

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>WELCOME TO THE PRESCHOOL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (PSD)</b> .....                          | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>PROGRAM BACKGROUND</b> .....  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>EHS Home-Based Prenatal Program provides:</b> .....                                   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Non Discrimination Policy</b> .....   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Parent/Guardian Rights</b> .....  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Cross-Cultural Diversity Policy</b> .....   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Enrollment Procedures</b> .....   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Confidentiality of Services</b> .....   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Holidays</b> .....  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Dropping off and picking up children</b> .....  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Late/Drop Policy</b> .....  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Attendance Policy for Center Based Programs</b> .....                                 | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Attendance Policy for Early Head Start Home Based Programs</b> .....                  | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Child Emergencies</b> .....   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Illness</b> .....   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Medication Administration</b> .....   | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment/Release (EHS Center Based Programs)</b> ..... | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Curriculum</b> .....  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Lesson Plans</b> .....  | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Assessments</b> .....   | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Screenings</b> .....  | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Health Services</b> .....   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Nutrition</b> .....   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Early Head Start Services to Children with Special Needs</b> .....                    | <b>18</b> |

**Transition.....19**

**Clothing .....22**

**Procedures for Guidance and Positive Discipline .....22**

**Television.....24**

**Child Abuse Reporting.....24**

**Car Safety Law .....24**

**Staff Qualifications.....24**

**Non Federal Share.....25**

**Parent Participation and Involvement.....25**

**Parent Orientation .....26**

**Communication with Parents .....27**

**End of the Year Event .....28**

**Use of Parent Activity Funds.....28**

**Fund Raising .....28**

**Harassment.....28**

**Notification: Sexual Harassment.....29**

**Agency Grievance Policy.....30**

**Disaster Preparedness.....30**

**Visitation and Security.....30**

**LOCATIONS OF EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY .....32**

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....33**

## **WELCOME TO THE PRESCHOOL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (PSD)**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

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

PSD has over 700 employees who serve more than 6,000 Head Start, Early Head Start and State Preschool children and families, of which 402 are Early Head Start children and their families, and 120 are Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership children and their families, annually at 73 locations countywide. We recognize that excellent staff forms the core of a quality program. For that reason, we are committed to focusing considerable time and attention in hiring the best employees and giving them the support they need to do their work well.

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

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

**Please read the entire handbook, carefully.**

Phalos Haire,  
Executive Director

## **Program Background**

### **Our Mission**

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

### **Our Vision**

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

### **Our Philosophy**

Our central premise is that family is the most fundamental factor influencing the lives of children. Besides having education needs, children also require a supportive, healthy home environment with stable and reliable relationships with adults and caregivers. In short, if you strengthen families, you strengthen children.

### **Program Goals**

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

### **Program Options:**

- Center Based
  - The center based program option includes Early Head Start classrooms, Child Care Centers, and/or Early Head Start Child Care Partnership.
- Home Based
  
- Operate Monday through Friday

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

## **Typical Daily Schedule in the EHS Center, Child Care Center, and Child Care Partnership**

Infants and toddlers need a regular schedule that is predictable but flexible enough to meet their individual needs and to take advantage of the learning opportunities that emerge continually every day. The daily schedule for the children is a guide; it provides a framework for planning and organizing the daily routine and play activities for them. The daily routines may be a little different based on the age of your child. For infants we follow their biological needs; they are fed, changed, and set down for a nap as needed. Toddlers are changed / taken to the toilet before routine transitions during the day and as needed.

## **The Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Program (EHS-CCP)**

EHS-CCP delivers the full range of Early Head Start services within a licensed Family Day Care Home or family-like setting. The program ensures family childcare homes are available that can accommodate children and families with disabilities. A child development specialist who supports family childcare providers conducts regular visits to each home, some of which are unannounced, no less than every two weeks. EHS-CCP is partially funded by childcare subsidy. Those families that are eligible to a subsidy are eligible for the EHS-CCP program.

## **The Early Head Start Home-Based Program**

The Early Head Start home-based program supports children and their families through home visits and group socialization experiences. Early Head Start home visits provide services to support and strengthen the relationship between infants, toddlers, and their parents. The strength and quality of these relationships are essential for child development outcomes during this period of rapid social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. We encourage and provide support to practice and build on the activities that are introduced during the home visit. Home visitors are required to conduct home visits on a weekly basis for 90 minutes each time for a total of 46 visits a year.

