



Parent Handbook

2022-2023

www.capk.org/headstart



Stay Connected!

Download **Learning Genie for Parents** and receive photos, videos, and other important classroom updates. With automatic translation, Learning Genie allows teachers and family to chat with each other in their native languages! Ask your center for a code to sign up.

If you're interested in fun activities you can do at home with your child or family, ask your center how to sign up for **ReadyRosie**.



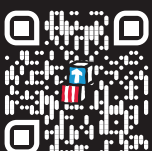
Extended Learning!

Ignite by Hatch is a powerful learning app in our PreK programs. Ignite includes 200+ play-based learning experiences covering seven domains of learning, from social-emotional development to language and math. Ignite helps parents ensure age-appropriate learning can continue at home. But unlike other apps, Ignite provides the same research-based experiences teachers provide in the classroom. Ask your child's teacher how to sign up.

Follow Us!

Through Social Media, CAPK Head Start shares a variety of activities, learning materials, and helpful tips families can use at home for remote learning, or to enhance what children are discovering while in class.

Follow **@CapkHeadStart** on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest to see how much fun your child is having.



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WELCOME TO HEAD START/STATE CHILD DEVELOPMENT



Dear Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Head Start and State Child Development Program of Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK).

As we begin this year, The Head Start and Early Head Start programs continue to provide a safe environment for you and your child focusing on the continuation of comprehensive services such as family engagement, health, nutrition, and mental health services. Our commitment and priority are to ensure children receive high-quality services and school readiness. Additionally, we proceed to follow the health and safety regulations from the

Office of Head Start and our Local Public Health Department as we continue providing in-person services to children and families.

We are dedicated to working in partnership with each family and community, and we invite you to participate in various aspects including classroom activities, local parent committee meetings, Policy Council, and other special activities and events. We look forward to partnering with you to help support your child reach his/her full potential and becoming lifelong learners.

Please take time to read through this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have regarding our policies, procedures, and practices. Our goal is to partner with you; we recognize that you are your child's first and most important teacher.

We encourage you to become an active participant in school activities and programs we offer. Please let our staff know if you have any questions and how we can best support you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda Gonzales', written in a cursive style.

Yolanda Gonzales,
Director of Head Start/State Child Development

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ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Our Mission Statement

To provide rich, high-quality early learning experiences to a diverse population of children ages birth to five. We promote access to comprehensive services with a holistic focus on the family by encouraging family engagement, supporting school readiness, and instilling self-reliance in children and their families.

Philosophy

We believe child development is the result of the interactions between children and their social environment. As early educators, the staff promotes a teaching philosophy that young children are active learners, eager to experience and understand their world. The early years set the stage for learning throughout life. The staff promotes learning by being responsive to children's needs, interests, and by developing a caring and respectful relationship with each child.

Program for Infant/Toddler Care

We utilize the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) as an overarching philosophical approach. The philosophy behind PITC is that infants need close, caring relationships, routines, and environments that promote their health and safety, connection to family and culture, and knowledgeable, responsive caregivers. PITC is grounded in the research-based understanding that intellectual, language, social, emotional, and physical learning happen together and are best fostered in very young children through responsive relationship-based learning experiences.

School Readiness

Parents can expect their children to be in an environment where they are encouraged to explore their curiosity and investigate the world around them. To be ready for school means that children must possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and behaviors needed to succeed in school and lifelong learning. We partner with each family to develop a holistic approach to school readiness. Our program staff takes the time to build positive relationships with children, parents, and amongst each other. Our staff fully embraces every opportunity to observe and understand children's temperament, interests, strengths, and challenges. Our programs build nurturing relationships with children, inspiring them to take risks, try new things and express their thinking. We provide physical, cognitive, social, and emotional learning experiences that promote school readiness.

Equal Access Policy

Our Program does not discriminate based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, immigration status, political belief, mental or physical disability, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance, or regulation.

We welcome the enrollment of pregnant women and children with disabilities and understand the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations for our children.

Worship and Teaching of Religion

While we believe it is essential to model and teach values such as concern and respect for all people, we believe it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide religious instruction if they choose. Therefore, under the Constitution of California, Article XVI, Section 5, 'religion is not taught in any child development program administered by the Head Start/State Child Development Program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Head Start/State Child Development Program is a subsidized program for low-income families and children with disabilities. Guidelines for eligibility are determined by The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Head Start (OHS), and the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division. There are no fees or charges for the Head Start portion of the program. However, the state portion of the day may have fees for the full-day program. The Head Start Program operates 10 months a year, 5 days per week, and provides service for children from 3 to 5 years of age within the local community.


We offer full-day California State Preschool (CSPP) and Infant and Toddler programs (CCTR). We operate 12 months a year, 5 days per week, for children ages six weeks to 5 years old. These full-day programs serve as a school readiness opportunity for children prior to entering kindergarten. Parent's/guardian's will be provided with written notice of any changes in services at least 30 days prior to the change.


