside door/s to alert parents as to where their children are being kept safe.

Shelter-in-Place

"Shelter-in-place" means that staff and children in the center will remain inside the center building. It may be used in emergencies such as severe storms, outside hazardous chemical spills or unhealthy air quality such as smoke from wildfires.

- Site supervisor or emergency responders determine when to shelter-in-place.
- Site supervisor will alert the Program Director as soon as possible to decide if and when parents should be contacted for pick up.

- The center will remain in shelter-in-place until the situation is deemed safe and the emergency responders, site supervisor and/or Program Director gives the “all clear” signal.

Evacuations

If Ordered to Evacuate:

- Evacuations will be done so immediately.
- Emergency personnel will direct staff to when and where to evacuate.
- Transportation to move children away from the center will be provided by emergency personnel.
- Notification to parent/guardians for reunification will be coordinated through central office.

On-Site Evacuation

On-site evacuation is to be used when locations outside of the center buildings are safer than inside. Hazards could include a fire or gas leak in the building, chemical or electrical issues, or following an earthquake after shaking stops.

Off-Site Evacuation

Off-site evacuation is to be used for a bomb threat or when the severity of the disaster requires moving children and staff to an area located further away from the center.

Reunification of children and families:

- Site staff will meet parent or pick up person to verify identification and ensure person is authorized on the Child's ID & Emergency card (LIC700).
- Site staff will stay with the children until all children are released to parent or authorized pick up person.

If child is released to emergency personnel staff will obtain the following information:

- Person's name, agency they work for, vehicle license plate number and the location where the child will be taken.
- Site staff will notify parent or primary contact person listed on the child's emergency card.

HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY

North Coast Opportunities, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer. North Coast Opportunities, Inc. is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and disrespectful or other unprofessional conduct based on sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding or related medical conditions), race, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), color, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), national origin (including language use restrictions and possession of a driver's license issued under Vehicle Code section 12801.9), ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, sexual orientation, military and veteran status or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law or ordinance or regulation. It also prohibits discrimination, harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

In addition, NCO prohibits retaliation against individuals who raise complaints of discrimination or harassment or who participate in workplace investigations. All such conduct violates Company policy.

Harassment Prevention

NCO's policy prohibiting harassment applies to all persons involved in the operation of the Agency. NCO prohibits harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct by any employee of the Agency, including supervisors, managers and co-workers.

NOC's anti-harassment policy also applies to vendors, customers, independent contractors, unpaid interns, volunteers, persons providing services pursuant to a contract and other persons with whom you come into contact while working.

Prohibited harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, comments, posts or messages;
- Visual displays such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests or sexual advances as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors;
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment; and
- Communication via electronic media of any type that includes any conduct that is prohibited by state and/or federal law or by company policy.

Sexual harassment does not need to be motivated by sexual desire to be unlawful or to violate this policy. For example, hostile acts toward an employee because of his/her gender can amount to sexual harassment, regardless of whether the treatment is motivated by sexual desire.

Prohibited harassment is not just sexual harassment but harassment based on any protected category.

Non-Discrimination

The Agency is committed to compliance with all applicable laws providing equal employment opportunities. This commitment applies to all persons involved in NCO operations. The Agency prohibits unlawful discrimination against any job applicant, employee or unpaid intern by any employee of NCO, including supervisors and co-workers.

Pay discrimination between employees of the opposite sex performing substantially similar work, as defined by the California Fair Pay Act and federal law, is prohibited. Pay differentials may be valid in certain situations defined by law. Employees will not be retaliated against for inquiring about or discussing wages. However, North Coast Opportunities, Inc. is not obligated to disclose the wages of other employees.

Anti-Retaliation

NCO will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint or participating in any workplace investigation and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

Reasonable Accommodation

Discrimination can also include failing to reasonably accommodate religious practices or qualified individuals with disabilities where the accommodation does not pose an undue hardship.

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the Agency will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless undue hardship would result.

Any job applicant or employee who requires an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact an NCO representative with day-to-day personnel responsibilities and discuss the need for an accommodation. The Agency will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any, that will help the

applicant or employee perform the job. An applicant, employee or unpaid intern who requires an accommodation of a religious belief or practice (including religious dress and grooming practices, such as religious clothing or hairstyles) should also contact an NCO representative with day-to-day personnel responsibilities and discuss the need for an accommodation. If the accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship, the Agency will make the accommodation.