Home visits are planned collaboratively with the parents/guardians. Our goal is to support the parents in their roles as primary caregivers of the child and to facilitate the child's development.

Regulations regarding what shall be covered during a home based visit are as follows:

The Family Partnership Agreement must include the specific roles of parents during home visits and Socializations [1302.50 (b)(1-6)]. Home visits are conducted with the child's parents or the child's legal guardians [1302.22(a)]. Furthermore, visits should be conducted in the child's home except in extraordinary circumstances when a short-term alternative arrangement may be necessary, for example, if the safety of the child or parent is in jeopardy or the family becomes homeless.

The Early Head Start home-based program option provides:

- Services to pregnant women, infants and toddlers primarily in the home, through intensive work with the pregnant women, child's parents and family.
- Enrollment into the program according to federal eligibility guidelines.
- 90-minute sessions once a week and 2 socialization days per month.
- Parents, whose children are enrolled in the home-based program option, the same services offered to Early Head Start services center based families.
- Effective delivery of comprehensive Health, Education, Nutrition, and other services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families.
- Services to children with disabilities.
- Comprehensive services to children and their families to meet their educational, social, health, nutritional, and emotional needs.
- Priority services for children with disabilities (certified) and homeless.

**EHS Home-Based Prenatal Program provides:**

- Services to pregnant women in the home by a nurse.
- PSD uses Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum as a guide when working with pregnant women.
- Continued visitations and support in EHS for newborn child.
- The length and frequency of the home visits are based on the family's needs and goals.
- Visits designed to educate parents with health related behaviors, and maternal personal life-course development i.e. family planning, educational achievement, and participation in the work force.

**Socialization**

The purpose of socialization experiences for infants and toddlers is to support child development by strengthening the parent/child relationship. The group experiences reflect this purpose and incorporate the goals of the program for participating families such as:

- Helping parents to better understand child development;
- Encouraging parents to share their parenting challenges and joys with one another;
- Providing activities for parents and children to enjoy together;
- Offering structured and unstructured learning opportunities for both children and parents; and
- Modeling successful strategies for engaging children and supporting their development.

Group socializations are another opportunity to strengthen and support relationships by providing parents with the opportunities to: obtain feedback from EHS staff and other parents or community based professionals about their child's interests, strengths, needs, and resources; observe their child responding to other children and adults; and share and learn from others about the challenges and joys of parenting.

Socializations are conducted with parents/guardians and may not be conducted with childcare providers and other substitute caregivers [1302.35(3)].

Socializations are held twice a month (unless otherwise noted) for 2 hours, which total 22 socializations for the year. Infant and/or toddlers must be up to date with age appropriate immunizations before they may participate in socializations.

### **Non Discrimination Policy**

The Preschool Services Department does not discriminate when determining which pregnant women, infants or toddlers will be served. The program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, color, and mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served. <sup>1</sup>

The Preschool Services Department:

- ❑ Welcomes the enrollment of pregnant women, infants and toddlers with disabilities
- ❑ Understands the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations for such clients and implements appropriate accommodations.
- ❑ Refrains from all forms of religious instruction or worship.

### **Parent/Guardian Rights**

Parents have guaranteed rights. A copy of these rights is given to each parent when enrolling their child and another copy is posted at the center.

### **Cross-Cultural Diversity Policy**

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

1. We KNOW the cultures of the children and families we are serving.
2. We FOCUS on similarities and acknowledge differences.
3. We CELEBRATE worldwide cultures and environments.

It is important that children and families recognize, acknowledge and celebrate their own cultures and other cultures around them. It is also vital that opportunities are provided in the classrooms and in parent meetings to experience cultures not represented locally.

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<sup>1</sup> EC 231.5 (a), (b)

Parents are invited to share cultural history with other parents and staff during the monthly Parent Advisory Committee Meetings.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

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

#### **The following documentation is required prior to enrollment:**

- Income Verification
- Record of Birth (EHS) or proof of pregnancy with expected date of delivery
- Infant or child's immunization record appropriate for age

An age appropriate well baby assessment is due within 30 days of enrollment into any program option. A "medical and dental home", (i.e. doctor, dentist and/or health care agency that is keeping records of the child) should be established within 90 days of enrollment. If you do not have a medical or dental home our staff will assist families with this.