Program Options


Center-based offers a Part-Day/Part-Year option, a three-and-a-half-hour classroom session, in either the morning or the afternoon. There is also a full-day option that provides six hours or more per day, five days a week. This program option is designed to meet the needs of families with infants/toddlers or preschoolers who are working and/or going to school. (Full-Day/Part-Year or Full-Day/Full-Year)

Home-based supports infants and toddlers, and their families, with comprehensive services during home visits and group socialization experiences. Home-based Educators are required to conduct forty-six weekly 90-minute home visits a year. Home visits are planned collaboratively with the parent(s)/guardian(s). We provide services to expectant mothers through our home-based option as well; expectant mothers and supportive family members will receive weekly home visits and socialization experiences during pregnancy.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership: The EHS-CCP Program brings together the strengths of childcare and Early Head Start programs. Early Head Start provides comprehensive family-centered services within high-quality early learning environments that adhere to the research-based Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). Integrating Early Head Start comprehensive services and resources into the array of traditional childcare and family childcare settings creates new opportunities to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, and their families.

 **Infant** (Age group 6 weeks to 24 months) – Our young infant rooms are designed to maintain a high staff-child ratio to meet the individual child's needs. The ratio of one (1) adult to three (3) infants allows for close interaction with caregivers, which is essential for attachment. Staff maintains individualized plans for each child based on their stage of development, needs, and interests.

 **Toddler** (Age group 18-36 months) – Our toddler classrooms maintain a ratio of one (1) adult to four (4) children. The daily schedule is more consistent and predictable than the infant program. For example, toddlers typically eat and sleep as a group, and their transitions are more predictable. A consistent schedule helps toddlers feel more in control and thus more competent and secure but is still flexible enough based on their individual needs.

 **Preschool** (Age group 3-5 years) – The Preschool program is committed to providing an educational

program focused on school readiness for children that nurtures a positive self-image and a supportive social environment. Parents/guardians are considered partners in stimulating the children's enthusiasm for learning. We offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to develop the child's knowledge and skills in all areas — physical, social, emotional, cultural, language, cognitive, health, and nutrition. The child development program is an excellent environment to prepare children for the diversity, they are likely to encounter as they grow, enter school, and seek fulfillment as adults. Our curriculum provides experiences in the following:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 👉 Creative Art Activities | 👉 Physical Development |
| 👉 Dramatic Play | 👉 Social Emotional Awareness |
| 👉 Music and Movement | 👉 Health and Safety Practices |
| 👉 Nature/Science/Technology | 👉 Enrichment Activities |
| 👉 Language Development | 👉 Individual / Small Group Learning |
| 👉 Reading, Writing, and Math Readiness | 👉 Kindergarten Readiness |

Program Hours of Operation: Our Program offers different options and hours of care. Some of our centers may open as early as 5:00 am and close as late as 5:30 pm. All centers have slightly different hours of operation, according to the option your child is enrolled in. Please check with the Site Supervisor for hours of operation.

EDUCATION SERVICES

Curriculum

Our **Center-based** classrooms utilize “Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's” and “Creative Curriculum for Preschool.” Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that helps teachers identify and respond to children’s changing interests and abilities to plan appropriate experiences for each individual child. Creative Curriculum offers children confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills through hands on project-based investigations.

Our **Home-based** and **Expectant Mothers** options utilizes the curriculum “Partners for a Healthy Baby”. Partners for a Healthy Baby is a parenting curriculum which provides a variety of topics focused on improving prenatal health; healthy birth outcomes; bonding and attachment; positive parenting; enhanced child health and development; infant mental health; economic self-sufficiency; and family stability. In addition, Creative Curriculum “Learning Games,” supports the development of children and provides families with engaging and learning experiences for the home setting.

The **Child Care Partnership** utilizes evidence-based curriculum to supports infant and toddler development. Strategies for learning are incorporated in the daily activities to nurture a child-centered environment.

Lesson Plans

Center-based weekly lesson planning includes content for both individual children and for the whole group. Teaching staff take each child's individual strengths, needs, and interests into consideration as they individualize their teaching practices. Lesson planning assists teachers in integrating day-to-day experiences for children to achieve their goals. Families are invited to be part of the planning process. Please talk to your teacher about ways in which you can participate.

Home-based lesson plans are completed weekly in collaboration with parents and expectant mothers (**families**). They are individualized to meet the child’s and family’s needs and interests. Families also participate in the development of the lesson plan for group socializations. Please talk to your Home-based Educator for ways to participate.

Daily Classroom Routine

Teaching staff implements age-appropriate learning experiences by following daily routines. Daily routines provide an opportunity for children to build trust, security, identify the past, and predict what is coming next. A consistent classroom routine is essential for children's learning.