North Coast Opportunities, Inc. will not retaliate against you for requesting a reasonable accommodation and will not knowingly tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

Complaint Process

If you believe that you have been the subject of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct, bring your complaint to your supervisor or to:

- Any other NCO supervisor
- The HR Director
- The Executive Director

as soon as possible after the incident. You can bring your complaint to any of these individuals. If you need assistance with your complaint, or if you prefer to make a complaint in person, contact the HR Director. Please provide all known details on the incident or incidents, names of individuals involved and names of witnesses. It would be best to communicate your complaint in writing, but this is not mandatory.

The Agency encourages all individuals to report any incidents of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct forbidden by this policy immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved.

You also should be aware that the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment, discrimination and retaliation in employment. If you think you have been harassed or discriminated against or that you have been retaliated against for resisting, complaining or participating in an investigation, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency. The nearest office can be found by visiting the agency websites at www.dfeh.ca.gov and www.eeoc.gov.

Supervisors must refer all complaints involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct to the HR Director of North Coast Opportunities, Inc. so the Agency can try to resolve the complaint.

When NCO receives allegations of misconduct, it will immediately undertake a fair, timely, thorough and objective investigation of the allegations in accordance with all legal requirements. The Agency will reach reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected.

NCO will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. However, the Agency cannot promise complete confidentiality. The employer's duty to investigate and take corrective action may require the disclosure of information to individuals with a need to know.

Complaints will be:

- Responded to in a timely manner
- Kept confidential to the extent possible
- Investigated impartially by qualified personnel in a timely manner
- Documented and tracked for reasonable progress
- Closed in a timely manner

If the Agency determines that harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct has occurred appropriate and effective corrective and remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved. NCO also will take appropriate action to deter future misconduct.

Any employee determined by the Agency to be responsible for harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to, and including termination. Employees should also know that if they engage in unlawful harassment, that can be held personally liable for the misconduct.

HEALTHY FOOD POLICY

In order to provide a positive role model for Head Start children and their families, it is our policy to serve foods which are healthy and nutritious. By providing healthy foods we create an environment that supports our commitment to high nutritional standards.

In accordance with the Head Start Performance Standards we:

1. Do not serve overly sweet and sticky foods especially those high in refined sugars.
2. Reduce the salt in cooking
3. Reduce the amount of fat in recipes and in food preparation
4. Do not use food coloring or additives in food projects or in food served

Examples of foods that are not included at any Head Start activity are: hot dogs, chips, cookies, cake, soda, fruit “drink”, Jell-O, candy, doughnuts and other sugary snack foods. Parents are requested to refrain from bringing any of these products to any Head Start function.

According to Department of Environmental Health Food Facilities Regulations, Section 114015. (27604): “Foods prepared or stored in private homes should **not** be served to children in the centers”. Potlucks are **not** presented as a Head Start activity. For health and safety reasons, food prepared in the centers for the children or at parent events **cannot** be sent home with children or their families.

Food for any Head Start activity is prepared at the site by staff, parents and children using safe food preparation techniques. Staff supervising food preparation receive training in food safety. The Nutrition Coordinator can provide additional information about menus, food preparation or nutrition.

HOLIDAY POLICY

HSCDP **acknowledges** and **recognizes** holidays with children and families. HSCDP does not celebrate holidays or birthdays with children and families.

Holidays are important celebrations of family and community identity which have significance for children in HSCDP and families have many different ways that they celebrate family cultural, ethnic, religious and other traditions. Many holiday celebrations reflect cultural and religious traditions that are valued more by some and less by other individual families in our program and it is believed that these family traditions are best taught within the child’s family.

HSCDP staff will work with families at their centers to create meaningful activities and events for children that can be appreciated by all families at the center.

The classroom and activities will provide a nurturing, relaxing environment that reduces the stress and tension often created by the excitement of holidays.

Activities will take into account the unique learning characteristics of young children and will be enjoyed by **all** families in the program. Such activities will not be based on craft skills beyond the ability of children under the age of five, and which require a lot of adult preparation.

The playful spirit of traditional holiday celebrations may be offered throughout the year. For example, the fun of dressing up at Halloween can be incorporated throughout the year by providing dress-up clothes and costumes, like animals & community helpers, which children can use on a regular basis.

The tourist approach of recognizing different cultures through their holidays will be avoided because it uses stereotypes which don't accurately reflect the people of these countries and cultures.