Legal Issues:

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

### **Confidentiality of Services**

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

- ❑ PSD staff and Child Care Providers who have a need to know
- ❑ Individuals authorized by the parent/family through a written and signed "Release of Information"
- ❑ Authorized personnel of agencies providing funding to PSD for the purposes of providing a high quality service to all participating families, meeting funding requirements and coordination with city, state and county services.
- ❑ Community Care Licensing (CCL)

In addition, PSD may release information to:

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



## **Holidays**

PSD observes the following holidays during the year and centers are closed on these days:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving - (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

## **Dropping off and picking up children**

For your child's protection and in compliance with state law, you must sign-in your child when they arrive at the school site and sign-out your child when they are picked up. Your full signature is required. Please do not initial.

The arrival and departure of your infant and toddlers are transitional times that need to be handled delicately. Please make sure the teaching staff and providers are aware that your child is at school. Never leave the child alone under any circumstances. It is important that the teacher and/or provider are aware of all arrivals and departures.

Please inform the staff and/or provider in writing of any special instructions or information that might be needed for that day.

Please, DO NOT PARK in "Loading or Fire Zones."

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

- When picking up your children, parents must come into the centers or family child care homes through the front entrance of the building.

Please make sure emergency information on file for your child is kept current.

At the time of enrollment, parents and guardians must fully complete an emergency information card that provides the center or family child care home with the names of people who are authorized to pick up your child from the center, and who may be called in case of an emergency. Please make sure the emergency information on file for your child is current. Any changes on the Emergency Card information must be reported to the school office or provider as soon as possible i.e., phone, address, emergency contacts. All changes must be made in person by the authorized parent or guardian and can not be made by phone.

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

Children will not be released to an adult who is intoxicated. If a parent, guardian or designated adult arrives to sign children out while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the police will be called immediately and they will handle the situation as necessary.

### **Late/Drop Policy**

It is important that children be picked up from the center or family child care home at the end of class time.

#### **We Ask That You:**

- Contact the center or family child care home if you are going to be late.
- Arrange with someone on the emergency card to pick up your child.

**If you are late and have not contacted the center or child care partnership home, one of the following actions may be taken:**

- We will call the telephone numbers for all people currently listed on your child's emergency card.
- If we do not get a response within a reasonable time (30 minutes), we may notify the authorities and they will transport your child to the nearest police station.
- Children may be dropped from the preschool program on the fourth late pick-up by the parent/guardian/authorized pick-up person.

### **Attendance Policy for Center Based Programs**

Children should attend school on time each day. Daily activities are planned for continuous learning experiences. Every absence, even missing part of a school day, delays your child's progress at school. Each lesson is taught in order, to build understanding, and to be ready to learn the next steps.

#### **Sign-in/out sheets:**

1. For emergency and legal purposes, parents/guardians are required to sign-in/-out with their full signature for each child. Enter correct arrival and departure time on the sign-in/out sheet each day the child attends school.
2. Accurate sign-in/out sheets are used for roll call in the event of an emergency. With permission from the parent or guardian, the child's teacher will sign-in/-out children who are transported by bus.
3. Children not properly signed-in/out may be considered absent without excuse and may be dropped from the program for excessive unexcused absences.
4. The parent/guardian is responsible to contact center staff on the day before or the morning of an absence and provide the reason for the absence. When the center staff is not contacted, the center clerk will call the parent/guardian one hour after the child's scheduled start time.
  - i. **Note:** Staff makes determination of absence category based on specific reason for absence provided by the parent or guardian. Doctor's excuses are required in cases of communicable diseases, serious illnesses/injuries including fractured bones.
5. An absence is considered "excused" under the definitions listed below.

**Excused absences** can include:

- Illness or quarantine of the child or parent
- Required doctor appointment for the child
- Court-ordered visitations or appointment where the child is required to attend (need copy of order)
- Site closure for emergency

**Unexcused absences** are defined as days of non-attendance, which do not qualify for the excused absence categories listed above. A maximum of 4 unexcused absences are allowed for a program year.

**Incorrect or missing Sign-in/out**

If you fail to sign-in/out for your child correctly, it may be considered absent "without excuse". This can add to excessive unexcused absences.

