



# *Northcoast Children's Services*

## *Parent Handbook*

For the family of: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of teacher/family worker and/or home visitor:

\_\_\_\_\_

Program your child is enrolled in: \_\_\_\_\_

Site phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Site address: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom or home visit days/hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/phone number of the site supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Northcoast Children's Services Main Office

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Arcata, CA 95521

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Office hours: 8:30-4:30 M-F

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**The Mission of Northcoast Children's Services is:**

*To Nurture and Empower the Whole Child and Family,*

*Enhance our Quality of Life and*

*Create a More Peaceful Global Community.*

# **Welcome to Northcoast Children's Services!**

**👋 We believe that parents are the first and primary teachers of their children.**

This handbook was created to give you information about our program.

Please remember to talk with your child's teacher, family worker or home visitor if you ever have questions about anything regarding your child or family.



# Parent Responsibilities

## Emergency Card

NCS is required by Ca. Community Care Licensing to collect updated information about how to contact each child's parent while their child is in class. Parents will also provide the names and phone numbers of two reliable emergency contacts who would be able to pick up the child during the day if the parent isn't able to. Home base programs also need emergency information on file. Parents are responsible for keeping this information up to date in case of emergency.

## Transportation To and From School/Playgroups

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to regular program activities. Children being transported in cars must be secured in an appropriate child safety seat according to California law. When a family faces a transportation crisis that makes it difficult for the child to attend program activities, parents may contact their child's teacher, family worker or home visitor for help in developing a transportation plan.

## Signing Children In and Out of the Classroom

It is a licensing requirement to complete daily attendance sheets for the classroom. When the child is dropped off or picked up, the parent signs his or her full legible name next to the child's name on the Attendance Sheet. The parent makes sure that staff knows that the child has arrived so that a "Daily Visual Health Check" can be conducted. After signing their child out at the end of the session, parents make sure staff knows the child has been picked up. Once the child has been signed out, the parent is responsible for their safety. If someone else is to pick up a child, staff cannot release the child unless the person is 18 years old or older and has been designated by the parent on the emergency card. Parents should let the friend or relative picking up the child know that they may be asked for photo identification.

## Center Attendance

It is important that your child be dropped off and picked up on time. A regular schedule helps them learn the school routine and be successful in the program. Too many absences can cause children to fall behind. Children fall behind if they miss just 3 days each month. Head Start and Early Head Start centers require 85% attendance in the classroom. If you have difficulty with regular attendance, your teacher will work with you to make an attendance plan. Your child may be moved to a home based program when there are too many absences.

## Absences

If a child is sick or unable to attend school or home visit, parents need to call the teacher or home visitor. Classroom Staff will call/text the parent within an hour if staff have not heard why a child is not in school. Staff will also do a home visit to see why a child is not in school. Documentation of classroom absences are required. Home Visitors will call/text to see why a home visit is missed.

## Late Pick Up

"Late pick up" refers to any time a child is picked up after the scheduled program hours. If an emergency arises parents agree to:

1. Call the center and let a staff member know the situation and/or
2. Arrange for another adult to pick up the child and let the center know that person's name and when the child will be picked up. Remind them they will need to show a picture I.D.

**If a child is still at the center after closing and staff has not heard from his or her parent, the following steps are taken:**

1. Attempt to reach the parent at home, work or school
2. Call the people listed on the emergency authorization card
3. Call the authorities (Child Welfare Services, law enforcement and NCS Executive Director)

Teachers will document late pick-ups with a form that the parent will sign each time they are late.

## **Responding to Safety Concerns when the Child is Picked Up**

If NCS staff believes a person is unsafe to pick up a child from school (such as a person under the influence of alcohol/drugs or extremely upset), *we cannot release a child to someone who is "impaired."* If the parent or other designated person appears to present a danger at the time, it could result in a police report (911) or a call to another adult on the child's emergency card.

## **Children's Clothing – What To Bring (and Not to Bring)**

Children's play is messy. They dig in sand, work with clay, climb, run and slide. Parents are asked to dress their children in comfortable play clothes. Shoes that are rubber-soled and either buckle or tie are best. We recommend closed-toe shoes for safety. A complete change of clothing (labeled) should be stored in the child's cubby in the classroom. *NCS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST, DAMAGED, OR STOLEN ITEMS.*

## **Bringing Other Items from Home to Class or Playgroup**

Children do not bring toys or other items from home unless the parent makes a prior arrangement with the teacher. These items are difficult to share with other children and are frequently lost or broken.

## **Being Ready for School**

School days are busy, exciting, and fun. It is important that a child gets enough rest (most children of this age need 10-12 hours of sleep every night, in addition to naps). Lack of rest causes irritability and low energy, as well as vulnerability to illness and disease. Ensuring that the child is rested and dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the weather makes for a more comfortable day at school.

## **Bringing Siblings (Brothers or Sisters) to the Site**

Only enrolled children are allowed to attend class at licensed centers. Siblings may accompany parents at drop off and pick up time, but must be supervised by parents at all times.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in or around any NCS building or at any NCS activity, such as home visits, classrooms, playgroups, HS/EHS Policy Council, field trips, trainings, etc. Secondhand smoke is harmful to children and adults. As of January 1st, 2008 it is against the law to smoke in a car with a child present.