Activities planned during holiday periods will avoid commercialism, like purchasing valentines or costumes

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Vaccination is a safe and effective way of protecting children from dangerous childhood diseases. HSCDP places great emphasis on the importance of timely immunizations based on the immunization schedule set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

- In accordance with California Community Care Licensing requirements, a child who is not up to date on immunizations may not attend class until immunizations are brought up to date.
- If a child is up to date but immunizations are not completed (e.g., the child just received the 3rd DTaP shot and must wait 6-12 months to receive the 4th DTaP), the Health Specialist will work with family services staff to notify the parents when shots are due and family services staff will support the family in keeping the immunizations up to date.
- Failure to keep the immunizations up to date will result in the issuance of a 14 Day Notice (H606) and a Notice of Action (NOA) (CD7617).
- If the overdue immunization(s) are not received by the end of the 14 Day Notice and NOA, the child will be unable to attend class and may be offered other program options or placed back on the waitlist.
- Due to recent changes in California State Law, parents may no longer waive immunizations for personal or religious reasons. The only exemption to immunizations would be a waiver due to medical reasons signed by a state licensed medical professional.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

- Every child with a disability who is enrolled in the Head Start Child Development Program must receive ALL services that s/he is entitled to under the Head Start Performance Standards. Refer to the Performance Standards, section 1308.1, the Recruitment Plan and the Service Area Plan.
- HSCDP also follows all regulations as prescribed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- No child will be excluded from the program or denied services due to:
 - Severity or types of disability
 - Facility accessibility
 - Staff attitude or apprehension
 - Need for personal services or specialized equipment
- Classroom placement decisions and service delivery methods may vary depending upon the child's needs and the capacity of the program to respond to those needs. In some instances, enrollment of children with special needs at specific centers may be limited by the appropriateness of the facility, as determined by California Department of Social

Services Community Care Licensing, or the program options at the center (i.e. full day state preschool option might exclude dual enrollment). There are a variety of placement/service options that may be appropriate, depending upon the child's needs and services available; these options include:

- Regular participation in the Head Start classroom, with additional services or therapy provided by another agency (such as the local school district or a private agency)
 - Regular participation in the Head Start classroom with additional services or therapy provided in the classroom by itinerant staff (provided by Head Start or another agency)
 - Limited/modified participation in the Head Start classroom (shortened days or fewer days per week)
 - Dual placement in Head Start and Special Education (i.e. part-time participation in Head Start and part-time participation in a Special Education program).
- Classroom placement decisions are made following a Review of Enrollment meeting and/or review of an IEP (Individual Education Plan).

LEARNING TRIP POLICY

Children shall have opportunities to engage in learning trips that involve leaving the school property and/or involve visitors to the center.

- Learning trips involving transportation services must ensure that children are transported in school buses or allowable, alternate vehicles that are equipped for use of height and weight appropriate child restraint systems, and that have reverse beepers (1310.12). Parents/Guardians or a designated responsible adult are to accompany their child(ren) on all approved learning trips involving transportation services.
- Learning trips may be held at the center by having community “helpers” and/or presenters visit the site (reverse learning trips), or by taking neighborhood walks with prior written permission from families. Four learning or reverse learning trips are recommended per year.
- Community “helpers” that visit the classroom will be appropriate for all the children that they will be addressing or performing. HSCDP staff work with parents/guardians to plan all learning trips, and the inviting of community “helpers”. All community visitors will be approved by families prior to their visit.
- Teachers will prepare children for all learning trips and visitors. To extend and expand on children’s learning opportunities, follow-up activities will be practiced in the classroom, including a “Thank You” for the participant(s).
- Families will not be charged any fees for participation in learning trips.

MEDICATIONS POLICY

To support high level health services for children enrolled in the HSCDP, certain necessary medications may be administered to a child during school hours following these procedures:

- Parent/guardian must notify the program that their child requires medication and must give written permission for staff to administer it during school hours.
- A form H609 Medications-physician’s instructions form must be completed and signed by the physician for each medication being administered.
- Staff is then trained to properly store, handle and administer any medication prior to administering it to a child.
- Staff training must be conducted by the parent and/or a health care professional knowledgeable of the child’s medical situation.
- Following medication administration staff will observe the child for possible side effects and alert the parent to any mild side effects or call 911 for any severe reactions.