## **Attendance Policy for Early Head Start Home Based Programs**

Visits canceled by the EHS Home Visitor must be rescheduled by the end of the month (when possible). We ask that parents make every attempt to schedule appointments so as not to interfere with their weekly Home Visits. It is critical for your child's success that they participate in their weekly visits. Visits cancelled by the parent are not required to be rescheduled, but will be recorded on the Home Visit Weekly Lesson Plan form. The following absence codes will be allowed for Home Base Option: "E" = Excused and "U" = Unexcused. These codes will be documented on the Home Visit Weekly Plan form with the date, absence reason, absence code, and the home visitor's initials

Excused visits (E)- When the child and/ or the family member is sick or has an emergency that causes the child or parent to miss the scheduled home visit appointment. For example: death in the family or called into work. Parents must communicate with the EHS home visitor to ensure proper documentation is recorded for the excused home visit.

Unexcused (U)- Unexcused will be given when a family calls the EHS home visitor and states that they have a scheduled appointment, are going out of town, or they will not be at home for the scheduled visit. A code of unexcused will also be given if a parent does not contact the home visitor to reschedule the missed appointment prior to the appointment time. Families may be dropped from the home base option after any unexcused visits. Each case will be reviewed by the EHS Home Base Supervisor before the family is dropped.

### **Child Emergencies**

If a child is injured or becomes ill at school (non-emergency), the parents is notified immediately. If you cannot be reached, our staff calls your provided alternate emergency names and numbers. PSD staff makes the child comfortable and remains with your child until you arrive.

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

### **Illness**

Because We Love Your Kids ...

Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment. The purpose of this policy for the EHS Center is to protect the children in our care from unnecessary exposure to contagious diseases and infections. If your child shows symptoms of illness during a 24-hour period prior to coming to the center or family child care home, please keep your child home until they are well. If your child becomes ill while at the center or family child care homes and/or requires attention from a medical professional, the parent or emergency contact is notified immediately. Some communicable diseases and infections may require a doctor's note to return to the center.

**Children with the following symptoms or illnesses must stay home or be picked up within one hour of notification. This list includes but is not limited to:**

- ❑ **Fever (not due to teething)**
  - Temperature 2½ degrees over body temperature (102° or higher rectally, 100° under the armpit, 101° orally).
  - Return when child is free of fever.
  
- ❑ **Rapid or labored breathing**
- ❑ **Runny nose**
  - Yellow or green mucous unrelated to allergies
  - Return when mucous is clear
  
- ❑ **Persistent cough or congestion**
  - Accompanied by yellow or green phlegm or is persistent and interferes with child's comfort or ability to drink, talk or sleep.
  - Return when symptoms are no longer present
  - A clearance from doctor may be required to return
  
- ❑ **Rashes** except diaper rash or poison ivy may require a doctor's note to return.
- ❑ **Diarrhea**
  - Three or more diarrhea stools within an eight hour period
  - May return 24 hours after last diarrhea stool
  
- ❑ **Nausea or Vomiting**
  - Two or more episodes of vomiting
  - Return 24 hours after the last vomiting episode or when a health care provider determines that the child's illness is not communicable and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
  
- ❑ **Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)**
  - May return 24 hours after treatment has started.
  - A doctor's clearance including the diagnosis and prescribed treatment is required upon return.
  
- ❑ **Impetigo (blisters or sores on the face, neck, hands, and diaper area)**
  - May return 24 hours after treatment has started.
  - A doctor's clearance including diagnosis and prescribed treatment is required upon return.
  
- ❑ **Strep Throat**
  - May return 48 hours after treatment has started and child is free of fever for 24 hours.
  - A doctor's clearance is needed before returning to school.

- ❑ **Lice**
  - May return when child is free of live lice.
  
- ❑ **Chicken Pox**
  - May return after sores are dry and crusted over.
  - Doctor clearance is required to return.
  
- ❑ **Ringworm**
  - Ringworm of the scalp - return after treatment is started and with doctor's clearance
  - Ringworm on the body does not require exclusion under the following circumstances:
    1. The affected area is covered at all times,
    2. Treatment has started, and
    3. If condition does not improve, a doctor's clearance may be required.
  
- ❑ **Mouth sores and drooling**
  - Return with doctor's clearance.
  
- ❑ **All contagious illnesses**
  - Doctor's clearance with diagnosis and prescribed treatment is required to return to the center.
  - Additional medical information, tests or examinations may be required prior to return.
  - Our centers are required to report communicable diseases to the Public Health Department.

### **Medication Administration**

If your child requires medication to be at the school, please speak with the Site Supervisor, who will give you the appropriate medication packet that must be completed and returned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment/Release (EHS Center Based Programs)**

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

### **Curriculum**

Early Head Start Center Based and Child Care Partnership Homes uses the "Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's". The 5 components in Creative Curriculum are 1) Knowing Infants, Toddlers and Two's; 2) Creating a Responsive Environment; 3) What Children Learn; 4) Caring and Teaching; and 5) Partnering with Families.

