



# Northcoast Children's Services State Program Parent Policies

**Welcome!**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to Northcoast Children's Services. This handbook was created to assist you in learning about our program and its requirements. Our mission is to provide a quality preschool experience for your child, build a supportive and collaborative partnership with you, and provide you with critical information on child development, early learning, nutrition, and community resources that may be beneficial for your family. We trust that you and your family will have a wonderful experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Montagne".

Kathy Montagne, Executive Director



Northcoast Children's Services operates State Preschool Programs, State Child care Programs, Head Start Programs and Early Head Start Programs.

All Families have to document their eligibility for the program.

In full day programs families are required to document their need for child care and a family fee might apply.

## **State Program Policies Index**

- 1. Documentation of Eligibility**
  - A. At-risk of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation
  - B. Child Protective Services (CPS)
  - C. Homelessness
  - D. Income eligible
  - E. Current CalWORKS (cash aid recipient)
  - F. Other Documentation Needed
- 2. Documentation of Need for Child Care** (full day/full year programs only)
  - A. Child Protective Services/At-Risk
  - B. Employment
  - C. Training Toward Vocational Goals
  - D. Seeking Employment
  - E. Seeking Permanent Housing
  - F. Parental Incapacity
- 3. Family Fee Assessments** (full day/full year programs only)
- 4. Notice of Actions**
- 5. Selection Priorities**
- 6. How to Continue in the Program**
- 7. Recertification**
- 8. Program Attendance Policies**
  - A. Sign in/Out
  - B. Absence Policies
- 9. Education Program**
  - A. Desired Results Profile
  - B. Environmental Rating Scale
- 10. Nutrition Services**
- 11. Parent & Community Involvement**
  - A. Health and Social Services
  - B. Parent Survey
  - C. Community Involvement
- 12. Staff Development**
- 13. Program Self Evaluation**
- 14. General Policies**

See Northcoast Children's Services Parent Handbook

## 1. Documentation of Eligibility

Your eligibility is based on the documentation and verification of at least one of the following:

- A. At-risk of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation
- B. Child Protective Services (CPS)
- C. Homelessness
- D. Income eligible
- E. Current CalWORKS cash aid recipient

### A. Documentation of At –Risk

If the basis of eligibility is at-risk, you must provide a written referral, dated within the six (6) months immediately preceding the date of application for services, from a legal, medical, social services agency, a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, a Head Start program, or an emergency or transitional shelter. **The referral must include six elements:**

1. A statement by a legally qualified professional\* that the child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and that child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk
2. Probable duration of the at-risk situation
3. Name of the person making the referral
4. Address of the person making the referral
5. Phone number of the person making the referral
6. Signature of the person making the referral

**\*Legally qualified professional** means a person licensed under applicable laws and regulations of the State of California to perform legal, medical, health or social services for the general public

### B. Documentation of Child Protective Services

If your eligibility is based on CPS, you will need to provide a written referral, dated within six months of application for services that includes:

- Statement from local county welfare department, child welfare services worker, certifying that the child is receiving Child Protective Services (CPS), and that child care and development services are a necessary component of the CPS service plan

- Probable duration of the CPS service plan
- Waiver of family fee, if requested
- Name, address, phone number, and signature of the county child welfare staff

### **C. Documentation of Homelessness**

If the basis of eligibility is homelessness, one of the following is required:

- A written referral from an emergency shelter, other legal, medical, or social service agency; or
- A written parental declaration that states:
  - That the family is homeless and
  - A description of the family's current living situation
  - A written statement signed by the parent "under penalty of perjury attesting that the contents of the statement are true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge"

### **D. Documentation of Total Countable Income**

Your income eligibility is based on documentation of the total countable income of all individuals counted in the family size, for example:

- Gross wages or salaries, commissions, tips, overtime, bonuses, gambling, lottery winnings
- Public cash assistance (CalWORKs)
- Disability or unemployment, or workers' compensation
- Child support payments received
- Portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes as tuition, books, or supplies

### **Documentation of Employment Income**

If your eligibility is based on employment income, documentation shall include:

- Release authorization\* and payroll check stub(s) for the month preceding certification

\*A release authorization allows the contractor's designated staff to contact the employer(s). The release authorization includes:

- Employer's name, Address, Telephone number, Usual business hours

### **Documentation of Self-Employment Income**

If your basis of eligibility is self-employment, you shall provide a combination of documentation necessary to establish current income for at least the month preceding certification or recertification. The documentation shall consist of as many of the following types of documentation as necessary to determine income:

- Letter from source of income
- Copy of the most recently signed and completed tax return with a statement of current estimated income for tax purpose, or
- Other business records, such as ledgers, receipts, or business logs

### **Self-Certification of Income**

If documentation of income is not possible, you may provide a self-certification of income

"Self-certification of income" means a declaration (written statement) that is signed under penalty of perjury, identifying:

- Employer, date of hire, rate and frequency of pay, total amount of income received for the preceding month(s), type of work performed, and hours and days of employment; or
- The amount and frequency of sources of income for which no documentation is possible

## **E. Other Documentation needed for Eligibility**

### **Documentation of Family Size**

The number of children you claim in your family size shall be documented by providing at least **one** of the following:

- Birth certificate/record
- Child custody court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster Care placement records
- School or medical records

- County welfare department records (Passport to Services)
- Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent

**Documentation of Single Parent**

- If you are the only parent signing the application for services, and the birth record indicates the child has another parent whose name does not appear on the application, you may provide a self-certification of being a single parent, signed under penalty of perjury.  
No further documentation shall be required

**2. Documentation of Need ( for full day programs)**

**Requirement to Report Increase in Income**

**Once certified or recertified as income eligible for services, you have an obligation to report increases in income that exceed the 85 percent threshold for ongoing income eligibility. Your ongoing eligibility for services shall be re-determined at that time.**

Certification of need for services is based on documentation and verification of at least one of the following:

- A. Child Protective Services/At-Risk
- B. Employment
- C. Training Toward Vocational Goals
- D. Seeking Employment
- E. Seeking Permanent Housing
- F. Parental Incapacity

**A. Child Protective Services/At-Risk**

See documentation information above in the Eligibility section.

**B. Employment**

See documentation information above in the Eligibility section.

**C. Documentation of Training Toward Vocational Goals, English Language Learner, General Education Development, or High School Diploma**

If the basis of need for services is training, documentation shall include:

- A statement of the your vocational goal or type of training activities

- The name of the training institution that is providing the training
- Days and hours of training
- The dates that quarter, semester, or training period, will begin and end
- A current class schedule (electronic print-out ) or
- if unavailable, a document that includes:
  - Classes currently enrolled in
  - The days of the week, and the times of the day of classes
  - The signature or stamp of the training institution's registrar
  - The anticipated completion date of all required training activities

### **Documentation of Training at Recertification**

At recertification, documentation of adequate progress from the most recently completed quarter, semester or training period shall be provided:

- In a graded program: 2.0 grade point average
- In a non-graded program: Pass program requirements in at least 50 percent of classes, or
- Meet the training institution's standard for making adequate progress

### **D. Documentation of Seeking Employment**

If the basis of need for services is seeking employment, documentation shall include a written parental declaration that:

- Is signed under penalty of perjury stating that the parent is seeking employment
- Shall include the parent's plan to secure, change, or increase employment; and include a general description of when services will be necessary

### **E. Documentation of Seeking Permanent Housing**

If the basis of need for services is seeking permanent housing, documentation shall include a written parental declaration that:

- Is signed under penalty of perjury that the parent is seeking permanent housing

- Includes the parent's search plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence; and
- A general description of when services will be necessary

## **F. Documentation of Parental Incapacity**

If the basis of need is parental incapacitation, you must provide a signed release authorizing a legally qualified health professional to disclose information necessary to establish incapacitation. The legally qualified health professional will need to provide Northcoast Children's Services with a statement that includes all of the following:

- That the parent is incapacitated, and that the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision for the child for part of the day
- The extent to which the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision
- The days and hours per week that services are recommended
- Probable duration of incapacitation
- Name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the health professional

