



Preschool Services

PARENT HANDBOOK

**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
PRESCHOOL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (PSD)**



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WELCOME TO THE PRESCHOOL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (PSD)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Preschool Services Department. The Preschool Services Department (PSD) has proudly administered child and family development programs in San Bernardino County since 1965. These programs include the Federal Head Start program, the State of California Department of Education California (CDE) State Preschool Program (CSPP), and the Child and Adult Care Food program.

PSD has over 600 employees who serve more than 5,000 Head Start, State Preschool, and Early Head Start and their families annually at 42 locations countywide. We recognize that excellent staff forms the core of a quality program. For that reason, we're committed to focusing considerable time and attention in hiring the best and giving them the support to do their work well.

We thank you for sharing your children and families with us. We value the rich cultural and ethnic diversity that each of you brings to our program.

This handbook provides information on our history, mission, vision, philosophy, and core values. In addition, information about services, policies, procedures, hours of operation, fees, enrollment and attendance procedures, transition services, health & safety, parent participation, emergency procedures, clothing, discipline, confidentiality, and other important information are included for your convenience and easy reference.

PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE HANDBOOK, CAREFULLY.

Diana Alexander,
Executive Director

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Our Mission

To Improve the Well-Being of Children, Empower Families and Strengthen Communities.

Our Vision

- Our children will excel in whatever setting they go to next.
- Our families' quality of life is measurably better after participating in our programs.
- Our efforts increase the quantity and quality of sustainable resources and services countywide.

Our Philosophy

Our central premise is that family is the most fundamental factor influencing the lives of children. Aside from children's educational needs, they also need a supportive, healthy home environment combined with stable and reliable relationships with adults and caregivers. In short, if you strengthen families, you automatically strengthen children.

Program Goals

For these reasons, our primary goals are to ensure that every child in San Bernardino County has access to a quality preschool experience, to increase the self-sufficiency of our families and systematically improve the quality of child development and community assets countywide.

TYPE OF CLASSES

CENTER BASED:

PART DAY CLASSES

- 3 ½ hours (morning session or afternoon sessions)
- State Preschool classes operate Monday through Friday
- Head Start Preschool Classes operate Monday through Thursday

FULL DAY CLASSES

- Operate Monday through Friday.
- Require that the parent is working, seeking employment, participating in training, attending school or has a verified incapacity.

PSD centers are generally open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

HEAD START - HOME BASED PROVIDES:

- Services to children primarily in the child's home, through intensive work with the child, child's parents and/or family.
- One 90-minute session per week and 2 socialization days per month.
- Parents and families receive the same Head Start services offered to center based families.
- Delivery of comprehensive Health, Education, Nutrition, and other services to children and families.
- Services to children with disabilities.

FUNDING SOURCES

HEAD START

- Is a federally funded child development program
- Serves children 3 to 5 years of age.
- Provides children and their families with comprehensive services to meet their educational, social, health, nutritional, and emotional needs.
- Children are enrolled into the program according to federal eligibility guidelines.
- Priority for services shall be given to children with certified disabilities, children referred by child protective services and homeless children.

STATE PRESCHOOL

- State funded child development program
- Serves children from 3 to 5 years in a classroom setting
- PSD combines State Preschool with Head Start to provide comprehensive services to children and families.
- Priority is given to children who are recipients of Child Protective Services (CPS) or at risk of abuse or neglect. After enrolling children who are recipients of CPS or at risk, 4 year old children and then 3 year old children are enrolled in order of California State Preschool Program (CSPP) enrollment priorities considering:
 - Income
 - Previous enrollment in CSPP Program
 - Children with disabilities (requires certified Individual Education Plan (IEP))
 - Children with limited English proficiency
 - And other special circumstances that diminish the child's opportunity for normal development.
- The lowest income is determined based on the California schedule of income ceilings.

NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Preschool Services Department program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, color, or mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served.¹ Additionally, the Preschool Services Department refrains from all forms of religious instruction or worship.

PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S RIGHTS

Parents have guaranteed rights. A copy of the Parent's Rights is given to each parent at the time of enrollment and a copy is also posted at each center.

CROSS CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

The Preschool Services Department provides many opportunities for non-religious celebrations in the classroom at each site. Great effort is made to offer children a wide variety of multicultural and diverse experiences throughout the year and to promote friendship, caring, tolerance and peace.

1. PSD's Administrative, classroom and support service staff receives training yearly on cultural diversity so they are aware of the various cultures represented in the population of families we serve. Cultures are represented in the classrooms by pictures, posters, stories, books, and dolls. Parents are asked to share traditions, stories, clothing and preparations of special foods specific to their cultures.
2. In the classroom, teachers emphasize similarities such as: everyone has eyes, but eyes come in different colors; everyone has hair, but hair comes in different colors and textures. Almost everyone eats rice, but there are many ways to prepare it, and some of those ways can be demonstrated in the classroom or at a parent meeting as part of a food experience.
3. It is important that children and families recognize, acknowledge and celebrate their own cultures and other cultures around them, but it is also vital that opportunities are provided in the classrooms and in parent meetings to experience cultures not represented locally. Parents will be invited to share cultural history with other parents and staff during the monthly Parent Advisory Committee Meetings.

¹ EC 231.5 (a), (b)

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

To begin the enrollment process, a parent or caregiver must complete and return an application.