## **Adult Food & Drinks**

During meals and snack times at classrooms and during playgroups, adults eat and drink what the children eat and drink. If an adult brings a hot drink to the site, it must be kept in a covered cup in a designated safe area away from the children.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

The consumption of alcoholic beverages, vaping, use of cigarettes or illegal drugs is not permitted in or near any NCS building or during any NCS activity.

## **Respectful Communication**

Staff and parents communicate respectfully to each other at all times. Each person's opinion is valued and considered.

## **Adult/Adult Conversations**

The sound in classrooms and at playgroups should be the sound of the children playing with each other and interacting with the adult staff and volunteers. Staff, visitors, and parents limit conversations in the classroom while class is in session. If there is a need for a lengthy conversation, it is best done away from the children.

# Children's Safety

## Together We Keep Your Children Safe

Keeping your children safe is our number 1 priority. When you are at your child's site, please be aware of safety and pedestrian safety..



- Wait for the teacher's greeting and health check when you arrive
- Always make contact with staff when you drop off and pick up your child and be sure they know when you are leaving
- Notify staff if someone else is picking up your child, and be sure their name is on your emergency card. Let them know that they may be asked for a photo id. We are only able to release children to adults, 18 years or older.
- Shut doors and gates when leaving, and attach gate hooks
- Stay off cellular/smart phones at all times while at the center
- Our school parking lots are busy places, especially at drop off and pick up time. Always hold your child's hand in the parking lot. You must accompany your child into the school at drop off and to the car at pick up time.
- Never leave a younger child or baby in the car even for a minute. If you need to talk to the teacher or another parent, please make sure your child stays under your supervision at all times.
- California state law requires all children under 80 lbs. or 4 foot 9 inches or shorter, to be properly restrained in a car seat. See current car seat requirements posted in each classroom.
- Please be involved in maintaining the safety of all the children at the center. Watch for children around you as you exit doors and gates.
- Discuss safety rules with your child when walking, talk to your child about safety. Show him/her how to stop at the edge of the street and look to the right, then left, then right again. Point out safety signs, traffic lights, crosswalks, and intersections. Always walk on footpaths and don't let children play on or near a road.

## Children's Rights

Children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to be given safe, healthful, and comfortable classrooms that meet their needs, and to be free from physical or other unusual punishment, including but not limited to humiliation, intimidation, and threats. All NCS programs refrain from religious instruction or worship (See "Personal Rights" form in the enrollment packet).

## Child Guidance and Discipline

Making sure that the classroom is a safe place for all children is a priority for NCS staff. Our goal is to help children learn to control their own behavior and to solve their own problems. Staff uses the following guidelines in supporting children:

- Children are encouraged to resolve their conflicts by using words (rather than their bodies) to express emotions. If children can't resolve their own conflicts, a teacher works with them and offers suggestions or alternatives.
- Positive behavior is reinforced.
- "Redirection" is used when appropriate.
- Clear limits are set and reinforced with children.

- Staff work in partnership with parents to create a consistent approach to guidance and discipline.
- If a child experiences on-going behavior issues, their parent will receive a “Behavior Concern Notice” and will meet with staff to create a plan to address issues.

Infants and toddlers need close guidance from adults while learning how to socialize with their peers.

## **Safe School Behavior Policy**

Our goal at NCS is to provide a positive, appropriate and safe experience for all children. Occasionally, a child’s behavior represents a serious safety threat for themselves or other children. In these cases NCS Staff work with families to help their child participate successfully in the classroom. If after exhausting all strategies to help a child participate safely in the classroom and the child’s behavior poses a continued serious safety risk, the child may transition to a more appropriate placement. Any decision to change a child’s placement is made with the child’s health, safety, and Community Care Licensing Title XXII regulations in mind.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Each site is prepared for emergencies with emergency supplies, an Emergency Preparedness Binder, and a posted “*Emergency Care and Disaster Plan*”. In some cases, children may need to be moved to a relocation site listed on the emergency plan. Staff stay with the children until the parent or a person designated by the parent on the emergency card comes for the child. Parents can call the NCS main office (800) 808-7206 or 707-822-7206 in the event of an emergency.



## **Site Closures**

If there is an extended power outage or other unexpected event, sites may need to close. If staff know the site will be closed, they try to contact parents before school starts (if time permits). If the power goes off during school, parents may be called to pick up their child. If the public school in the community is closed due to a natural disaster, NCS programs will close as well.

A large Tsunami can be generated by a distant earthquake or in minutes from a local earthquake. With the exception of the Crescent City 7th St. location, all NCS locations are above the Tsunami Evacuation Areas. If a Tsunami is predicted, parents should not drive through a tsunami evacuation zone to pick up or drop off their children. Follow instructions from the Office of Emergency Services or local Emergency Broadcast Systems.