## **3. Family Fee Assessment (full day/full year programs only)**

- Monthly fees are assessed at certification and recertification. If you have a change in circumstances that might reduce your family fee, you may request an update to the application prior to the recertification due date
- Your family fee is paid in advance of service. You may pay by cash, check, etc.
- No adjustments are made for absences
- Your fees are delinquent seven (7) calendar days after the due date. A NOA will be issued to you with a pending termination date for services. To halt the NOA action you may either pay the delinquent fees or agree to reasonable repayment plan for the delinquent fees
- Credit is given for child care fees paid to other service providers when assigned provider is not able to meet all the family's certified need for child care. A receipt or cancelled check for the fees paid is required. The credit is applied to the next billing period



## **Exceptions to Family Fee Assessment**

### **No fees are assessed for:**

- CPS or At-Risk, for a maximum of 12 months, if the written referral from a legally qualified professional or the CPS worker states that family fees shall be waived
- Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid
- Part-Day CSPP families or
- CHAN families

## **4. Notice of Action (NOA)**

### **You will receive a Notice of Action (NOA) at:**

- Initial certification to approve or deny services
- Recertification
- When your family fee payment is delinquent
- Disenrollment from the program
- Parent Right to Appeal:
  - The NOA will provide the details of the action, and the instructions on how to appeal
  - You must follow the instructions and timeline for the appeal process at the local level (program) first. If you do not agree with the program's decision, you may appeal at the CDE level

## **5. Selection Priorities**

### **How Families are Selected:**

- The first priority for enrollment in state programs is children who are receiving Child Protective Services or have been identified as at-risk of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.
- The second priority is by income ranking order using the current income rankings table. Enrollment is prioritized by lowest income rankings and age. Three and four year olds are eligible for CSPP state preschool program services and infants and toddlers ages 12 to 36 months are eligible for CCTR infant toddler programs.

## **6. How to Continue in the Program**

- Timely recertification process; annually for all
- Timely payment of Fees, if applicable
- Adherence to Fee Payment Plan
- Abide by contractor policies, procedures and Requirements

## **7. Recertification**

- Following the initial certification for services, your family is eligible to continue receiving services for no less than 12 months
- Recertification for services is completed by the authorized staff person, following all of the documentation requirements for initial Certification.

## **8. Program Attendance Policies**

### **A. Daily Sign-In/Out**

Our daily sign in/out process is required by Community Care Licensing, and is the source document used to claim reimbursement from the California Department of Education:

- On each day of attendance the parent or other authorized adult must enter the actual time of arrival and departure on the sign-in/out sheet and sign your full legal signature at each point
- For any absence on a day of enrollment you must provide the reason for the absence and your full signature

### **B. Absence Policies**

There are Two Categories of Absences

#### **Excused:**

- Illness/quarantine of child or parent
- Best Interest Day is a day of absence in the best interest of the child (10 per child in the fiscal year)
  - Best interest days are not limited for CPS or at risk
- Family emergency
- Court-ordered visitation, court order must be on file

- Child cannot attend school because he or she has to receive treatment, therapy or professional services while class is in session.

**Unexcused:**

- Unexcused absences are days of non-attendance that are not listed above as excused. 20 unexcused absences may result in termination of services from the program.

**Best Interest Days for the Child**

Best Interest Days for the child may include:

- Family vacation
- Time with relatives
- Special events for the child
- Cultural or religious celebrations
- Enrichment opportunities
- Others

You must notify the Center Director of planned or unexpected Best Interest Days whenever possible

**Family Emergencies**

A family emergency is a sudden situation that makes it difficult or unsafe for you to bring your child to the program, such as:

- Earthquake, natural disasters
- Transportation problems
- Hazardous weather condition
- Sibling Illness
- Hospitalization of a family member
- Death of a family member
- Sudden change in residency
- Others on a case-by-case basis

Please notify the center if you cannot bring your child into the program as soon as you are able to do so.

## **Unexcused Absence Policies**

Unexcused absences are days of non-attendance that are not listed above as excused. Unexcused absences are not reimbursed. An excess of 20 unexcused absences may result in termination from the program.