The following documentation is required prior to enrollment:

- Income Verification
- Record of Birth
- A documented screening for tuberculosis (TB test) no more than 1 year old from start date
- Physical Exam (no more than 1 year old from start date)
- Immunization Records (Immunizations must be current or up to date)

It is required that each child upon enrollment in the program will have had:

- 3 doses of Polio Vaccine
- 4 doses of DTP
- 1 dose of MMR (after 1st birthday)
- 1 HIB (after 1st birthday)
- TB Clearance
- 1 Hepatitis B (after the 1st Birthday)

Or one of the following for parents who decline to have immunizations:

- Medical Waiver from a licensed medical professional
- A signed Personal Beliefs Affidavit from the parent

Suggested immunizations:

- 1 Varicella (after 1st birthday)
- 2 Hepatitis A

A "medical and dental home", (i.e. doctor, dentist and/or health care agency that is keeping health records of the child) should be established within 90 days of enrollment. PSD staff will assist families who do not have medical or dental insurance.

Legal Issues:

In order to maintain a safe learning environment for all children, copies of Court orders relating to custody suits or restraining order, whether settled or in progress, must be provided to PSD as part of the enrollment process.

INCOME DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Family Fees:

Your child may be enrolled into a Head Start and California Department of Education (CDE) State Preschool collaboration program. Enrollment in this program requires parents to follow both Head Start and State Preschool requirements. Head Start does not require parents to pay a fee; however CDE may require a fee for the portion of the day that your child is enrolled in the State Preschool program. When a family's income falls above a certain range, the family will be required to pay a family fee. Family fees are charged and collected in accordance with CDE regulations. A family fee is based on the level of adjusted gross monthly family income and family size. Fees are to be paid monthly in advance due on the 1st day of each month. The fee total will be due each month whether your child attends all contract hours or not. If fees become delinquent, your child will be terminated from the program if not resolved. If family fees are late three times within a fiscal year, services will be terminated.

Prior to enrollment (or if any changes) you will be required to provide:

- Consecutive pay stubs for the most recent month prior to submittal of the application.
- If self-employed, PSD will verify income documentation and may contact clients to verify the stated income
- If applicable, Court-ordered child support documents, or affidavit of child/spousal support
- If applicable, documentation of cash aid, unemployment payments, or disability payments,
- If seasonally employed, verification of income for the 12 months prior to enrollment
- Documentation of any child support which you pay
- Verification of absent parent must be obtained if the documentation indicates a single parent household.

The following are also required:

- Names of family members in your household
- Your address, phone number
- Proof of residency in the State of California.

To be eligible for full day services, all adults counted in the family must establish and maintain eligibility and need through documentation. Full day schedules are designed to coincide with the parent(s) documented eligible activities schedule. CSPP eligible families that do not meet the need requirement for full day services will be enrolled in the part day program.

***Changes to any of the above information are to be reported to PSD within 5 calendar days. Changes include** birth of another child, marriage or separation, change

of job/class schedule, change in income or pay, change of employer, residence, emergency contact information, or reason for needing child development services.

Failure to report these changes in a timely manner or falsification of any information may result in termination of services.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF SERVICES

The use or disclosure of information maintained in the child or family file will be limited to:

- ❑ PSD staff who have a need to know
- ❑ Individuals authorized by the parent/guardian/caregiver through a written and signed "Release of Information"
- ❑ Authorized personnel of agencies which provide funding to PSD and requires coordination with city, state and county services.

In addition, PSD may release information to:

- ❑ Appropriate authorities in order to comply with a subpoena or other court-order without prior written consent from the parent;
- ❑ The child's parent or the parent's representative who have submitted a prior written request to review their family file.

HOLIDAYS

In observance of the following holidays during the year and centers will be closed on these days:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King's Day
Presidents' Day
Spring Recess - 1 Week (part day classes only)
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving -2 Days
Winter Recess - 2 Weeks (part day classes only)
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Eve

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP CHILDREN

For your child's protection and in compliance with state law, you must sign-in your child when he/she arrives at the school site and sign-out your child when he/she is picked up. Your full signature is required. (Please do not initial)

The arrival and departure of your child are transitional times that need to be handled delicately. Please make sure teaching staff and providers are aware that your child is at the school. **Never** leave the child alone under any circumstances. It is important that the teacher is aware of all arrivals and departures. Please inform the staff in writing of any special instructions or information that might be needed for that day.

Please DO NOT Park in "Loading or Fire Zones."

PSD has established the following policies for the safety and security of the children:

- When picking up children, parents must come into the centers through the designated entrance for your child's classroom.
- If the child is outside on the playground, parents must let the child's teacher know they are picking up the child.
- Children may not be picked up from an outside entrance or over the fence.
- Hold your child's hand and keep your child with you when you are in the parking lot.

Please make sure emergency information on file for your child is kept current! At the time of enrollment, parents and guardians must fully complete an emergency information card that will provide the Center with the names of individuals who are authorized to pick up your child from the center, and who may be called in case of an emergency. Please make sure the emergency information on file for your child is current. Any changes of the Emergency Card information must be reported to the school office or provider as soon as possible i.e., phone, address, emergency contacts. All changes must be made in person by the authorized parent or guardian.

Only individuals listed on the child's emergency card, who are at least 18 years of age (other than a parent), can sign-in/sign-out the child, regardless of whether they are a sibling or relative. A photo ID is required of anyone who comes to pick up a child. Please notify relatives, friends and neighbors that you have listed them on the emergency form and they will be required to provide a photo ID to pick up your child.

Children will not be released to anyone who appears to be in an intoxicated condition. If a parent, guardian or designated adult arrives to pick up a child while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the police will be called immediately to handle the situation, as necessary.

LATE / DROP POLICY

It is important that children are picked up from the center at the end of class time.