## **Site Safety Protocol and Lockdown Procedure**

The safety of staff and children at all NCS sites is of the highest concern. NCS has a site safety protocol and lockdown procedure. In the event of a threat to the site, or persons at the site, staff will call 911 and the center will be locked down. A note is placed on the door which will remain locked until law enforcement responds or until the situation is resolved. Parents can call the main office at 822-7206 for information.

## **Accidents and Emergency Medical Care**

At least one or more staff members at every center (and one staff person at home base sites) have been trained in First Aid and CPR. Children’s accidents and injuries are documented on an “NCS Accident Report Form,” and the parents receive a copy. First aid kits and supplies are available in each classroom and playgroup site.

### **If a medical emergency should arise, the following steps will be taken:**

- Staff will call 911 if a child is having a medical emergency.
- Staff will try to reach the parent by phone.
- Staff will try to reach the people listed on the child’s Emergency Card.
- Staff may call the child’s physician.

- Staff will try to reach the parent by phone if a child receives a “head bump” while at school.
- If a child has eaten or tasted a potentially poisonous substance, staff will call the Poison Control Center and follow instructions given by the Poison Control Staff.

## **Licensing and Safety Issues**

### **Role Of California Community Care Licensing**

All NCS center-based programs (including combination programs) must meet Title 22 licensing regulations that ensure the minimal health and safety of children. The California Community Care Licensing Division has a district office analyst to visit and inspect sites. Each site has a current license posted in a prominent place for parents to view.

Parents may make complaints regarding licensed centers to: California Community Care Licensing, 530 Cohasset Rd. Suite 170, Chico, CA 95926 (530-895-4275). NCS does not discriminate against parents or children when a concern is brought up or a complaint is made.

### **Mandated Reporting**

California Law (Penal Code 11166) states that people who work with children are "mandated reporters" of child abuse or neglect. This means that if staff know or reasonably suspect child abuse, they must report it to Child Welfare Services/ Child Protective Services.

All NCS staff fall under this law and are mandated reporters. The primary purpose of the Reporting Law is for the protection of children. If parents would like further information, they can ask their child's teacher, home visitor, or family worker.

### **Child Custody**

In most situations, both parents have a legal right to be a part of their child's life. If a custodial parent has a legal document (such as a certified restraining order) stating that the other parent has limits on their access to a child, a copy of this document must be in the site file. Staff will deny a parent access to their child when the legal document specifically denies them access. Without such documentation in the site's files, legal parents/ guardians are entitled to pick up the child.

# **Annual Notice Regarding Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Parental Rights Effective August 1, 2017**

**This Notice Describes How Personally Identifiable Information About Your Child May  
Be Used And Disclosed, And How You Can Access This Information.  
Please Review It Carefully**

By law, Northcoast Children's Services must protect the privacy of your child's Personally Identifiable Information. Information that could be used to identify your child (known as "Personally Identifiable Information" or "PII") includes your child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child. Northcoast Children's Services retains PII because your child receives Head Start/Early Head Start services from us and it is a part of each child's record with us. We take our obligation to protect the privacy of your child's PII data very seriously.

This notice explains your rights and our legal duties and privacy practices.

We are required to give you a copy of your rights in writing every year, including definitions (which cover descriptions of the types of PII that may be disclosed), to whom we can disclose.

Northcoast Children's Services will abide by the terms of this notice. Should our data and child record practices materially change, Northcoast Children's Services reserves the right to change the terms of this notice, and will follow the terms currently in effect. If we revise our practices substantially, we will provide a revised notice either to the address you have supplied or we will hand them out at child pick-up.

## **Definitions**

**Child Records** means records that: (1) are directly related to the child; (2) are maintained by the program, or by a Party acting for the program; and (3) include information recorded in any way, such as print, electronic, or digital means, including media, video, image, or audio format.

**Confidential** means to be kept private with certain specific protections.

**Consent** means written approval or authorization that is signed and dated. It may include a record and signature in electronic form that: (1) identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic Consent; and, (2) indicates the same person's approval of the information. Consent can be revoked going forward.

**Disclosure** means to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication of Personally Identifiable Information contained in Child Records by any means, including oral, written, or electronic means, to any Party except the Party identified as the Party that provided or created the record.

**Party** means an entity or individual.

**Parent** means a Head Start child's mother or father, other family member who is a primary caregiver, foster parent or authorized caregiver, guardian or the person with whom the child has been placed for purposes of adoption pending a final adoption decree.

**Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** means any information that could identify a specific individual, including but not limited to a child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child.

## **Required Uses and Disclosures of PII**

We must use and disclose information contained in Child Records that is PII in a number of ways to carry out our responsibilities. We keep PII in our Child Records. The following list describes the types of uses and Disclosures of PII that federal law requires Northcoast Children's Services to make and allows us to do so without your Consent:

**Within this organization for Head Start purposes;  
In connection with an audit or evaluation of education or child development programs or for enforcement or compliance with federal legal requirements** (such as to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that funds our work);

**For studies to improve child or family outcomes or quality of services:**

**During Disasters or Health/Safety Emergencies to appropriate Parties** (including but not limited to local health departments, police, fire, EMS, etc.);

**Pursuant to Court Orders or Subpoenas**

**For Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Monitoring** if the results will be reported in an aggregate form that does not identify any individual;

**To Foster Care Caseworkers** who have the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement; and,

**To appropriate Parties in cases of suspected or known child maltreatment** (such as Child Protective Services).

Northcoast Children's Services also uses and shares your child's PII when requested by you or when otherwise required by law.

