



Northcoast Children's Services

Parent Handbook

For the family of:

Name of Teacher, Family Worker or Home Visitor:

Program your child is enrolled in: _____

Site phone number: _____

Site address: _____

Classroom or home visit days/hours: _____

Name and phone number of the Site Supervisor: _____

Northcoast Children's Services Main Office

1266 9th Street
Arcata, CA 95521
(707) 822-7206
Toll-free (800) 808-7206
Fax (707) 822-7962
Office hours: 8:30-4:30 M-F

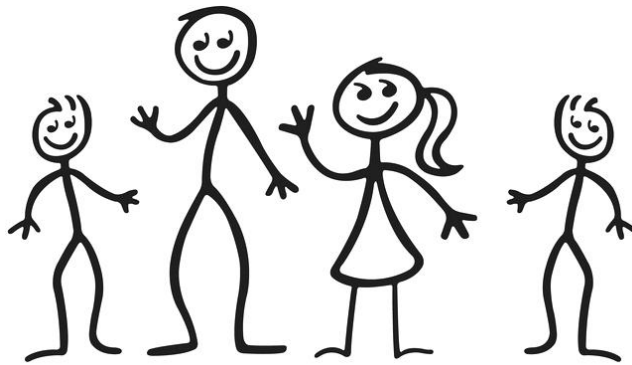
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Welcome to Northcoast Children's Services!

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.



Northcoast Children's Services Programs

Center Based Head Start and Early Head Start

In the center based program, children attend 4-5 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. Families in full day full year programs may be charged a fee.

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!

Non Discrimination Policy

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

There is no fee charged for Head Start, Early Head Start, or Child Care Food Programs.

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 adult emergency contacts who are 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

As a licensed facility we are required 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" (Pg. 13) 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 children be dropped off and picked up on time. A regular schedule helps them learn the school routine and be successful in the program. A child may be absent for illness, quarantine, family emergency, visitation or other reason. If a child is sick or unable to attend school or a home visit, parents need to call the Teacher or Home Visitor. Documentation of classroom absences are required. Home Visitors will call/text to see why a home visit is missed.

Children fall behind if they miss just 3 days each month. Head Start and Early Head Start centers require 85% attendance in the classroom.

In the State Program if a child has been absent for 7 consecutive days with no contact, our program will attempt to contact in 2 different ways, one which shall be in writing. After 30 consecutive days this is considered abandonment of enrollment and the child could be dropped. State preschool and childcare programs provide up to 10 days of absences for best interest which could be vacation, special events, religious or cultural experience. Please talk with your teacher regarding these days.

If you have difficulty with regular attendance, your Teacher will work with you to make an attendance plan. Children may be moved to a home based program when there are too many absences.

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 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, 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, marijuana 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.
- 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 8 years old 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 when leaving, and attach gate hooks.
- 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, staff will work with the family to create a plan to help the child be successful.
- 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 may represent 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 and funding requirements 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 will 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 (707) 822-7206 or 800-808-7206 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 must meet Title 22 and/or Title 5 State 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, 520 Cohasset Rd. Suite 170, Chico, CA 95926 (530-895-5033). 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 the child, a copy of this document must be in the site file. Staff will deny a parent access to their child only 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. In cases where parents share custody, child information is shared but parent information is kept confidential.

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, 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 independently using active thinking, and making choices.

Most NCS preschool programs use the Teaching Pyramid and CSEFEL 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.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

The goal of Northcoast Children's Services is to ensure 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 the "testing" of children. Children are assessed a total of 2-3 times during the school year. Assessment outcomes are used to plan and conduct age and developmentally appropriate activities for the children.

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 will be reviewed with families and may prompt referrals to community providers and follow up services.

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.

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. If you have concerns about your child's development but they do not have an IEP nor IFSP, we encouraged you to talk with the Teacher, Home Visitor or Family Worker.

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

Tooth Brushing

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

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. Both English and the home language of the children are modeled 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 pre-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 all children attending NCS programs. 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.

Home Base Program

The Home Base philosophy is based on the belief that success begins in the home setting. Home Visitors come once a week and work with parents and their children together. The Home Visitor and parents plan ways to help children learn using parent and child interactions, daily routines and household materials.

There are also regularly scheduled play groups, parent meetings and Policy Council to attend. Parent meetings are offered throughout the year on subjects of interest to parents of young children.

Your Home Visitor will come ready and prepared to participate with you and your child. Please call your Home Visitor ahead of time if a family member is ill and/or your home visit needs to be changed. Plan to attend playgroups and parent meetings if possible. Your Home Visitor will keep

your child and family information confidential within the Early Head Start / Head Start program, except as required by law.