WE ASK THAT YOU:

- Contact the center if you are going to be late.
- Arrange with someone, who is listed on the emergency card, to pick up your child.

If you are late without contacting the center, one of the following actions may be taken:

- We will call the telephone numbers for all individuals currently listed on your child's emergency card.
- If we do not get a response, we will call the police and they will transport your child to the nearest police station.
- Children may be dropped from the preschool program on the third late pick-up by the parent/guardian/authorized pick-up person

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Children should attend school on time each day. Every absence, even missing part of a school day, interferes with your child's progress at school. Each lesson is taught in sequence, which builds understanding. In order to be ready for new steps in learning, previous steps must be mastered or the child will not be ready for the new material.

1. For emergency and legal purposes, parents/guardians are required to sign their child in/out (using full signature) with the correct time of arrival and departure on the sign-in and out sheet each day the child attends preschool. Accurate sign in sheets are important as they are used for roll call in the event of an emergency. With permission from the parent or guardian, the child's teacher will sign-in/sign-out children who are transported by bus.
2. Children not properly signed in/out may be considered absent "without excuse" and may be dropped from the program for excessive unexcused absences.
3. Children enrolled in the CSPP Full Day program option are eligible for center-based services during specific contracted hours identified during the application process. Parents/guardians are required to notify PSD of any changes within 5 calendar days.
4. Bus consent forms are required to be completed and signed by parent/guardian prior to the child using bus services. Only the persons listed on the bus consent form/emergency card will be allowed to drop-off/pick-up the child.

5. The parent or guardian is responsible for contacting center staff on the day before or the morning of when the child is expected to be absent. The parent or guardian must provide the reason for absence.
 - i. **Note:** Staff makes determination of absence category based on specific reason for absence provided by the parent or guardian. Doctor's excuses are required in the case of communicable diseases, serious illnesses/injuries including fractured bones.
6. An absence will be considered "excused" under the definitions listed below. A child may also be considered "excused" under "family emergencies" and "best interest days" as defined below. All other reasons will be considered "unexcused".

Excused absences can include²:

- Illness or quarantine of the child
- Illness or quarantine of the parent
- Court-ordered visitations (need copy of order)
- Site closure for emergency
- **Best interest days** (limited to 10 days per program year) family vacation or parent day off, family visits (non-court ordered), program temporarily removes child from program. **Children who are recipients of protective services or at risk of abuse or neglect are not limited to 10 best interest days.**
- **Family emergencies** e.g. impromptu crisis or life threatening situations, unexpected transportation challenge (limited to 10 days per program year, medical appointments for sibling(s)).

Unexcused absences are defined as days of non-attendance, which do not qualify for any of the excused absence categories listed above. Children are allowed a maximum of 5 unexcused absences for a program year.

7. Children enrolled in the CSPP Full Day program option who have excessive late drop offs or early pick-ups will have their need for full day services re-evaluated by the program to determine continued need for the contracted childcare hours.

² EC 8208(e)

CHILD EMERGENCIES

If a child is injured or becomes ill at school (non-emergency), the parents will be notified. In the event you cannot be reached, the alternate emergency names and numbers you have provided will be called. PSD staff will make the child comfortable and remain with her/him until you arrive.

It is extremely important that our staff is aware of your daily schedule and any changes in emergency contact information, e.g., names of individuals with permission to pick up your child, and telephone number changes.

ILLNESS

The goal of the illness policy is to ensure the health and safety of all children and adults. If your child is sick, please keep your child home until he or she is well. If your child becomes ill while at the center and/or requires attention from a medical professional, you or your emergency contact will be notified immediately. Some illnesses may require a doctor's note to return back to school.

Children with the following symptoms or illnesses must stay home or be picked up within one hour of notification. Children of families who do not follow this policy may be dismissed from the Center. This list is not all-inclusive:

- ❑ **Fever**
 - Temperature 2 ½ degrees over body temperature (102° or higher rectally, 100° under the armpit, 101° orally).
 - Return when child is free of fever.
- ❑ **Rapid or labored breathing**
- ❑ **Runny nose**
 - Yellow or green mucous unrelated to allergies
 - Return when mucous is clear
- ❑ **Persistent cough or congestion**
 - Accompanied by yellow or green phlegm or is persistent and interferes with child's comfort or ability to drink, talk or sleep.
 - Return when symptoms are no longer present
 - A clearance from doctor may be required to return
- ❑ **Rashes** except diaper rash or poison ivy may lead to exclusion until a doctor provides clearance to return.
- ❑ **Diarrhea**
 - Three or more diarrhea stools within an eight hour period
 - May return 24 hours after last diarrhea stool
 - You may be asked to have a stool sample taken by a health care provider prior to return
- ❑ **Vomiting**
 - Two or more episodes of vomiting

- Return 24 hours after the last vomiting episode or when a health care provider determines that the child's illness is not communicable and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- ❑ **Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)**
 - May return 24 hours after treatment has started.
 - A doctor's clearance including the diagnosis and prescribed treatment is required upon return.
- ❑ **Impetigo**
 - May return 24 hours after treatment has started.
 - A doctor's clearance including diagnosis and prescribed treatment is required upon return.
- ❑ **Strep Throat**
 - May return 48 hours after treatment has started and child is free of fever for 24 hours.
 - A doctor's clearance is needed before returning to school.
- ❑ **Lice**
 - May return when child is free of lice.
- ❑ **Chicken Pox**
 - May return after sores are dry and crusted over.
 - Doctor clearance is required to return
- ❑ **Ringworm**
 - Ringworm of the scalp - return after treatment is started and with doctor's clearance
 - Ringworm on the body does not require exclusion under the following circumstances:
 1. The affected area is covered at all times
 2. Treatment has started
 3. If condition does not improve, a doctor's clearance may be required.
- ❑ **Mouth sores and drooling**
 - Return with doctor's clearance.
- ❑ **For all contagious illnesses**
 - Doctor's clearance with diagnosis and prescribed treatment is required to return to the center.
 - Additional medical information, tests or examinations may be required prior to return.
 - Our centers are required to report communicable diseases to the Public Health Department.