**Except as described above**, Northcoast Children's Services **will not use or disclose your PII without your written Consent**. You may give us written Consent to use or disclose your PII to anyone for any purpose that you choose. You may revoke your authorized Consent so long as you do so in writing; however, Northcoast Children's Services will not be able to get back any PII we have already used or shared based on your prior permission.

**Parental Rights**

You have the right to:

**Ask to inspect** your Child's Record on-site containing PII that Northcoast Children's Services maintains.

Northcoast Children's Services will create an opportunity for you to inspect your Child's Record on-site within **45** days. You *do not* have the right to remove the original record from on-site nor to take any parts of the original record with you.

**Ask for a copy** of Child Records disclosed to third Parties with Parental Consent, free of charge.

**Ask Northcoast Children's Services to amend** your Child's Record if you believe that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates your child's privacy. You must ask for this by in writing, along with a reason for your request. Northcoast Children's Services will review your request and decide on it within **30** days. If Northcoast Children's Services denies your request to amend your PII, we will issue you a written statement explaining why and explain your right to a hearing.

**Ask for a hearing** if your request to amend the Child Record is denied. If the issue is not decided in your favor at the hearing, you have the right to place a statement in the Child Record that either comments on the contested information or that states why the Parent disagrees with the program's decision, or both.

**Complaints or Questions**

If you believe that your child's privacy rights may have been violated or if you have questions, please let us know as soon as possible. Complaints should be directed to: **Kathy Montagne, Executive Director at 1266 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Arcata, Ca 95521 or 707-822-7206**. Filing a complaint or exercising your rights will not affect the care or services your child receives from Northcoast Children's Services.

# Classroom Activities and Routines

Play is a young child's work, and is the foundation for their academic or "school" learning. Children become enthusiastic learners through "hands-on" educational experiences. They also become more independent, self confident, and inquisitive. The curriculum is reflective of the daily lives of children, incorporating the child's first language and culture.

## Curriculum

NCS classrooms are designed using the "**Creative Curriculum**". Classrooms are arranged into different "interest areas" that include activities designed around a specific subject, theme, or skill(s). A child may work alone or with others in these areas. Children are encouraged to discover a broad variety of new concepts through playing/working with others, communication, observation, experimentation, and through problem solving opportunities. Classroom interest areas include blocks, art, dramatic play, music, library, writing, math, science, discovery, toys/games, sand/water, and outdoor play. We believe that children learn best by doing. Classrooms are set up to be places where children can learn about how things work through hands-on play, active thinking, and making choices. Home Base Programs use the **Portage Curriculum**.

Most NCS preschool programs use the "Second Step" and Safety curriculums in the classroom to teach children important social-emotional and safety skills. These programs are designed to help children learn to get along with others, reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior, and to teach important concepts, including fire safety, gun safety, and personal safety.

## Daily Schedules

A daily schedule and weekly lesson plan are posted in each classroom. These daily routines help children feel secure, independent, and able to move easily from one activity to another.

Schedules in the infant/toddler classrooms revolve around a young child's routines of arrivals, departures, feeding/preparing and eating snacks and meals, diaper changing and toileting, dressing, indoor and outdoor play, sleeping and quiet activity time. Routines help the children develop their relationships with the adults who are their primary caregivers in the classroom (staff or parent). A weekly plan of activities is posted in each classroom

## Screenings & Assessments

NCS utilizes several screenings and child assessments that help staff and parents identify a child's strengths as well as areas of needed growth or delays. These screenings may prompt referrals to community providers and follow up services.

## Tooth Brushing

Children brush their teeth with fluoridated toothpaste in Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms and playgroups. Infants under one year of age do not use toothpaste.



## Special Needs

Screenings and assessments are two ways the staff help parents determine if their child has a special need. If parents have concerns about their child, they are encouraged to talk with their child's teacher, home visitor or family worker.

## **Dual Language Learners**

In our center based programs we use the English with home language support model to help children build and maintain a solid foundation in their home language through the use of bilingual staff and volunteers who model both English and the home language of the children in the classroom when possible. Most instruction takes place in English with bilingual staff previewing and reviewing information in the home language before and after learning experiences. Bilingual staff support pre reading and re writing skills such as letter and word recognition in the home language. Staff work with families to share information on the importance of maintaining the home language and benefits of bilingualism.

In our EHS home based program visits are conducted in the family's home language through the use of bilingual home visitors whenever possible. Most activities focus on the continued development of the home language with introductions to English for both children and families.

In the HS home based option there is an increased focus on English development with activities that support continued development of the home language.

## **Diapering and Toileting**

Diapers are provided for children enrolled in Head Start & Early Head Start. Children are diapered in a designated area. "Diapering Guidelines for Parents and Staff" is available on-site.