- The HSCDP Health Specialist will coordinate communication between the parent, physician and staff and monitor that all necessary signed documentation and training is received.
- At no time will staff administer medication without parent permission, physician written instructions and completed training.
- Parent/guardian may also come to the center to personally administer medication to their child if desired.

REPORTING CHANGES POLICY

The California Department of Education requires NCO/HSCDP to inform all families that they can voluntarily report changes during a family’s certification period. The reporting changes policy (CDE800) shall be signed at the time of initial enrollment and at each re-certification appointment. The parent’s signature verifies that s/he understands the policy.

Families may voluntarily report changes in order to:

- Reduce Family fees
- Reduce service schedule
- Increase service schedule
- Disenroll from the program due to no longer needing services

Families **have an obligation to report increases in income that exceed the 85 percent threshold** for ongoing income eligibility, and the family’s ongoing eligibility for services shall at that time be re-determined.

Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent SMI) for Recertification Child Care and Development Programs*

Family Size	Family Monthly Income	Family Yearly Income
1–2	\$5,540	\$66,479
3	\$6,157	\$73,885
4	\$7,069	\$84,822
5	\$8,199	\$98,393
6	\$9,330	\$111,965
7	\$9,542	\$114,509
8	\$9,755	\$117,054
9	\$9,967	\$119,598
10	\$10,179	\$122,143
11	\$10,391	\$124,687
12	\$10,603	\$127,232

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERN POLICY

HSCDP encourages parents/guardians to voice their celebrations, concerns, and opinions about the program. To do this we foster open communication between the program and the families we serve and model how disagreements can be resolved with open communication. When a parent/guardian has a complaint, it will be handled in a timely manner.

Step 1 – Site Level

- When a parent/guardian expresses a concern to a staff member it should be taken seriously and handled with open two-way communication and in a timely manner.
- Together with the site supervisor, the staff member should discuss any concerns informally with the parent/guardian in an attempt to resolve the concern.
- If the concern cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parent/guardian, he or she should be referred to the Family Services Manager (FSM) at Central Office. Parent/Guardian should be provided with the FSM contact information and offered assistance in completing the optional a Parent/Guardian Concern form (MISC104-A) and guidance on how to send it to the FSM.
- Staff will use a Parent/Guardian Concern Addendum form (MISC104-B) to document the concern and any informal discussions with the parent/guardian and inform the Site Supervisor if they are not already involved.
- Site Supervisor will immediately notify the FSM and CDS that a concern may be coming.

Step 2 – Central Office Level

- FSM will contact to parent/guardian within three business days and attempt to resolve the concern.
- FSM will notify CDS and Site Supervisor if the issue has been resolved.
- If the concern is not resolved, the CDS will follow up with Site Supervisor and staff to gather more information and report back to FSM. The CDS, FSM and Site Supervisor will work together to create a resolution plan. The Program Director (PD) will be kept informed of the status of the concern.
- The FSM will act as the point person with the parent/guardian, keeping him or her informed of the plan and checking back every few days to see how things are going.
- If the parent/guardian feels the concern is resolved, Parent/Guardian Concern Addendum form (MISC104-B) will be used to document resolution status.
- If a resolution is not reached between FSM and parent/guardian, all applicable documentation will be forwarded to the PD within three business days.

Step 3 – Program Director Level

- PD will contact the parent/guardian within three business day and attempt to resolve the concern by phone or personal meeting.
- If the concern remains unresolved, the PD will meet with the NCO Executive Director and forward any applicable documents to the NCO Executive Director (NCO ED).
- The policy council will be made aware that a parent concern has been forwarded to the NCO ED and the governing board.

Step 4 – NCO Executive Director/Governing Board Level

- NCO ED will bring concern to the Governing Board
- NCO ED will contact the parent/guardian within five business day and attempt to resolve the concern by phone or personal meeting.
- If the concern remains unresolved, the NCO ED will forward the concern to the Governing Board.
- If the Governing Board decides to act, the parent/guardian will be notified and may be invited to meet with the Governing Board if additional information is needed.
- If the Governing Board decides not to act, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian indicating the Board's decision not to act and why.

PERSONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

HSCDP complies with California Community Care Licensing regulations and every child receiving services shall have rights which include, but are not limited, to the following:

- To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.
- To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.
- To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
- To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving unit of the licensing agency and of information regarding confidentiality.
- To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice.
- Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night.
- Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR POLICY

Our goal is to enhance children's self-regulation skills, self-esteem, self-confidence, and to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Teachers use Positive Behavior Support techniques to help children learn self-control, responsibility, problem-solving skills, and cooperation. Teachers teach pro-social skills and use alternative strategies, during moments of conflict, that are age and developmentally appropriate to support children as needed, i.e.: redirection, offering choices, natural and logical consequences, etc. We do not use time out as a strategy within our classrooms.