Allergies

Parents are to notify staff, in writing, of any allergy limitations. This written notification is to be placed on the two emergency cards and on the Medical History Profile.

As part of our educational program, children will be brushing their teeth after breakfast and lunch meals. Toothbrushes and toothpaste will be provided. The toothbrushes will be stored in racks that meet health and safety standards.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

If your child requires medication at the Center, please connect with the Site Supervisor for the Medication Packet.

Medication will be administered to children **only** under the following conditions:

With written parental authorization and direction from your child's physician (this applies to both prescription and non-prescription medicines).

Prescription medication must be in its original container and labeled with your child's name, physician's name, pharmacy, and name of medication, dosage and frequency of administration.

Non-prescription (over the counter) medication must be in the original container and labeled with your child's name, accompanied by written instruction for administering the medication from your child's physician.

PSD staff will maintain a record of medication administration for children on prescribed and non-prescribed medicines. The record will contain the name of the child, time medicine was administered, dosage and name of staff person administering the medicine. In the event of any atypical reaction, staff will immediately notify the parents, call the child's physician and/or 911 for emergency assistance.

Because of possible allergic reactions, PSD staff will not administer the first time dose of any medication to children. The first dose of any medication must be administered before the medication is brought to the center.

CONSENT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT/RELEASE

Community Care Licensing requires all children to have a signed Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment form on file. Parents are asked to fill out this form with specific procedures they wish followed in case of an emergency. Please work with the center to keep your child's consent forms up-to-date.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Your child must be designated as either a bus rider or a walker (your child cannot be both, i.e., dropped off at school, and then takes the bus home).

- All bus riders must have/wear a nametag provided by the school each day they ride the bus.

If your child rides the bus, he/she must be accompanied to/from the bus stop by an authorized person 18 years of age or older. You must sign your child onto the bus at the time of drop off. You must sign your child back into your care at the time of return from preschool EVERY DAY! If no one is at the bus stop to receive your child, your child will be returned to the school and you will have to pick him/her up at the school.

TRANSITION FROM HOME TO PRESCHOOL

Separation can be difficult for young children and parents. Parents and guardians should plan to spend a little extra time with their child the first few days of preschool. Parents, guardians and children need time to become acquainted with the center, the staff and routines. It may take you and your child time to adjust to the routines and center environment. This is typical and expected by staff. So, feel free to observe, ask questions or share concerns.

To increase your child's sense of security about her/his classroom, please let your child know when you are leaving. Do not sneak out or "ask their permission" to leave. Tell them you are leaving and when you will return using words that your child will understand. Feelings about separation are normal, and trying to distract your child with a toy while sneaking out will not help build the trust that is necessary for your child to feel secure.

Making a successful separation from parents is an important challenge for children, and one that takes time to complete. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have about your child's or your own feelings with your child's teacher or the center director. We are here to assist you and your child through the separation process.

CLOTHING

Children do well in school when they are comfortable. We believe that children should be as self-sufficient as possible, so please dress children in clothing that will help him/her experience success as they learn to 'do for themselves'. Clothing should be placed in comfortable, washable play clothes that are easily manageable by the child for toileting and comfort.

Please choose clothes that will allow children to participate in all the classroom activities (painting, playdough, sand and water play) without undue concern about getting dirty. Providing an extra set of clothing that will remain at the center in case of accidents is highly recommended. Sturdy shoes with closed heel and toes, or strap in the back and rubber soles are recommended. Shoes must be worn with socks.

Children should be dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the current weather. We play outside everyday (unless too wet or windy), so children will need sweaters, coats, etc. when the weather is cool and your choice of sun protection on hot, sunny days. All coats, jackets, sweaters and hats must be marked with the child's name.

It is difficult for young children to share their special possessions and children can become very disappointed if their special items are lost or broken. To eliminate feelings of possession and envy, and to prevent lost or broken personal items, please keep toys and other personal objects at home. Toys should only be brought to school if requested by the teacher.



PROCEDURES FOR GUIDANCE AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

The goal of any necessary "discipline" or guidance in our program is to promote life-long self-control, self-esteem and self-discipline in children. We want children to learn to make appropriate choices by themselves and not to rely on adults to control their behavior.

In accordance with our goals of discipline, we utilize supportive and fair discipline techniques that help children acknowledge the behavior, make choices about the solution and be responsible for consequences.

The children are taught and encouraged to use a problem solving approach when conflicts arise. They are taught to show respect for themselves and others as well as their environment. We do this with positive attention and by setting limits for inappropriate behavior.

At no time will any adult in our program hit, ridicule, humiliate, threaten a child, or use food or isolation as a means of controlling behavior or as discipline. The discipline and guidance techniques used by PSD staff are designed to help children develop self-control. We do not use 'time out' because the technique is not effective in helping children develop self-discipline.

The interactive style, teacher expectations, classroom environment and schedule of planned activities minimize conflict and support positive behavior among the children. Constructive methods are used in maintaining group control and handling individual behavior. Examples of constructive methods are:

1. Establishing rules with children in the classroom and on the playground in the beginning of each new school year. Rules are established in the classroom by the teaching staff in the classroom.
2. Giving verbal instructions to children that are brief, specific, and clear. Teaching staff gives brief and specific verbal instructions.
3. Praising children for appropriate behavior.