An age appropriate "toileting plan" is created for each child in diapers. NCS staff and parents work together to help children learn to use the toilet. Parents are responsible for leaving changes of clothes at the site, and for washing any soiled clothing. Staff are aware of a child's "toilet readiness" signals and will help each child learn the skills they need to be successful at toilet learning. Children are never disciplined about "accidents." Staff are positive and encouraging.

## **Individualized Education Plan (IEP) & Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

NCS staff are actively involved in supporting children and families when there is an IEP or IFSP for the child. The developmentally-rich environment of NCS classrooms, playgroups and home visits provide children with the appropriate activities to meet their individual goals.

## **Home Base Program**

The Home Base philosophy is based on the belief that success begins in the home setting. Children and families receive weekly home visits with a Home Visitor who works with the parent to enhance the child's growth and learning.

As a parent you will:

- Be involved in a weekly 1 1/2 hour home visit.
- Be at home and ready to participate when your home visitor arrives.
- Call your home visitor ahead of time if a family member is ill and/or your home visit needs to be changed.
- Come to playgroups and parent meetings when possible.

The Home Visitor will:

- Support you as the teacher of your child.
- Be on time for home visits and all you if she is going to be late or need to change your home visit.
- Help you and your child find fun things to do in everyday activities.
- Come ready and prepared to participate with you and your child.
- Keep your child and family information confidential within the Early Head Start / Head Start program, except as required by law.

Make sure you and your family know about upcoming playgroups, parent meetings and other NCS activities.

## Parent Involvement

**Parents are always welcome at NCS sites. You can stop by anytime. Parent Involvement and input is an essential aspect of our programs. NCS provides many opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for parents to be involved in decision-making, skill building and in the healthy development of their child and family.**

### Volunteering

NCS welcomes and encourages parents to volunteer in our programs. Volunteering benefits the child, the parents, and the program! Parents can help in their child's classroom by getting down on the child's level and playing with them. Children love it when a parent spends time in the classroom. There are many ways you can be involved: You can volunteer to work (play) in your child's classroom for a half an hour or the whole day. Parent volunteers can read books to children, help with a cooking project, share a skill or hobby, help with field trips, help decorate bulletin boards, prep activities at home, help set up for parent meetings, help with art projects, etc. **Ask your child's teacher or home visitor about all the volunteer opportunities available in our programs!**

### TB Screen and Proof of Immunizations

All adults (staff and parents) who regularly work or volunteer in licensed programs must have a current TB screen, MMR, Tdap, influenza immunizations along with a certification of good health. This is a licensing requirement and also helps ensure that the classroom is safe and healthy. Parents can provide proof of immunizations or get an antibody test to prove immunities to MMR and Tdap. Parents can waive the influenza vaccine with a parent waiver if they so choose. Interested Parents can request NCS staff to verify immunization information from the CAIRS system. If you have Medi-Cal or health insurance go to your doctor or your local health dept. and use Medi-Cal or Insurance to pay for your TB screen (some providers will not bill Medi-Cal for TB screens). *For Head Start families only: If you don't have Medi-Cal or health insurance, please speak with your child's teacher about how to have Head Start pay for your immunizations and TB screen.*

### Parent Meetings and Workshops

All parents of children enrolled in NCS programs are members of the site parent committee. Meetings are opportunities for parents to get to know each other and are planned for a time that is best for most of the parents at the site. Childcare is provided. These meetings can include learning new skills such as CPR, cooking, crafts, talking about parenting or learning about community resources. Each site's parent committee can choose the meeting topics that they would like to know more about. Every HS/EHS site has a Blue Parent Binder with information and ideas to use at parent meetings. Staff encourages parents to take an active role in planning and facilitating the parent meetings.



## Leadership Opportunities

Northcast Children's Services encourages parents to be involved at all levels of our program from volunteering in the classroom to taking an active role in decision-making and policy-making. Here are a few opportunities available to parents. Ask your teacher or home visitor for more details.

- **HS/EHS Policy Council**

Parents from all HS/EHS sites are elected each year to be a part of the HS/EHS Policy Council, which is an important decision making body in the agency. Policy Council members are trained in leadership, information gathering and analyzing, and decision making and communication skills. The council meets monthly to vote on major program issues and set direction for HS/EHS programs.



- **Advisory Committees**

Parents in Head Start and Early Head Start are encouraged to be members of standing committees such as: Health Services Advisory Committee; Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA); and Program Planning Committee. State programs establish Parent Advisory Committees through regular parent meetings at the sites.

- **Hiring Panels**

At least one parent participates in the interview process for all new Head Start/Early Head Start hires. All parents have the opportunity to be involved in this unique process.

- **NCS Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is made up of community members and parents of present and past children enrolled in NCS programs. Membership on the Board is an opportunity for individuals to set policy and make decisions that affect all of the programs NCS offers.

## Parent and Staff Communication

Staff and parents communicate often. Home visitors meet with parents weekly. Parents who drop off/pick up their child in the classrooms have daily opportunities to talk with teachers and/or family workers. To ensure that the child has a successful day at school, it is especially important that parents share information about what is going on in their child's life - particularly things that may cause stress for the child.

### Confidentiality

Any information, verbal or written about children and families enrolled in NCS programs is confidential and is not shared with anyone other than NCS staff unless required by law.