Staff will discuss the daily classroom routine with you. A copy will be posted on the parent board and a visual schedule posted at children's eye level.

Inclusion and Belonging - Birth to Five

Our program's offer respectful, inclusive learning environments that invite and honor the diverse perspectives of our families. Children experience a sense of belonging, positive social relationships, and development to reach their full potential. All children's environments are safe, age-appropriate, and provide designed indoor and outdoor spaces for individual and group experiences. Your child will find engaging areas to be active and hands-on learning materials to explore that promote inclusion and belonging. Our centers reflect our families and communities. Center staff will share with you how to contribute to your child's environment.

Dual Language Learners

We celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists in our Program. Language preservation and bilingualism are beneficial to children, parents, and our communities. If your home language is other than English and you speak with your child daily in your home language, your child will have a wide range of benefits from cognitive to social advantages early and later in life.

Teachers are encouraged to speak in children's home language and use dual-language books, songs, and cultural materials to support language development. Our staff makes every effort to foster the pre-school children's primary language while supporting English's continued development. If the child's home language is not spoken by the teaching staff, we incorporate their home language into the classroom through learning materials and ask parents/volunteers to translate commonly used words and phrases.




Screenings and Assessments

Desired Results Developmental Profile

Your child's developmental progress is assessed by staff within 60 calendar days after entering using the Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP). The California Department of Education (CDE) developed the DRDP to measure and achieve higher learning outcomes. Assessments are performed three times a year; data gained through these assessments are used to plan developmentally appropriate activities and individualization for all age groups throughout the year.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires

Our Program uses Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) to screen* children's development. Within 45 days of entering the Program, parent(s)/guardian(s), staff, and providers will collaborate in completing the ASQ-3 and ASQ: SE-2 questionnaires to obtain a broad sampling of each child's skills and behaviors for one or more of the following purposes:

-  To identify children who may need a referral for a more comprehensive evaluation to determine a possible disability or the need for special placement.
-  To determine the most appropriate environment for children, and to individualize children's experiences.
-  To identify children at risk of developmental or social emotional challenges.

**Results of these screenings will be shared with families; staff will share any need(s) for further assessments.*

Expectant Mother Social-Emotional Screenings

Our Program uses Social-Emotional Screenings to determine risk factors of expectant mothers. The screenings are completed within 45 days of enrollment and 45 days of postpartum. Staff identify the need for a possible referral and assist with immediate emergencies or crises by connecting expectant/new mothers with the appropriate in-house professionals.

Environment Rating Scales

Our Program completes an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment of each classroom to measure program quality annually. The scale measures the quality in center-based classrooms. This process consists of the various interactions that occur in a classroom between staff, children, parents, and other adults. It also measures children's interactions with the materials and activities in the environment and space, schedule, and materials that support these interactions.

ERS reports are generated to identify strengths and improvement areas to enhance program quality. The program uses information gained from this assessment to purchase materials for the classroom or conduct staff training to help achieve program quality goals.

Parent/Teacher Conferences





Teachers and Home-based Educator will meet with you to share and review your child's progress at a Parent/Teacher Conference. Your involvement is essential to planning learning goals and objectives that reflect your child's needs and strengths. Staff will partner with you and share strategies on how you can support your child's learning at home.

Parent Surveys

Each year, parents/guardians of state-enrolled children will have an opportunity to participate in the DRDP Parent Survey. This survey helps improve our customer service planning activities to support children's learning and development and meet family needs. The results from the survey become part of our annual Agency Self-Evaluation process.

Program Self-Evaluation

Our Program is required to submit an annual self-evaluation to the State of California. This evaluation involves analysis and a written plan for all areas needing improvement. It ensures an effective childcare and development system that meets the needs of children, parents/guardians, and the community. The following assessments are required to complete our Agency Self-Evaluation:

-  An assessment of the Program by parents/guardians using the Desired Results Parent Survey
-  Findings from the DRDPs
-  Results from the Environment Rating Scales
-  Procedures for ongoing monitoring to ensure program compliance.



HEALTH SERVICES

Our Program's commitment to wellness embraces a comprehensive vision of healthy children, families, and staff. Our objective is to support healthy physical development by encouraging practices that promote early identification of problems, prevent illness or injury, and foster positive and culturally relevant health behaviors that enhance life-long well-being.

Our Program emphasizes the importance of early identification of health and mental health needs, which, if undetected or untreated, might cause learning difficulties. We will make every effort to work with you to ensure that your child is connected to a doctor or clinic to receive a complete age-appropriate health assessment, as required by California's Bright Futures Periodicity schedule. We call this a "medical home." Appropriate dental

care is recommended by California's Dental Periodicity Schedule and performed by the child's regular dentist, which is called a "dental home."