If a child exhibits a pattern of disruptive or hurtful behavior, teachers and parents may utilize some or all of the following steps to resolve the situation:

1. Offer appropriate alternatives to the child, including re-direction and support for problem solving with the classroom environment.
2. Review completed screenings and assessments and conduct additional observations with documentation to help clarify what, where and when behavior is occurring.
3. Schedule a meeting to share information with the child's parent(s). Parents may be asked to observe their child in the classroom.
4. Develop a plan, in collaboration with the child's parents, with steps to be carried out at home and in the classroom to help support the child in acquiring and using appropriate behaviors.
5. Identify and discuss with the parents any additional resources or referrals that may be helpful.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. Teachers will refrain from discussing children with anyone other than their parents, guardians and appropriate staff.

TELEVISION

Preschool Services Department supports the philosophy that children learn best through active interaction and involvement with their environment. This knowledge, coupled with the understanding that watching television is not an interactive medium, is the foundation for the policy that Preschool Services Department does not provide open television viewing for your child. A wide variety of other opportunities and activities are available for your child when s/he needs quiet or restful time.

On rare occasions the site will utilize a video that has been carefully selected for its appropriate educational value.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

In accordance with the California Department of Children and Family Services all employees of the Preschool Services Department are mandated reporters. This means that staff **must report** suspicion or knowledge of child abuse or neglect. The proper authorities must be notified if there is any evidence such as:

- Physical or psychological abuse.
- Child neglect, i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, and shelter even if no physical injury is evident.
- Sexual abuse, assault or child molestation.

CAR SAFETY LAW

California State law requires that all children under the age of 8 and under 4 feet 9 inches must be properly secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint system (safety or booster seat) in the car's rear seat. **If children are left unattended in a vehicle in the parking lot, the police will be notified immediately.**

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Center based Head Start / State Preschool teachers hold a current Child Development Teacher Permit or higher from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and a minimum of an Associate's Degree or higher. We strive to ensure our staff reflects the diverse linguistic and cultural makeup of the children and families in our program. The use of intergenerational staff is encouraged.³

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

This service area focuses on serving children 3 - 5 in quality, comprehensive programs in a variety of locations and types of settings. The major emphasis has always been to serve the 4-year-old child, who is preparing to enter school in order to ensure school readiness and success.

PSD uses the Creative Curriculum, which is a **supportive curriculum** that organizes the children's and teacher's environment, daily routine and interactions. The curriculum gives the teaching team a systematic method for planning, organizing and carrying out their preschool responsibilities and daily activities. For the children, the curriculum provides a consistent and secure daily experience that promises interesting things to do, attention by their teachers to their interests and needs, and a sense of control over themselves and their environment.

The curriculum provides experienced teachers' a plan for children that fosters independent thinking, initiative and creativity. Children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical capacities develop quickly when they can use materials and their imaginations freely in an environment that promotes investigation, decision-making, cooperation, persistence and problem-solving. The capacities that children develop in this open framework are broad abilities that children can use daily in the classroom as well as at home.

This research based and developmentally appropriate curriculum is presented in either a half-day or a full-day format. An attractive, clean learning environment is arranged with frequently changing activities, toys and experiences in order to reach each a child's preferred way of learning by encouraging and allowing for success for all children.

³ EC 8203(g)

A safe environment is assured through constant health checks, safety checks and monitoring. An emergency preparedness plan is reviewed and updated frequently including staff trained in First Aid and CPR.

INTRODUCTION TO DESIRED RESULTS

Desired Results for Children and Families is a system that documents child and family progress and provides information to help our agency improve our service to you.

A *desired result* is a condition of well-being for children and families. Desired results reflect the positive effects of our program on the functioning of children and families.

We use these results to determine how much children and families are benefiting from our activities and make changes accordingly.

The seven basic components of the desired results system for children are as follows:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy Development including English as a Second Language
- Cognition, Including Math and Science
- Physical Development – Health
- History – Social Science
- Visual and Performing Arts

The seven basic components for families are as follows:

- Family Well Being
- Parent – Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connection to Peers and the Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders

HEALTH SERVICES

The Generalist will provide assistance to those families who do not have medical and health resources. Free physical exams may be available to eligible children through the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program.

Other health related services offered are:

- Health Education workshops for parents.
- Tooth brushing for children.
- Dental, vision, and hearing screenings.

NUTRITION

For the children to gain maximum benefits from the program, they must bring healthy bodies and minds, sustained by nutritious food, to the learning process.

Meals and Snacks

All children receive a nutritious, free lunch each day, and either breakfast (morning and full day classes) or a snack (afternoon and full day classes). Children are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods and familiar foods prepared in different ways. Meal times are used as part of the learning process, with adults and children sharing the meal, discussing color, texture, and food groups. Meals are served family style (in bowls/pitchers on table) to allow children to gain independence in serving and eating and to work on fine motor skills. Food is served in a relaxed atmosphere that allows for social interactions with peers and adults.

A child arriving at the center after breakfast has been served, but between 8:45 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., and who has not had breakfast, will be offered breakfast. For supervision purposes, the parent must sit and accompany the child until the meal is complete. A child arriving between 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. and has not had breakfast, will be offered a 2 component snack. Lunch will be served between 11:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Menus are posted in each classroom. All meals and snacks conform to the nutritional requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food program (CACFP).