Aggressive or challenging behavior during early childhood is often typical behavior for young children. At this age, children are acquiring self-regulation, language and social emotional skills that will help them use their words. It is our job as adults to teach positive social behavior. It is our job to teach children to use their words, to problem solve and to have empathy for others. You can help by doing the games and activities sent home with your child on the Home Activities for School Readiness.

Children who exhibit aggressive behavior will not be sent home, unless it is a true safety concern, or the child really needs support from a parent or guardian. Research shows that suspending children from school is harmful because the child cannot learn new behavior without practice. Instead, our efforts will be focused on the strategies that can be used to help children who are exhibiting the behavior, as well as supporting the other children in the classroom to learn positive social emotional behaviors. Research also shows that all children benefit from working through challenging situations and can learn empathy, how to stand up for themselves and how to set boundaries. The safety of the entire classroom is always the focus for the staff. When necessary, teachers will partner with you, the parent, to come up with the best plan to teach these important skills and address any concerning behavior.

Second Step, ASQ-SE and Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) will be used to enhance children's positive behavior and support social emotional development.

HSCDP complies with California Community Care Licensing regulations prohibiting the use of physical and/or emotional (verbal) punishment in childcare facilities. There will be no physical discipline or threats of physical discipline, i.e. hitting (including but not limited to) spanking or slapping, pinching, pushing, grabbing, etc., by parents/guardians, siblings, staff, or volunteers, during any program activities

HSCDP has qualified Mental Health Consultants available to provide additional support to families and staff. These supports include observation of children, meeting with staff and parents to discuss behavior concerns and giving recommendations to support the child in learning positive social skills and self-control.

Parents/guardians will be reminded that Head Start staff are mandated child abuse reporters and must report to the appropriate agency if abuse and/or neglect are suspected. Following instruction from the local Department of Social Services, Head Start staff does not tell parents/guardians when a report has been made. Reporting requirements are explained during enrollment and orientation.

PROTECTING CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES FROM ALLERGENS POLICY

Children with allergies will be protected from allergens in classrooms and playgrounds while enrolled at HSCDP. Children with special medical allergies, intolerances, or chronic diseases which require food substitutions are accommodated when supported by a medical statement.

Modifications can be made to the menu for children who are unable to consume program meals due to mental or physical disabilities.

Changes to that child's menu are made as close as possible to the other children's food, taking into account the child's preferences and nutritional needs.

SMOKING/TOBACCO POLICY

- NCO Head Start Child Development Program (HSCDP) does not permit smoking or the use of any tobacco products (including e-cigs) at any program site, activity, or event.
- NO SMOKING/TOBACCO:
 - Around or in any HSCDP building, or site including the classroom, Parent Room, play yard, restrooms, or parking lot;
 - Anywhere on school grounds when a HSCDP site is located on public school property;
 - In the immediate vicinity of children, parents/guardians, or staff during an HSCDP Learning Trip, including inside a vehicle while transporting HSCDP parents/guardians or children;
 - In the immediate vicinity of any HSCDP function such as parent events, Program Policy Council (PPC) meetings, fundraising events, or recruitment activities; and/or
 - During a home visit with HSCDP staff. If visit is lengthy, parent/guardian may request a break.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

- HSCDP staff is not permitted to work under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs. Parents/Guardians, community volunteers, and others are not permitted to work around children *while* under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Parents/Guardians and other adults must be sober at all HSCDP activities including home visits, learning trips, parent events, and driving children to and from the Center. Site staff will ask the parent/guardian to call someone else to transport or public transportation, if he/she appears to be intoxicated. If a parent/guardian leaves the Center and drives a car under the influence (with or without the child), staff must call authorities immediately.
- HSCDP offers families information on substance abuse and substance abuse prevention, and referrals for counseling and/or treatment programs. The telephone numbers of community organizations that work with drug abuse and prevention are listed in the Resource Directory.