The Creative Curriculum is an ongoing observation and assessment tool to help teachers identify and respond to children's changing interest and abilities in order to plan appropriate experiences for each individual child. The Creative Curriculum offers choices and encourages flexibility for both children and teachers.

All components are based and supported by research conducted by Early Childhood theorists. Components are used in children's routines and individualized experiences. PSD uses various resources such as "Learning Games" and "Parent as Teachers" that are based on the developmental levels of each child to help individualize experiences for children and to engage parents/caregivers.

The EHS Home Base uses the Parents as Teachers Curriculum for providing services to families with children from the prenatal period to kindergarten. This program has four goals:

1. Increase parent knowledge of early childhood
2. Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues

3. Prevent child abuse and neglect
4. Increase children's school readiness and success

### **Lesson Plans**

Lesson plans are completed weekly for center based and during the home visit with parents. Lesson plans document parent's and children's goals. To be in compliance with regulation [45 CFR 1304.3(a)(5)], a lesson plan must include:

1. The children's development and learning goals (documented on the Child Development Progress Summary)
2. The experiences that are used to achieve these goals,
3. What PSD and parents do to help children achieve these goals, and
4. The materials needed to support the implementation of the curriculum.

The Lesson Plan and the Child Development Progress Summary requires both the parent and EHS home visitor's signatures.

### **Assessments**

EHS Home visitors and Family Child Care Providers are required to perform or obtain developmental screenings within 45 days of child entry into the program [45 CFR 1304.20(b)]. The screening process is used only to determine whether a child's development is progressing as expected or whether a concern needs further evaluations. Developmental assessments, however, are ongoing processes to observe and evaluate a child's needs and resources throughout the child's participation in the program.

PSD uses Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) to assess the developmental progress of children in the Early Head Start program. The DRDP is designed for teachers and providers to observe, document, and reflect on the learning, development, and progress of all infants and toddlers in an early care and education program. The assessment results are intended to be used by the teacher and provider to plan curriculum for individual children and groups of children and to guide continuous program improvement.

### **Screenings**

#### **Ages & Stages Questionnaire Screenings (ASQ SE )**

Staff and providers completes the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ SE) with parent(s) of each child, within 30 days of the child's start date in the program. This is to obtain a broad sampling of a child's skills and behaviors for one or more of the following reasons:

- To identify a child who should be referred for a more comprehensive evaluation to determine a possible disability or the need for special placement.
- To help determine the most appropriate initial placement or grouping of children.



- To assist the teacher in planning a more appropriate program for the child.
- To comply with mandated screening requirements.

The **ASQ SE:**

- Is a screening system for identifying young children at risk for social or emotional difficulties.
- Screens infants and young children for social-emotional delays in the crucial early years of life.

Health screenings include Physicals, Vision, Hearing, Dental, Lead, TB which are due within 30 days of enrollment.

### **Health Services**

Assistance by agency health specialists will be provided to assist families who are in need and presently do not have medical and health resources. Free physical exams may be available to eligible children through Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP).

Other health related services offered are:

- Weighing and measuring children twice a year.
- Health/Nutrition Education workshops for parents.
- Toothbrush training for children.
- Dental, vision, and hearing screenings.

### **Nutrition**

Prior to the infant's first day at the center or family child care home, PSD staff or providers together with the parent(s) shall complete a needs and services plan for the infant. The needs and services plan shall be in writing and shall include but not limited to the child's individual feeding plan. (Title 22)

### **Meals and Snacks**

All children receive a nutritious, free lunch every day, and either breakfast (morning and full day classes) or a snack (afternoon and full day classes). PSD Early Head Start makes every effort to provide your child with wholesome foods to introduce your child to a variety of food tastes and textures. Snack foods include cereals, crackers, fruits, vegetables, yogurt, cheese, and 100% fruit juice. Meals may be provided for parent and infant two times per year, during socialization, for the Early Head Start home base program.

Young infants will be fed according to their own schedule. Government approved formulas will be provided to all infants. If your child is on a special formula, accommodations will be made with a doctor's statement.

As infants grow and start eating solid foods, their eating needs will change and the eating times will be adjusted toward the group schedule.

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

### **Food Allergies**

If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, please inform the teacher. Arrangements will be made to accommodate special needs. Meal substitutions can be made with a doctor's statement.