Food Allergies

If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, please inform the teacher, Site Supervisor, and the Generalist. Arrangements will be made to accommodate special needs. Meal substitutions can be made with a physician's statement for medically based diets or with parents' statement for religious/cultural based diets.

Nutritious Foods for Children

Healthy foods and age appropriate nutritious meals and snacks are provided to the children. Refined sugars, salt and foods high in fats are discouraged when planning menus. Menus are reviewed by a registered dietician nutritionist on a regular basis. Workshops on child nutrition, menu planning and healthy low fat cooking are available for staff and parents.

Parents and guardians are requested **not** to send candy, peanuts, chips, popcorn, gum, carbonated drinks or other alternative snacks to school with your child.

Other Nutrition related services offered:

- **Weighing and measuring of children twice a year.**
- **Nutrition counseling for families of children at nutrition risk that include anemia and any growth related concerns per parents' request.**
- **Nutrition Education workshops for parents.**

HEAD START SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Head Start program regulations require that at least 10% of our available slots be made available to families with children who are professionally diagnosed with a disability, such as hearing, vision or speech impairment, or serious health or emotional problems. Additionally, PSD provides appropriate mental health referral services to children or families as appropriate. The program ensures that all children with special needs receive all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Parents are involved in the planning and implementation of services for their children. Efforts are made by staff to coordinate the services offered to the children by resource agencies and the public schools. Meetings are held with the public schools, program staff and parents before the end of classes to enable a smooth transition for the child into kindergarten.

Services to children, families and staff include:

- Identification of the special needs of children through observation, screening and assessment.
- Workshops on behavior management.
- Working with speech, language or hearing impaired children.
- Identification of possible problems.
- Referral of children to a mental health professional when necessary.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is a vital part of the Preschool Service Department programs. Parents are considered to be the first and primary educators of their children. PSD supports and encourages parents to actively participate in their child's early education, growth and development.

We encourage you to become actively involved in your child's education. Teaching Staff are your resource in providing valuable "School to Home Activities" that you and your child can participate in at home to help improve educational skills. Your input, suggestions and observations are valuable to us. All parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom and at the center on a regular basis in whatever capacity you feel is appropriate for you.

BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER, please be aware that all volunteer time will be maintained and recorded by each preschool site.

All parent volunteers **who exceed 15 hours per week at the facility** will be referred to the PSD Volunteer Coordinator to schedule an appointment to be fingerprinted and background checked, in accordance with Community Care Licensing Regulations. Volunteers will be required to pay for fingerprinting and background clearance. Once the volunteer's fingerprints have cleared, he/she will be notified that they may resume their volunteer service.

In addition, volunteers must have a current TB test performed not more than one year prior to or seven days after initial presence in the center. If you do not have a current TB test, or health insurance a Generalist and/or Site Supervisor will provide low cost local resources.

Parents can participate in many ways including:

- Participating in classroom activities (reading or telling stories, singing, playing games)
- Kitchen and food preparation duties
- Participating in our job training/apprenticeship program⁴
- Attending parent workshops provided by the program.
- Increasing your knowledge of age-appropriate behavior
- Supervising children on the playground
- Teaching a child or small group of children
- Helping the teachers prepare materials
- Helping staff with maintenance and repair of the classroom or play equipment
- Contacting other parents
- Typing in the center or at home
- Participating on the Parent Advisory Committee
- Assisting with the nutrition program
- Serving on the Health Services Advisory Committee
- School to Home Activities

⁴ EC 8202(c)

Parent Orientation

Parent orientations are provided at the beginning of each school year. These orientation meetings are held to provide new parents an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the teacher, the classroom environment, and our policies and procedures. Orientation is a valuable opportunity for all parents, new and returning, to socialize and network with other parents. We strongly recommend that all parents attend.

Family Support Services

The Preschool Services Department is committed to providing support services to families in order to strengthen the family and assist them in improving the quality of their lives.

Often, parents may desire or need assistance beyond the capabilities of the individual center. The Preschool Services Department has established partnerships with various community agencies that may be helpful to our families. Referrals and consultation are available for health care, child development and behavior and support services such as job training, educational opportunities, housing, legal counsel and family difficulties. Additionally, there are 7 Family Learning Centers (FLC) where workshops, trainings, resource fairs, referral information and literacy programs are held in regions throughout the county.

Parent Conferences

Each child's development is of major importance to us. Teachers observe children carefully and design program activities with educational goals in mind for each child. Teachers meet with parents to share insights and to learn more about each child. The California Department of Education and the Head Start program require that teachers and parents meet at least four times per year. You will be notified of an opportunity for this meeting. During this time, parents are informed of the child's progress, identify areas for improvement and work together with the teacher in developing goals towards school readiness.

Conferences are typically done at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the year; however, you may request a conference with your child's teacher at any time. These conferences are a time for undisturbed parent/teacher communication and an opportunity for teachers to provide parents with specific information about their child's growth and development.

Parent Advisory Committee Meetings

Parents and guardians of children enrolled at the center are also invited to participate on the Parent Advisory Committee. This committee is a parent run committee that meets once per month and is open to all parents to plan and discuss program activities offered at the center. It is designed to offer parents a forum where questions can be answered,

suggestions can be made, and problems solved. Another purpose of the committee is to ensure that effective, two-way, comprehensive communication between staff and parents is carried out on a regular basis throughout the program year.

Head Start Policy Council

An important feature of Head Start parent involvement is the parent's role in establishing the policies for the organization. The Policy Council (PC) is comprised of one parent representative elected from each center (including Delegate Agencies) and community representatives. Meetings are held monthly. The PC helps to plan activities and make decisions about the program. The Policy Council term begins in October and continues through September 30th of each year. Membership term on the PC is limited to no more than three years.