WEAPONS POLICY

- HSCDP and State licensing regulations do not permit weapons of any kind to be in or around HSCDP sites, buildings, classrooms, play yards, vehicles in parking lots or in the immediate vicinity of children, parents, or staff at any time.
- This includes during child pick up and drop off, parent events, meetings, home visits, fund development activities, recruitment activities, or any activity or event where HSCDP staff, children or families are present.

TEMPORARY EXCLUSION OF ILL CHILDREN POLICY

When a child is not feeling well he/she may be temporarily excluded from school. This decision is made by the Site Supervisor and/or the Teacher if one of the following conditions exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the Teacher and/or Site Supervisor.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the teaching staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children as determined by the Teacher and/or Site Supervisor.
3. The child has any of the following conditions:
 - An oral temperature of over 101 degrees or greater (100 degrees or greater if taken under the arm). A child may return to school when fever free for 24 hours, without medication.
 - Lethargy - extreme tiredness
 - A sore throat with fever and swollen glands
 - An earache
 - A deep, hacking cough
 - A lot of crying, irritability, or moodiness
 - Severe congestion
 - Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing (see their doctor)
 - An unexplained rash
 - *Vomiting (two or more times in the last 24 hours)
 - *Diarrhea (two or more times in the last 24 hours)
 - Complaints of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms. (Contact their doctor immediately)
 - Stomach pain that lasts more than 2 hours or stomach pain that stops and starts along with a fever or other symptoms
 - Mouth sores with drooling
 - Lice or nits (see No-Nits Policy)
 - Yellow discharge from the eyes
 - An unusual yellow coloring to the skin or eyes (contact their doctor)
 - Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing (unless parent brings a note from doctor and keeps sores covered)

*NOTE: Child may return to school when free of symptoms without medication for 24 hours for any of the above conditions. A note from a physician is NOT required.

Contagious Illnesses

- Infectious conjunctivitis/pink-eye (with eye discharge) - until 24 hours after treatment started
- Scabies and other infestation - until 24 hours after treatment
- Chicken Pox - until six days after start of rash or all sores have crusted over
- Measles - until four days after start of rash
- Rubella (German measles) - until six days after start of rash
- Strep throat, scarlet fever, or other strep infection - until 24 hours after treatment is started and the child is free of fever
- Impetigo - until 24 hours after treatment started
- Infectious Diarrhea:
 - Salmonella typhi – until after 3 negative stool samples
 - Shigella – until after 2 negative stool samples
 - E coli 0157:H7 – until after 2 negative stool samples
- Pinworm - until 24 hours after treatment is started
- Pertussis - until five days after treatment started
- Oral herpes (if child is drooling or lesions cannot be covered) - until lesions heal
- Shingles (if lesions cannot be covered) - until lesions are dry
- Hepatitis A - until seven days after start of symptoms (e.g., jaundice)
- Tuberculosis (TB) - until the health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious
- Mumps - until nine days after start of symptoms (swelling of “cheeks”)
- Coxsackie Virus (Hand, Foot and Mouth Syndrome) - exclude one week while mouth sores are present.

*NOTE: If a child has a contagious disease, the parent must bring in a note from a physician explaining the child’s absence is due to illness. When the child is ready to return to school, the parent must bring a note from the physician stating that the child is no longer contagious and can return to school.

The Site Supervisor and/or Teacher will make the decision about whether the child should be excluded and will explain the reasons to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision, the child will still be excluded that day, however, the parent/guardian should be given contact information for the Health Specialist and/or the Area Team Supervisor for clarification.

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, the site will notify the Health Specialist. The Health Specialist will contact the Health Department, if necessary. For all infectious diseases for which treatment has been initiated, continuing to include the child in care after treatment has been initiated is conditional on completing the prescribed course of therapy and clinical improvement of the child’s illness. When measles, rubella, mumps, invasive Hemophilus influenzae disease, or pertussis is diagnosed, children in the facility who are not immunized for the disease must be excluded.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES NOTICE

It is the intent of the NCO Head Start Child Development Program to fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding the NCO Head Start Child Development Program’s alleged violation of a statute or regulation that the California Department of Education is authorized to enforce. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying (*Education Code*, sections 200 and 220 and *Government Code*, Section 11135) in any program or activity funded directly by the State or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the California Department of Education:

California Department of Education
Child Care & Development Division
Complaint Coordinator
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. In this event, the complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including but not limited to, injunctions; restraining orders; or other remedies or orders.