### **Nutritious Foods for Children**

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

### **Early Head Start Services to Children with Special Needs**

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

Parents are involved in the planning and implementation of services for their children. Efforts are made by staff and family child care providers to coordinate the services offered to the children by resource agencies. Services to children, families and staff include:

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

### **Diapering**

PSD provides disposable diapers and wipes for children in the Infant/Toddler classrooms, Family Child Care Homes and during socialization days. Your child will be changed at regular intervals throughout the day and as needed. Parents may choose to bring diapers to be used just for their child if they want a specific type other than what the program is providing.

### **Transition**

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

Early Head Start program is a place where children and parents expect to find opportunities for growth and development from whatever starting point the child brings to the new setting. Early childhood educators build a more continuous learning experience for young children and their families by preparing children and involving the parents in the transition.

### **Early Head Start Prenatal Program to Early Head Start:**

- In the third trimester of the pregnancy, the Registered Nurse will introduce the Early Head Start home-based program option for infants/toddlers to the expectant mother.
- The mother is invited to the upcoming socialization to meet the families that are currently enrolled in the EHS home-based program.
- Once the baby is born, the Registered Nurse will coordinate a meeting between parent and staff.
- A Well Baby Check will be provided by a Registered Nurse within 2 weeks of the child being born. The EHS Home Visitor will accompany the Registered Nurse on at least one (1) home visit to support the successful transition of the family and child.
- The EHS Home Visitor and Registered Nurse will also provide resource information on additional programs, which are high in quality and provide consistent and responsive caregiving.
- The mother will be informed of the requirement to provide birth verification such as medical card, birth announcement or birth certificate by the time the child turns six weeks of age.
- EHS Home Visitor and Registered Nurse will document all follow up and newborn information into ChildPlus.
- Post-partum care will continue by the Nurse based on the needs of the family and the newborn reaching 6 weeks of age.

- The child may be enrolled in the Home Based Option at six (6) weeks of age. Child may have the opportunity to be enrolled in the Center Based Option if that program option is available in their area.
- A Parent Orientation will be provided and the family file will be transferred to the receiving program.

### **Transition from Early Head Start to Head Start:**

Children in the Early Head Start program will begin the transition process when they are 30 months old. Every effort will be made to accommodate the child in the Head Start Program, but if space is unavailable, a referral will be made to a program that is age appropriate within the families' current service area.

The purpose of the Transition Plan is to ensure a smooth transition and the most appropriate placement for the child . The plan will be developed through active parental involvement during the planning and transition process for continuity of comprehensive services for parents and children between different program settings.

To successfully transition children from Early Head Start to a Head Start Program, the following areas will be reviewed with the parent six (6) months prior to the child's third birthday:

- A transition planning conference will be scheduled with the Parent and the EHS Staff or family child care provider to coordinate the transition plan at 30 months.
- Parent will receive a Transition Plan when the child turns 30 months old to prepare them for the Transition Process.
- An appointment with the Program Generalist will be set with the parent to submit a new Head Start application and income documentation to ensure the family qualifies for Head Start.
- EHS Teacher/Home Visitor/Family Child Care Provider may coordinate one to two visits with the receiving program for the parents and the child to support a successful transition and to coordinate the meetings between the staff and the parent.
- EHS Teacher/Home Visitor/Family Child Care Provider will schedule a formal meeting with the receiving program prior to the child's first day.
- Program Generalists will provide assistance, guidance and education to the family on the enrollment process into the Head Start program to include the following:
  - Status of all Health Screenings
    - Review medical home status
    - Ensure Immunizations are up to date
    - Review medical conditions that may require special accommodations, needed treatments are completed or in the process of being completed.

- Development status
  - Ages & Stages Questionnaire
  - Child Portfolios
  
- Progress of the family
  - Review family circumstances, identify changing circumstances (current and known upcoming events)
  - Review Family Partnership Agreement Goals
  
- Program Options
  - Discuss Head Start and other resources and options in the local area.
  - Provide Head Start application
  - Income Re-certification

Ongoing communication will be conducted with the parent about the progress of the transition activities. All follow up will be documented in Child Plus.

On the child's third birthday, or closely thereafter, the child transitions into a new program and the following actions are taken:

- Child's Portfolio is given to parent.
- Copy of completed child's file and assessment is transferred with the child to the new program on the first day of attendance.
- Closing summary is completed and the file is given to the Program Generalist for closure.