Parent Education & Training

Parent education and training opportunities will be offered to parents at the center and through partner agencies on a regular basis. Parents and guardians are encouraged to suggest topics for workshops, seminars and other education and training activities. PSD staff, partnership agency staff and independent consultants are utilized to address some of the parents' topics of interest.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Parents have the right to be informed about issues and events at the center. Parents can expect a variety of communications which include:

Bulletin Board

Each classroom has a bulletin board that contains information for parents. A bulletin board is also located in the center containing community and center information.

Newsletter

All of our centers distribute a newsletter to families of children enrolled at the center. The newsletters often include tips for addressing certain situations and behaviors as well as information about activities taking place at your child's school. Periodically, the newsletter will include information on such topics as separation anxiety, the importance of play, the benefits of inclusion and other relevant issues in the field of Child Development and Early Childhood Studies.

Monthly Calendar

Parents receive a calendar containing important dates and center events for the month.

Compliment/Complaint Forms

Compliment/Complaint forms are located in the center's office. Parents are encouraged to submit written comments, suggestions, or concerns.

END OF THE YEAR EVENT

Each classroom teacher plans end of the year activities. Some examples of activities include, a day at the park, parent/child make and take crafts, parent/child tea. All children receive a certificate at the end of the year. Traditional cap and gown (graduation) ceremonies are **not** allowed due to staffing, licensing, and building capacity concerns.

NON-FEDERAL SHARE FOR THE HEAD START PROGRAM

The Head Start program funding requires that twenty (20) percent of the Head Start grant is matched with contributions/donations. These are called "Non-Federal Share" and consist of volunteer time, participating in Head Start activities, donating materials, serving on Policy Council, and many other ways. You will be asked to fill out "Non-Federal Share" forms when you donate services, materials, or volunteer time to the Head Start program.

USE OF PARENT ACTIVITY FUNDS

Parent activity funds are used for training activities or projects which are educational/skill building in nature. Activities must be designed for participation of adults, not for children. Examples of activities include: how to advocate for your child during their school years, becoming more organized, communication skills, team building, community awareness, building positive self-esteem, and personal goal setting/development. Parent committees must submit a plan and budget for the year within 60 days of the start of the program year. All parent groups must follow the Preschool Services Department procedures for activities.

FUND RAISING

On April 15, 2002, the Head Start Parent Policy Council voted to end fundraising permanently. The Head Start Parent Policy Council's action was based on the recommendation from the Administration for Children and Families when they conducted their tri-annual audit of Preschool Services Department in January 2002.

- According to the Federal audit team, no activity such as fundraising could be done on behalf or in the name of Head Start because the funds would become the property of Head Start.

HARASSMENT

Agency policy prohibits intimidation or harassment of any student by any employee, student or other person. Staff shall be alert and immediately responsive to conduct which may interfere with students' ability to participate in or benefit from program services,

activities or privileges. Civil Rights guarantees and Equal Access Laws shall be adhered to in all educational and personnel/employment practices.

NOTIFICATION: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Preschool Services Department that all persons, regardless of their sex, be afforded equal rights and opportunities and freedom from discrimination of any kind in PSD programs and settings.⁵

Sexual Harassment is a violation of federal and state law and can cause physical, emotional and economic problems for its victims. Sexual Harassment is defined as unsolicited or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

The Preschool Services Department will take prompt and appropriate action if an incident of discrimination or harassment occurs to avoid or minimize the impact of any incident of discrimination or harassment. The PSD and the County will pursue all reasonable preventive measures to ensure that programs and services are free of discrimination or harassment.

AGENCY GRIEVANCE POLICY

The Preschool Services Department (PSD) of San Bernardino County operates the Federal Head Start and State Department of Education's State Preschool programs. PSD strives to be the very best in the services we provide to children and families. PSD encourages open communication between our staff and parents, community partners, and the communities we serve.

To assist our parents and those we serve to have a voice in the daily operations of the program, we provide parents and the community an avenue for submitting their **concerns**, **feedback** and/or **compliments**.

If you have **concerns**, we ask that all attempts are made to resolve them through direct feedback and problem solving with the staff and supervisors involved.

- If, attempts to resolve your concerns have been unsuccessful at this level, the following procedure will serve as a guide to address your **concerns**.
- This procedure may also be used to submit **feedback** and or **compliments**.

Procedure

1. Complete the Concern / Feedback / Compliment Form available at every site.
2. Written concern should include:
 - Name and address of the person filing the concern

⁵ Education Code 231.5[a],[b],[c]

- A description of the problem
- Date of occurrence
- Names of people involved
- Possible solutions
- Parents should consult with their FCP Generalist or Site Supervisor for advice and assistance.

3. The form should be completed by the individual(s) involved and submitted to:

Preschool Services Department
 Attn: Program Manager
 662 South Tippecanoe Avenue
 San Bernardino, CA 92415-0630
 (909) 383-2078

4. Upon receipt of a concern:

- A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the situation;
- The Program Manager may invite those concerned to attempt to resolve the concern;
- The Program Manager will issue a written decision in response to the concern not later than 30 days from date of filing.

NOTICE OF ACTION APPEAL INFORMATION

If you disagree with an official decision you learn about through a “Notice of Action” (NOA) form, you may appeal the intended action. To protect your appeal rights, you must follow the instructions described on the back of the Notice of Action form. If you do not respond by the required due dates or fail to submit the required appeal information with your appeal request, your appeal may be considered abandoned.