For further information, contact Early Education & Support Division at (916) 322-6233 or visit the UCP website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cp/uc>

TERMINATION POLICY

HSCDP makes every effort to keep children and families enrolled in the program. However, there are some cases where there may be cause for termination of CDE funded services, including:

- Failure to meet eligibility or need for care subsidy requirements.
- Knowingly misrepresenting eligibility or need for care by giving inaccurate information to obtain a benefit that you would not otherwise be entitled to receive. (See Parent Fraud Policy)
- Failing to report increases in income that exceed the 85% threshold.
- Violating program or agency policies or procedures.
- Violent behavior, threats of violence, harassment or bullying towards children, other parents, staff or volunteers.

APPEALS PROCESS

Parents have the right to appeal any changes to CDE subsidized child care services including the termination of services due to cause. Whenever the program makes a change in services you will receive a CDE form CDE7617 Notice of Action (NOA) form.

- The NOA will tell you what action will be taken, the reasons for the action and the date the action will be taken.
- The NOA will include detailed information on your right to appeal the action if you disagree with it, and provide you with specific instructions for appealing.
- There are two levels of appeal: 1) A local hearing conducted by the Program Director or her designee, and 2) a state review conducted by the CDE. The state review may be requested only if you disagree with the decision of the local hearing.
- If you wish to appeal the action on the NOA you must do so within 14 calendar days of the date you receive the NOA. Instructions on how to do this are on Page 2 of the NOA.
- Your child will continue to receive services in accordance with your last service agreement until the appeal process is completed or abandoned. The only exception to this would be if the cause for change or termination of services is for behavior that threatens the safety of other children, parents, staff or volunteers. Services may be immediately stopped in this case but all other appeal rights remain.
- Within 10 calendar days of receiving your request to appeal, the Program Director or her designee will provide you with a notice telling you the date, time and place of the local hearing.

- You have the right to review information in your family data file, have another person attend the local hearing with you, or on your behalf, and to request an interpreter if needed.
- You should bring any documents/information with you to the hearing that support why you think the action is wrong.
- The hearing officer will make a decision based on the information you provide at the hearing.
- Within 10 calendar days after the local hearing a written decision letter will be sent to you. The decision letter will tell you how to request a CDE review hearing if you do not agree with the decision made at the local hearing.
- If you decide to appeal the decision to the CDE, the CDE must receive your request within 14 calendar days from the date on the local hearing decision letter.
- Your appeal will be considered abandoned if you do not submit a request for local hearing within 14 calendar days of receiving your NOA; or you or your authorized representative do not attend the local hearing; or you do not submit a timely request for the CDE review after the local hearing process has taken place.
- Please see Page 2 of the NOA for more detailed information on how to file an appeal.

CHILD CARE CENTER NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS

PARENTS' RIGHTS

As a Parent Authorized Representative, you have the right to:

1. Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office.
3. Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
6. Receive from the licensee the name, address and telephone number of the local licensing office.
 - a. Licensing Office Name: COSS Community Care Licensing Centralized Complaint Bureau
 - b. Licensing Office Address: 101 Golf Course Dr, Suite A-230 Rohnert Park, CA 94928
 - c. Licensing Office Telephone #: 707-588-5077
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the child care center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
8. Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form.

NOTE: CALIFORNIA STATE LAW PROVIDES THAT THE LICENSEE MAY DENY ACCESS TO THE CHILD CARE CENTER TO A PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE IF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE POSES A RISK TO CHILDREN IN CARE.

For the Department of Justice "Registered Sex Offender" database, go to www.meganslaw.ca.gov

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(Detach Here - Give Upper Portion to Parents)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS (Parent/Authorized Representative Signature Required)

I, the parent/authorized representative of _____, have received a copy of the "CHILD CARE CENTER NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS" and the CAREGIVER BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS form from the licensee.

Name of Child Care Center

Signature (Parent/Authorized Representative)

Date

NOTE: This Acknowledgement must be kept in child's file and a copy of the Notification given to parent/authorized representative.

For the Department of Justice "Registered Sex Offender" database go to www.meganslaw.ca.gov

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Resources

U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act

<http://www.ada.gov/chcinfo.pdf>

California Code of Regulations

<https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Index?transitionsType=Default&contextData>

EESD consultant contact information link

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/assignments.asp>

Fiscal Services web-site

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/cd/index.asp>

Funding Terms & Conditions for Center based programs

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/cd/ftc2016.asp>

Management Bulletins

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/allmbs.asp>

Parent Appeal Information

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/parentappealinformation.asp>