**Transitioning of Children with Special Needs:**

- The Home visitor/teacher/family child care provider will introduce the transition process to the parent at 30 months of age. The home visitor/teacher will obtain, from the parent, the date for any special education follow-up appointments.
- The Home visitor/teacher will complete an updated DAYC-2 screening protocol form and forward a copy to the disabilities unit.
- A meeting between the disabilities unit and EHS program supervisor will be conducted to review child's needs and concerns. Meetings will be held bi-weekly. The disabilities unit will track the status of any special education or related services that the child may qualify for at age three.
- The program generalist will meet with the parent to complete a new application/enrollment packet and to discuss program options at 30 months of age.

- If the child is transitioning to a different agency, the home visitor/teacher will obtain parent's written permission to transfer information to the specified agency.
- If the child is transitioning to the Head Start Preschool Program, the file will be forwarded to the new site location.
- The Program Generalist will document in the Child Plus database the date when information is forwarded to the child's next placement.
- The family will be notified by letter if the child is accepted into the HS Program or placed on a waiting list. If accepted into a HS Program, the Generalist will provide the family with specific information related to the new program, 10 days prior to the child's first day.

### **Clothing**

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

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

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

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

### **Procedures for Guidance and Positive Discipline**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Television**

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

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

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

In accordance with the California Department of Children and Family Services, all employees of the Preschool Services Department are mandated reporters.

This means that staff **must report** suspicion or knowledge of child abuse or neglect. The proper authorities must be notified if there is any evidence such as:

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

### **Car Safety Law**

California State law requires that children be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety or booster seat) until they are at least 8 years old or at least 4 feet 9 inches tall. **If children are left unattended in a vehicle in the parking lot, the police will be notified immediately.**

### **Staff Qualifications**

Center based Early Head Start teachers hold a current Child Development Teacher Permit or higher from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. We strive to ensure



our staff reflects the diverse linguistic and cultural makeup of the children and families in our program. The use of intergenerational staff is encouraged.<sup>2</sup>

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Family Child Care Providers possess a Child Development Associate Teacher Permit or higher from the California Commission of Teacher Credentialing or an equivalent Child Development Associate Credential, or are working towards obtaining the Permit.

### **Non Federal Share**

The Federal Government requires that 20 percent of the Early Head Start grant be matched with contributions from parents and the community. These are called "Non-federal share" and consist of volunteering, attending Early Head Start activities, donating materials, working on the educational goals of children at home, serving on Policy Council, and many other ways. Parents will be asked to fill out "Non-Federal Share" forms when they perform services, provide materials, or volunteer time to the Early Head Start program. The Non-Federal Share form must be filled out completely.

### **Parent Participation and Involvement**

Parent involvement is a vital part of the Preschool Services Department. Parents are the first and primary educators of their children and we support and encourage parents to actively participate in their child's early education, growth and development.

We encourage you to become actively involved in your child's education. Your input, suggestions, and observations are valuable to us. All parents are encouraged to volunteer at the center on a regular basis in whatever capacity you feel is appropriate for you.

Community volunteers and former parents are also encouraged to participate in the program.

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

All parent volunteers ***who exceed 15 hours per week at the facility*** will be referred to the PSD Volunteer Coordinator to schedule an appointment for fingerprints and background check, in accordance with Community Care Licensing Regulations. The department will pay for the costs of fingerprints and background checks. Once the volunteer's fingerprints have cleared, he/she will be notified so they may resume their volunteer service.

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

Parents can participate in many ways including:

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<sup>2</sup> EC 8203(g)

- ❑ Participating in classroom activities (reading or telling stories, singing, playing games)
- ❑ Kitchen and food preparation duties
- ❑ Participating in our job training/apprenticeship program<sup>3</sup>
- ❑ Attending parent workshops provided by the program.
- ❑ Increasing your knowledge of age-appropriate behavior
- ❑ Supervising children on the playground
- ❑ Teaching a child or small group of children
- ❑ Helping the teachers prepare materials
- ❑ Helping staff with maintenance and repair of the classroom or play equipment
- ❑ Typing in the center or at home
- ❑ Participating on the Parent Advisory Committee
- ❑ Assisting with the nutrition program
- ❑ Serving on the Health Services Advisory Committee
- ❑ School to Home Activities

### **Parent Orientation**

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

### **Family Support Services**

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

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

### **Parent Conferences**

Each child's development is important to us. Teachers observe children carefully and design program activities with educational goals in mind for each child. Teachers want to meet with parents to share insights and to learn more about each child. The Early Head Start program has established a mandate that teachers and parents meet together four

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<sup>3</sup> EC 8202(c)

times year. You will be notified of an opportunity for this meeting. This is an opportunity for teachers to provide parents with specific information about their child's progress, growth and development.