When a family is working with other community agencies, resources, or request other individuals receive information regarding their child or family, NCS staff and the family will talk about a Release of Confidential Information. They discuss why a release would be helpful and what information the family would like shared. The family decides whether they want to complete the Release of Confidential Information.

Confidentiality is also requested from parents. If you observe something in a classroom or playgroup that involves another parent or child, please respect the other family's confidentiality and do not discuss with anyone other than your teacher/home visitor. It is the staff's responsibility to share information about the child or family with their parents in a timely manner.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are scheduled at each site during the school year. Parents and staff talk about the child's progress, family needs and create a plan to support the child and family's development. Parents may schedule additional conferences to meet with staff as needed.

## **Parent Orientations**

Parents are given an orientation to the program at the first parent meeting and/or during the first week of school (or individually if enrolled later in the year).

## **Concerns/Complaints**

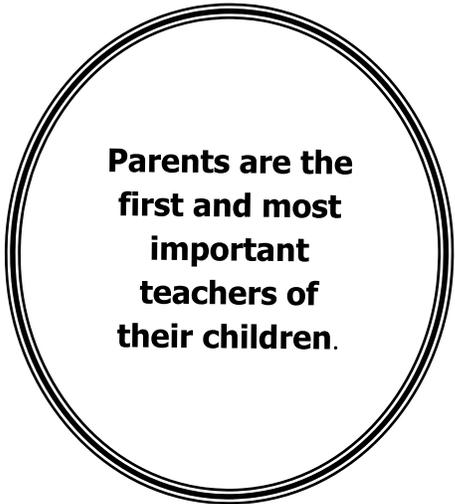
Our goal is for staff and parents to develop and keep ongoing communications with each other so that parent concerns can be addressed as soon as possible. Concerns, complaints or suggestions can be discussed with staff or submitted in writing. If a parent has a concern or complaint that can't be resolved by talking directly with staff, the parent can talk with the Supervisor, State Program Administrator, or other main office management staff. (Others are posted on the Parent Bulletin Board.)

## **Family Services**

NCS is a family centered program which is designed to support the parents' role as the primary educator, nurturer and advocates of their children. Staff work in partnership with parents to build respectful relationships and assist the family in accessing resources and meeting family goals. Parents are encouraged to identify their family strengths, needs and interests, and to develop a plan to meet the goals they would like to work on.

### **Services to families are based on individual need and may include:**

- Referrals to community agencies to assist the family in meeting their needs and goals
- Support with literacy goals
- Meeting basic needs for food, clothing and housing
- Applying for Medi-Cal, TANF, food stamps, WIC, etc.
- Locating doctors, dentists, counseling services, etc.
- Crisis intervention support services
- Transitioning children and families from one program to another
- Quick Reference Guide to Services
- Finding transportation to a community agency or service
- Other services may be available as needed
- Parenting education & support



**Parents are the  
first and most  
important  
teachers of  
their children.**

# Children's Health

## Immunizations

Prior to attendance in any licensed NCS Center, children must be immunized against diseases. This is state law. Children who are behind schedule but have received all immunizations possible, may attend, but need to complete immunizations as they are due. Please check with staff if you have questions.

Parents are also encouraged to keep current documentation of their child's immunizations in their files at home. The EHS program requires that parents keep their child's well-child check-ups and immunizations current.



## Physical Exam

**Prior to or within 30 calendar days of attendance at any NCS Center, parents must provide NCS with a child's complete physical exam.** Preschool exams must be less than 12 months old. Children must remain up to date on well child exams. Parents must provide a copy of their child's most recent exam. Children in Center Base programs may not attend class without a current Physical Exam or an appointment scheduled within 30 days. Home visits will be provided to children not attending class.

## Dental Exam Head Start & Early Head Start Children Age 1 or at First Tooth

Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards require yearly dental examinations for enrolled children. Children must have completed a dental exam (within the past 12 months) or have a dental appointment scheduled within 90 days of enrollment.

For children not covered by Medi-Cal or other health insurance, Head Start/Early Head Start or other local resources may pay for children referred/requiring dental exam/treatment by a pediatric dentist. A limited number of appointments with pediatric dentists may be available for children suffering from severe dental decay or emergency dental needs. For assistance, ask the child's teacher, home visitor, or family worker. Early Head Start staff assists parents with dental services as needed.

## Allergies / Food Modifications

**Before a child attends center classrooms or playgroups, parents must tell staff about their child's known allergies. This includes (but is not limited to ) allergies to bee stings, animals, medications, and/or allergies to specific foods.**

Parents of a child with a food allergy(ies) must return a "Medical Statement for Participants Requiring Special Meals" signed by a licensed medical professional within 2 weeks of enrollment or within 2 weeks of confirmation of an allergy.

For Center Base programs, the parent of a child with an allergy must meet with center staff and have all plans and needed interventions in place before a child attends on his/her own without the parent. This ensures safe food substitutions will be made to the regular menu and safety plans are in place.

## Giving Medications at School

NCS staff are not trained as medical professionals. When needed, parents should give the child the first dose of medication at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. Parents or legal guardians may give medication to their own child during the childcare day.