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 to date, may attend on a conditional basis, 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 Home Base program encourages parents to 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, which includes a TB Risk Assessment. Preschool exams must be less than 12 months old. 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 and Early Head encourage yearly dental examinations for enrolled children. Children are encouraged to 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 who are referred or require a dental exam or 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. Let your child's Teacher, Home Visitor, or Family Worker know if you need assistance. Early Head Start staff assists parents with dental services as needed.

Allergies / Food Modifications

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.

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.

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.

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 in the numbered items under the Daily Visual Health Checklist 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.

Daily Visual Health Checklist

In order to provide an environment, which supports each parent's desire for a safe and healthful environment for their child, we have established procedures for a Daily Visual Health Check. Please do a visual check yourself before bringing your child to the center or playgroup.

This health check will be conducted as soon as possible after the child enters the childcare facility and whenever a change in the child's behavior or appearance is noted while that child is in care. **The adult bringing the child must remain until the Daily Visual Health Check is completed.**

The health check will address the following:

1. Reported or observed illness or injury affecting the child or family members since the last date of attendance.
2. Reported or observed changes in behavior of the child (such as lethargy or irritability) or in the appearance (e.g., sad) of the child from the previous day at home or the previous day's attendance at child care;
3. Skin rashes, impetigo, itching or scratching of the skin, itching or scratching of the scalp, or the

presence of one or more live lice;

4. A temperature check of over 101° taken by any method if the child appears ill;
5. Other signs or symptoms of illness and injury (such as drainage from eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, cuts/lacerations, pain, or feeling ill).

After the child has been determined to be able to participate, the child can then be signed in for the day. If the child is determined to be too ill to participate or develops any of the above symptoms during the session, he will not be allowed to stay at the center or playgroup.

If your child is in the Home Base program, please consider these health guidelines before a Home Visitor comes to your house. Call the office or Home Visitor to cancel the visit if you or your children have any of the above symptoms.

We suggest that you make arrangements ahead of time for who will care for your child if he is ill.

For your child's well-being and for the health of all of the children, we ask for your cooperation. If you have questions about any NCS Health Policy, please ask your Teacher or Home Visitor, or call the Health Services Manager at 822-7206 or (800) 808-7206.

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, they 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. For all other FNS nutrition assistance programs, state or local agencies, and their sub recipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, or from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA.

The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by: Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. By fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or email to: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. 05/05/2022 Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may 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.

Parent Involvement

Parents are always welcome at NCS sites. 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. Fun parent events are planned for and with families (school orientation, ice cream socials, family fun nights and more) please talk with your teacher or home visitor on what days and times are best for you. These events will be planned when most families can participate.

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. You can also:

- Help with projects at home (cutting out things for the classroom)

- Help to organize the parent bulletin board
- Help organize the parent meetings/events
- Share a hobby/family tradition

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 current TB screen, MMR, Tdap, influenza and Covid 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 NCS might be able to assist you in paying 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. Child Care 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 site has a 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

Northcoast 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.

NCS Policy Council

Parents from all sites are elected each year to be a part of the 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 decisions and to help plan changes to NCS programs.

Advisory Committees

Parents in all NCS programs are encouraged to be members of standing Policy Council committees such as: Health Services Advisory Committee; or the Program Planning Committee.

Hiring Panels

NCS welcomes parents to participate in interviews of new staff. All parents have the opportunity to be involved in this unique process. If you are interested, please call our main number of 707-822-7206 and ask for Human Resources.

NCS Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is made up of community members and parents of present and past children, and has oversight and governance responsibilities for all NCS programs.

Parent Survey

Northcoast Children's Services requests that all families complete the Parent Survey each year. We analyze the results of the annual parent survey, and use those results to help identify strengths and areas of needed improvement.

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, things that have been going well or 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. In Head Start and Early Head Start 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, Cal Fresh, 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
- Parenting education & support
- Other services may be available as needed

State Funded Programs Only Family Fee Assessment

FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2022-2023 ALL FAMILY FEES HAVE BEEN WAIVED

- 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 or check.
- 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
- Income eligible families in Part-Day CSPP programs
- Children with an IEP or IFSP

Requesting a Change in Hours

For full day/full year child care programs hours of care are documented at the initial certification and recertification, or at the voluntary request of the family to increase or decrease the hours of need.

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

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 continued quality improvement.

Annual Notice Regarding Personally Identifiable Information (PII) & 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 with-in **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: **Rodney Oien, Executive Director at 1266 9th 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.

NOTES

The mission of Northcoast Children's Services is:

“To nurture and empower the whole child and family, to enhance our quality of life, and create a more peaceful community.”



Ncsheadstart.org
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