### **Early Head Start Policy Council**

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

### **Parent Education & Training**

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

### **Communication with Parents**

We believe that parents have the right to be informed about issues and events at the center. Parents can expect a variety of communications including:

### **Bulletin Board**

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

### **Newsletter**

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

### **Monthly Calendar**

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

### **Compliment/Complaint Forms**

Compliment/Complaint forms are located in the Center's office. Parents are encouraged to submit written comments or suggestions that may improve the Center.

### **End of the Year Event**

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

### **Use of Parent Activity Funds**

Parent activity funds are used for the development of the Early Head Start parent in the program. Projects that parents participate in must be designed for participation of adults, not for children. Examples of skills that could be the focus are organization, communication, team building, community awareness, building self-esteem, and personal goal setting. Parent committees must submit a plan and budget for the year within 60 days of the program year. All parent groups must follow the Preschool Services Department procedures for activities.

### **Fund Raising**

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

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

### **Harassment**

Agency policy prohibits intimidation or harassment of any student by any employee, student or other person. Staff shall be alert and immediately responsive to conduct which may interfere with a students' ability to participate in, or benefit from program services, activities or privileges. Civil Rights guarantees and Equal Access Laws shall be adhered to in all educational and personnel/employment practices.

## **Notification: Sexual Harassment**

It is the policy of the Preschool Services Department that all persons, regardless of their sex, be afforded equal rights and opportunities and enjoy freedom from discrimination of any kind in our programs and settings. <sup>4</sup>

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

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

## **Agency Grievance Policy**

The Preschool Services Department (PSD) of San Bernardino County operates the Federal Head Start/Early Head Start and State Department of Education's State Preschool programs. We strive to be the very best in the services we provide to children and families, and encourage open communication between our staff and parents, community partners, and the communities we serve. We recognize there is always room for improvement.

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

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

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

## **Procedure**

1. Complete the Concern / Feedback / Compliment Form available at every site.
2. Written concern should include:
  - Name and address of the person filing the concern
  - A description of the problem
  - Date of occurrence
  - Names of people involved

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<sup>4</sup> Education Code 231.5[a],[b],[c]

- Possible solutions
- Parents should consult with their Generalist or Site Supervisor for advice and assistance.

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

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

4. Upon receipt of a concern:

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

### **Disaster Preparedness**

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

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

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

In the event of an emergency or disaster:

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

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

### **Visitation and Security**

The center and family child care homes have an open door policy and parents are welcome and encouraged to visit their children during the day. All visitors, aside from parents, must sign in at the center's front desk or family child care home designated area each time they

visit the site. Visitors accompanying a parent are asked to wait in the lobby while parents drop off or pick up their child.

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

## Locations Of Early Head Start Programs In San Bernardino County

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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Apple Valley HB (760) 247 - 6955            | <b>FAMILY LEARNING CENTERS (FLC)</b>   |
| Barstow CB/HB (760) 253 - 2956              | Apple Valley (760) 240 - 5353          |
| Easter Seals Ontario CB/HB (909) 923 - 3352 | Barstow (760) 253 - 2336               |
| Chino CB/HB (909) 627-0206                  | Del Rosa (909) 881 - 7544              |
| Crestline HB (909) 338-1470                 | Ontario (909) 983 - 2039 / 7008        |
| Del Rosa HB (909) 881-7544                  | Rialto Renaissance (909) 875-5913/7953 |
| Fontana Citrus CB/HB (909) 428 - 8496       | Victorville (760) 951-3430             |
| Fontana USD CB (909) 357-5000 X7080         | Twenty-Nine Palms (760) 367-5150       |
| Hesperia HB (760) 948 - 4411                |  |
| South Redlands HB (909) 798 - 2690          |  |
| Victor Valley College CB/HB (760) 952-1215  |  |
| Yucaipa HB (909) 797 - 3585                 |  |
| Yucca Valley HB (760) 369-7424              |  |
|   |  |

CB – Center Base

HB – Home Base



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

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

I have received:

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

- due process procedures
- Parent rights
- Personal rights

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please place a copy in child's folder.**