If a child must have medication given to him/her by staff during school hours, parents need to follow the procedures as required by Community Care Licensing.

## Incidental Medical Services

Northcoast Children's Services Licensed Child Care programs, upon request from a parent, may administer and store limited medications to provide services: *Nebulizer, Inhalers, & Epi-pens*. In these situations a meeting with the health coordinator must be scheduled before your child attends to determine how best to serve your child's individual needs and ensure all required paperwork is on file.

At least one staff member at each site is trained in CPR and First Aid. All medications must be in their original container with the original pharmacy or clinic label and not expired. All prescribed medication must be in the child's name.



## Sunscreen

Even overcast days can burn children's sensitive skin. NCS has sunscreen on-site, and will apply it to children with parent permission. Please talk with a staff member for any questions.

## Child Illness At School / Home Visits

The school notifies parents when a child has been exposed to a contagious illness or condition. If a child is ill with any of the conditions listed on the next page or develops any symptoms during playgroups or class time, he/she will not be able to stay at the site. Staff notifies the parent immediately to take the child home. While waiting for the parent to arrive, the child is isolated to prevent further contact with other children.

Parents need to notify the school within 24 hours if their child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness or condition, even if the child is kept at home. If a home visit has been scheduled and any family member is ill, the home visitor/family worker needs to be notified to cancel and reschedule the home visit.

Staff will be conducting a daily visual health check in classrooms and at playgroups to make sure children are well enough to participate.

## Times to Keep a Child At Home or Cancel a Home Visit

### (same as Daily Visual Health Checklist)

1. The presence of lice or nits.
2. Axillary temperature of 100° ( forehead, under arm or ear), Oral temperature of 101° or higher. Child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. (American Academy of Pediatrics)
3. Cough that interferes with sleep, or causes vomiting or spitting up of mucus 24 hours prior to attendance.
4. Persistent pain including earache, stomach pain, pain when urinating, pain from an injured limb, and/or pain that stops a child from taking part in activities.
5. Parasitic infections such as pinworms or ringworm.
6. Extreme congestion, causing difficulty in breathing.
7. Vomiting or diarrhea 24 hours prior to attendance.
8. Sore throat.
9. Rash, including scabies, impetigo or MRSA that itches, is blister-like or weeping.
10. Child too ill to participate.



## When a Child Can Return to School or Resume Home Visits

Please note that staff may request a clearance from a physician prior to readmitting the child to the class. If there is a difference in opinion between staff and a family as to whether the child should return to class, the Health Coordinator or Supervisor makes a final decision based on discussions with the parent, the physician and the teachers. When a child is returning to school after surgery or other medical procedure, let the staff know if child has any restrictions from participating in regular activities. For diseases not covered in the chart on the next page, please contact Health Staff.



CONCERN	WHEN A CHILD MAY RETURN TO THE PROGRAM OR RESUME HOME VISITS
1. Chicken Pox	Child should be kept out of class/ playgroups until all sores/ blisters have dried and crusted over, (usually 6 days from onset of rash)
2. Common Cold / Flu	Child has not had a fever for 24 hours. Child does not have prolonged coughing or profuse discharge from the nose. Child must not have vomited or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours. Child is well enough to participate in regular activities.
3. Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever	24 hours after receiving antibiotic treatment and has had no fever for the preceding 24 hours.
4. Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)	24 hours after receiving treatment and eyes are clear.
5. Lice (Pediculosis)	After the following has been done: (Contact doctor regarding appropriate treatment for infants and toddlers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair has been treated with a lice killing product.</li> <li>• Wash clothing, bedding, combs, brushes &amp; head gear in hot water.</li> <li>• Remove all nits from hair of infected person. <i>Child must be nit free.</i></li> </ul>
6. Scabies or Pinworm	24 hours after receiving treatment. (Note: items such as underwear, clothing, bedding, and towels <u>must be washed in hot water</u> ).
7. Impetigo, Ringworm or MRSA	After treatment has been initiated and lesion is dry; it must be covered by clothing or bandage.
8. Roseola, Fifth Disease or coxsackie virus (hand-foot-mouth syndrome)	When temperature has been normal for 24 hours, rash is gone and child is feeling well enough to participate.
9. Herpes Simplex -Type I Cold Sores	When lesions are dry or crusted over. Exclude child if he/she is unable to keep hands/toys, etc. out of mouth.
10. Tuberculosis, Pertussis, Hepatitis A, Bacterial Meningitis, Measles, Mumps & Rubella	Received physician's permission to return to school or resume home visits.

## Nutrition and Food Service

### Menus

NCS provides nutritious, regularly scheduled meals and snacks that are moderate in fat, low in salt and sugar. Menus are designed to expose children to new foods emphasizing fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains as well as old favorites and often includes foods from the cultures of the children enrolled in each classroom.

All parents are encouraged to review the cycle menu posted at their site. Substitutions and special arrangements for meals and snacks are made for children with medically based dietary needs.