## **9. Education Program**

The education program at Northcoast Children's Services includes:

- Developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate
- Inclusive of children with special needs
- Encouraging of respect for the feelings, and rights of others
- Supportive of children's social and emotional development by:
- Building trust
- Planning routines and transitions so they can occur in a timely, predictable and unhurried manner
- Helping children develop emotional security

Teachers, and staff at Northcoast Children's Services support the development of children's cognitive, language, physical, and social/ emotional development by:

- Using various strategies, including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, and exploration
- Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue
- Promoting interaction, and language use among children, and between children and adults
- Supporting emerging literacy, and numeracy development
- Promoting each child's physical development by providing sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials, and guidelines for active play
- Promoting, and maintaining practices that are healthy, and safe

### **A. Desired Results Developmental Profile**

The goal of Northcoast Children's Services is to ensure that all children are making progress in the domains of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development:

- We use the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), a tool developed by the CDE, EESD, to assess children’s development
- The DRDP assessment is conducted through observation of children during play activities, and routines, rather than through “testing” of children
- Children are assessed within 60 days of enrollment, and every six months thereafter
- Parents’ input, collected by the DRDP Parent Survey, is a necessary component of this assessment
- Assessment outcomes are used to plan, and conduct age and developmentally appropriate activities for the children

## **B. Environment Rating Scale**

Northcoast Children’s Services conducts an annual Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment on all classrooms to ensure that we are providing quality classroom environments, and activities that promote the development and well-being of the children enrolled. Results from the ERS assessment are also used to enhance, and promote continuous quality improvement.

## **10. Nutrition Services**

Northcoast Children’s Services promotes children’s health and well-being by providing nutritious meals and snacks daily. All meals and snacks are culturally, and developmentally appropriate, and meet the nutritional requirements set forth by the federal Child Care Food Program.

If your child has food allergies, requires a special diet or accommodation, please inform your child’s teacher.

## **11. Parent & Community Involvement**

Northcoast Children’s Services strongly encourages parent involvement in program activities, and offers educational opportunities for families. The following are opportunities for your involvement and education opportunities:

- An orientation to the program is offered for all enrolling families
- A minimum of two (2) individual conferences annually to discuss your child’s development, and to learn how to best support your family

- Regular meetings for families and staff

### **A. Health and Social Services**

Northcoast Children's Services offers a health and social service component for all families. If your family has health and/or social service needs, we encourage you to discuss those needs with your child's teacher, our family resource specialist, or the program director. Northcoast Children's Services will provide you with referrals to appropriate community agencies, based on your specific needs, and will follow up with you to ensure that your families' needs have been met.

### **B. Parent Survey**

Northcoast Children's Services requests that all families complete the Desired Results Parent Survey that we distribute each year. We analyze the results of the annual parent survey, and use those results to plan and conduct activities that support your child's learning and development, as well as to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all families enrolled.

### **C. Community Involvement**

Northcoast Children's Services actively engages with our local community, and encourages community involvement by:

- Soliciting support from the local community, including the solicitation of donated goods, and items
- Providing information to the local community regarding services for children, and families

## **12. Staff Development**

Northcoast Children's Services is committed to providing quality early childhood education. Our teachers and staff are highly skilled, qualified, and hold the appropriate credential/permit required by the State of California:

- New employees are provided a thorough orientation to guide them in understanding how agency policies relate to their respective job description
- We support our staff's ongoing professional development by assessing their needs, and providing workshops and activities to enhance their professional growth and development

- We provide staff with an annual, written performance evaluation that identifies areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement. Professional development opportunities are offered, as applicable
- We use ongoing two-way internal communication mechanisms that include email, phone, newsletter, and monthly staff meetings to provide staff with information necessary to carry out their respective duties

### **13. Program Self-Evaluation**

Northcoast Children's Services conducts an annual self-evaluation of the program to ensure that we are effectively meeting the needs of children, and families, and to promote continuous quality improvement. Desired Results Developmental Profile, Environmental Rating Scale and Parent Surveys are components of the Self Evaluation.

### **14. General Policies**

See Northcoast Children's Services Parent Handbook