STEP 1: Complete the appeal information to request a local hearing:

STEP 2: Mail or deliver your local hearing request within 14 days of receipt of the notice to:

Preschool Services Department
 Attn: Family Community Engagement Program Manager
 662 South Tippecanoe Avenue
 San Bernardino, CA 92415-0630
 (909) 383-2078

STEP 3: Within ten (10) calendar days following the agency’s receipt of your appeal request, the agency will notify you of the time and place of the hearing. You or your authorized representatives are required to attend the hearing. If you or your representative does not attend the hearing, you abandon your rights to an appeal, and the action of the agency will be implemented.

STEP 4: Within ten (10) calendar days following the hearing, the agency shall mail or delivery to you a written decision.

STEP 5: If you disagree with the written decision of the agency, you have 14 days from your receipt of the written decision to file an appeal with the California Department of Education (CDE). Your appeal to CDE must include the following documents and information: (1) a written statement specifying the reasons you believe the agency's decision was incorrect, (2) a copy of the agency's decision letter, and (3) a copy of both sides of this notice. Mail your appeal to the following address:

California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Appeals Coordinator

STEP 6: Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of your appeal, CDD will issue a written decision to you and the agency. *If your appeal is denied, the agency will stop providing child care and development services immediately upon receipt of CDE's decision letter.*

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

It is the intent of the PSD to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (Ed 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.

For State Preschool programs, complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the State Department of Education.

Child Development Division
Complaint Coordinator
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814

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. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event.

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.⁶

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

PSD has a written Disaster Plan of Action in case of an earthquake or other disaster. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. Parents and guardians can help to make a potentially traumatic occurrence less stressful by keeping their child's emergency form updated.

The emergency form contains vital information regarding your child's doctor, authorization for medical treatment if necessary, names of individuals to contact if you cannot be reached, as well as the names of those who are authorized to pick up your child if you are unable to do so.

To ensure that the center is prepared for emergencies, PSD practices earthquake, fire and lock down drills monthly. In addition, the center maintains a permanent supply of food, water, blankets, flashlights, radios, and first aid supplies. It is estimated that these supplies are sufficient for two days. Teachers and all staff on duty during an emergency will work together to account for the welfare of all the children.

In the event of an emergency or disaster:

Come as quickly as you can to pick up your child.

When you reach the center, come in as calmly as you can so as not to upset the children.

VISITATION AND SECURITY

The center has an open door policy and parents are welcome and encouraged to visit their children during the day. All visitors must sign in at the center's front desk each time they visit the site. Visitors accompanying a parent are asked to wait in the lobby while parents drop off or pick up their child.

Visitors, observers and program support staff who spend short periods of time at the center are required to wear nametags.

⁶ EC 231.5 (c)

LOCATIONS OF HEAD START / STATE PRESCHOOL CENTERS IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

For more information about the program, please call (909) 383-2078, or the phone number listed below for the center near you.

For site maps visit: www.sbcounty.gov/psd - preschool locations

Adelanto (760) 246 - 5073	Ontario Montclair USD (909) 917-5081
Apple Valley (760) 247 - 6955	Phelan (760) 868 - 0829
Baker Family Learning Ctr (909) 887-8780	Redlands (909) 798-2690
Baker Valley USD (760) 733 - 4567	Rialto Eucalyptus (909) 421 - 7180
Barstow (760) 253 - 2956	Rialto Renaissance (909) 875 - 6863
Big River (760) 665 - 5065	Rialto Willow (909) 421-7042
Bloomington (909) 876 - 6342	S.B. West (909) 888 - 0493
Boy's & Girl's Club (909) 381 - 4294	Twenty-Nine Palms (760) 367 - 5150
Chino (909) 627 - 0206	Upland (909) 931 - 0147
Colton (909) 876 - 4240	Victor Valley College (760) 952-1215
Crestline (909) 338 - 1567	Victorville (760) 245 - 9147
Cucamonga (909) 948 - 6979	Waterman Gardens (909) 889 - 3807
Del Rosa (909) 883 - 0103	Westminster (909) 983 - 0600
Easter Seals Montclair (909) 626-1700	Yucaipa (909) 797 - 3585
Easter Seals Ontario (909) 923 - 3352	Yucca Valley (760) 369 - 7424
Easter Seals Upland (909) 981 - 4668	
Fontana Citrus (909) 428 - 8496	
Fontana USD (909) 357-5000 X7080	FAMILY LEARNING CENTERS (FLC)
Hesperia (760) 948 - 4411	Apple Valley (760) 240 - 5353
Highland (909) 425 - 0785	Barstow (760) 253-2336
Mill Child Dev. Ctr. (909) 885 - 0789	Del Rosa (909) 881 - 7544
Needles (760) 326 - 5221	Ontario (909) 983 - 2039 / 7008
Newberry Springs (760) 254 - 2141	Renaissance (909) 875 - 5913 / 7953
Northgate (760) 951-1425	Victorville (760) 951 - 3430
Ontario Maple (909) 984 - 4117	Twenty-Nine Palms (760) 367 - 5150

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Child's Name

I acknowledge that I received, read and understand the contents of the Preschool Services Department Parent Handbook. As a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the center, I will follow the policies and procedures of the center, as detailed in the Parent Handbook. I will also work collaboratively and in partnership with the center staff to ensure compliance with local, state and federal regulations as required in the daily operation of the center and programs offered for young children.

I have received:

An orientation for parents which includes program philosophy, program goals and objectives, program activities, eligibility requirements, and

Due process procedures

Parent rights

Personal rights

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Please place in child's folder.