### Family Style Meals

During snacks and mealtimes at the center, children and staff sit at the table and eat together "family style." Children are encouraged to serve themselves and pour their own beverages with adult supervision except at some vended sites. Adults do not serve children, only assist. Children are never forced to eat certain foods or eat certain amounts of food. Adults eating with children will take child sized portions modeling portion sizes and will model behaviors they wish to see at the table. It is our belief that mealtimes should be pleasant giving children time to socialize and chat with friends and teachers.

During playgroups, when age appropriate, toddlers are encouraged to serve themselves.

### Foods Brought From Home or Store

According to State Health Regulations, foods prepared in private homes may not be served at any parent/child NCS activity. This minimizes the risk of food-borne illness due to cross contamination, time or temperature abuse, or transporting mistakes. Food donations are entirely voluntary. Parents who wish to donate food, can obtain a list of safe foods from staff.

## Childcare Food Program

Northcoast Children's Services participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a Federal program offered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Participation in the CACFP allows Northcoast Children's Services to provide nutritious meals, without charge, to enrolled children. In accordance to Federal law, the U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against the customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program of activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination complaint Form found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_custom.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_custom.html) or any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to: Northcoast Children's Services Civil Rights Coordinator, P.O. Box 1165, Arcata, CA 95518 or call 707-822-7206. Substantiated complaints will be forwarded to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities my contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

**Note: The only protected classes covered under the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) are race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider & employer.**

# **Northcoast Children's Services Programs**

## **Center Based Head Start and Early Head Start**

In the center based program, children attend 3-5 days per week. The child has an opportunity to interact with other children and explore a classroom environment that supports growth and development. Our staff provides a nurturing, stimulating environment. Parents are invited to participate in planning curriculum, field trips, and parent meetings. The curriculum is designed to meet the individualized needs of the child. Hot meals are provided. Child care is available at some Head Start/Early Head Start sites.

## **Home Based Head Start and Early Head Start**

A Head Start or Early Head Start Home Visitor visits the family to work together with them on the social, emotional, and educational goals for the child. Twice a month parents, children, and their Home Visitor meet as a group with other families for a socialization/play group or a field trip.

## **Childcare and Preschool Services (State Funded)**

Child care is provided for toddlers, and preschoolers. Hours of care are based on family need. Our staff provides a nurturing, stimulating environment. Parents are invited to participate in planning curriculum, field trips, and parent meetings. The curriculum is designed to meet the individualized needs of the child. Hot meals are provided. Eligibility for full day full year is based on income and need. Eligibility for part day part year preschool is based on family income.

## **Early Head Start Pregnancy Program**

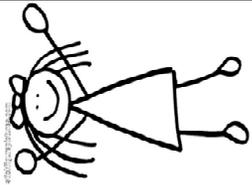
We believe that parents are the first and most important person in their baby's life, and that a strong parent-baby relationship is important for your baby and your family. The goal of our pregnancy program is to support families in having a healthy pregnancy, baby and mom!

*There is no fee charged for Head Start, Early Head Start, or Child Care Food Programs. Income eligible families whose children are enrolled in State funded Child Development Centers or who are in Head Start Enhanced Centers may be charged fees based on family income.*

*Families in full day/year programs may be charged a fee.*

*NCS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children are served.*

## School Readiness & Family Engagement Goals

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Long Term Goal 1</b> <b>School Readiness</b></p> <p>Goals Within the context of each Head Start and Early Head Start family's culture, enrolled children will demonstrate progress in healthy social, emotional, physical, &amp; cognitive development and in the achievement of social competence</p>	<p><b>Approaches to Learning</b> - Children will demonstrate initiative, curiosity, and positive approach to learning.</p> <p><b>Social and Emotional Development</b> - In the context of relationships, children will develop and learn the social-emotional skills necessary to act and interact with self-confidence, regulate their behavior, and be successful in the early years and beyond.</p> <p><b>Language and Literacy</b> - Children will demonstrate an understanding of concepts of print, phonological awareness, alphabeticity, word/print recognition, comprehension and analysis of age appropriate text, and literacy interest and response. Children will demonstrate increasing emergent writing skills such as writing letter-like shapes and writing their first names. (HS only).</p> <p><b>Cognition</b> - Children will continue to develop their understanding of number sense, algebra and function (for classification and patterning).</p> <p><b>Perceptual Motor and Physical Development:</b> Children will demonstrate improvement in perceptual motor skills, movement concepts, and participate in physical play. Children will develop health habits like basic hygiene, and oral health. (EHS only).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Long Term Goal 2</b> <b>Family Engagement Goals</b></p> <p>Working in partnership with Head Start and Early Head Start, enrolled families will demonstrate the ability to identify their strengths, fulfill basic needs and therefore be able to establish and meet their personal &amp; family goals</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <hr/> <p><b>Family Well-Being</b> - Parents and Families who identify food as a concern will access food resources.</p> <p><b>Families as Life Long Educators</b> - Parents and Families will extend their children's learning by engaging in educational activities with their children and children's language skills will improve with improved attendance.</p> <p><b>Continuous Program Improvement</b> - NCS will collect, analyze and report data on PFGE outcomes that will drive decision making and strategic planning.</p>



# 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,

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**

## 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.





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