To comply with licensing and Head Start requirements, all children enrolled must have on file the following:

-  A physical examination/well-baby check, which is current and up to date within the last 12 months, must be submitted within 30 days after entering the Program. Physical examinations and well-baby checks may be obtained from a child's regular physician or through the County Public Health Department.
-  The physical examination must include tests for anemia, blood lead level, tuberculosis risk assessment, and other screenings required by the individual child's age. The physical exam must be updated annually.

Children must have up-to-date immunizations upon entry into a classroom unless they are experiencing homelessness or are foster children. A case conference will be scheduled for homeless or foster children who are not up to date prior to entry. Children must maintain current immunizations to attend school. Children enrolled in Home-based, whose immunizations are not up to date at the time of enrollment, will be given 30 days to become current or up to date.

Daily Health Check

According to Title 22 California State Licensing requirements, before your child is signed in each day, the center staff will check for general signs of illness and assess if they are ready to participate in the daily routines. During this time, please notify your child's teacher if you have any concerns regarding your child's health or if your child had a high fever (100.4) or was not feeling well before arrival at the center.










If you are enrolled in our Home-based program, please share with your Home-based Educator how you and your child are feeling and if you are both ready to participate in the home visit and/or socialization.




Illness/Isolation

According to Title 22 California State Licensing requirements, if your child becomes ill during the day, you or one of your emergency contacts will be asked to pick him/her up within one (1) hour. Your child will be able to rest in an isolation area while waiting to be picked up.

When Your Child is Ill and Should Not Come to School

If your child has, or shows, any of the symptoms below, you should keep him/her at home and contact the school within one (1) hour to report the absence.

-  Fever of 100.4°F or higher. Children should return to school when fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of Tylenol, Motrin, or any other temperature-reducing medication unless otherwise indicated by a note from a health care provider.
-  Earache.
-  Headache and stiff neck.
-  Vomiting/abdominal cramps or diarrhea. Children should return to school when free of these symptoms for 24 hours unless otherwise indicated by a healthcare provider's note.
-  Severe cough, when symptoms are not due to an allergy or recent illness. Children making high-pitched or whooping sounds while coughing or cough preventing them from participating in the daily routine.
-  An unidentified rash, infected sores, persistent itching.
-  A sore throat or trouble swallowing, especially a strep infection. Typically, a child may return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment with a physician's note and when the fever is gone.
-  Conjunctivitis (pink eye). Children may return 24 hours after treatment with a note from a physician unless otherwise indicated.
-  Any infectious disease diagnosed by your doctor.

-  Head lice. Head lice are common among children in school settings; parents are encouraged to check for head lice and nits as part of routine hygiene. When it is determined that a child has head lice, the policy requires that the child may return to class when he/she is completely free of lice.
-  Flu symptoms (fever with a cough, or sore throat, and body aches).
-  Child looks or acts differently, tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, unable to participate in activities, or difficult to awaken.

Oral Health

Infant oral hygiene: Infants through 12 months of age have scheduled infant oral hygiene (swabbing of the gums and existing teeth) provided twice a day after feedings and especially before nap time.

Tooth brushing: Preschool and toddler classes have scheduled tooth brushing throughout the day. **Due to COVID-19, our program will review the recommendations from regulatory agencies and implement the recommended practices.**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to model good oral health practices in the home for the entire family. See program staff for assistance in obtaining oral hygiene resources.

Administration of Medication

If a child needs health-related services provided by staff during center hours, the following guidelines must be followed; the Family Service Worker (FSW) will provide you with the Authorization to Administer Medication at School form and the Physician's Documentation form to be completed by a medical provider. You must return completed forms to center staff for your child to enter.

A meeting will take place to train staff on the proper administration, side effects, and expected outcomes from the prescription. Medication must be in the unopened and original container. The Health Content Area Specialist will facilitate the process and will be available during the meeting. After the meeting is completed, your child can attend school.

Exceptions to the medication policy are sunscreens and diaper rash cream. These types of medications only require an Agency Consent Form signed by you. Teething gel is not allowed at the center.

Each center maintains an Incidental Medical Services binder with the required, completed forms to provide medical services to children that require any medication.

Medical and Dental Emergencies

If a child is hurt at school, the teaching staff will administer basic first aid and complete an accident report. Parent/guardian will be notified of any accidents immediately. A copy will be provided when the child is picked up from school.

In the event of an emergency that requires critical medical assistance, your child will be transported to a hospital by ambulance and accompanied by our staff. We will notify you immediately if such an incident occurs. As such, it is essential for parents/guardians to keep all contacts and emergency card information current at the center.





Emergency Disaster Preparedness

There is an Emergency Care and Disaster Action Plan posted in each classroom. Staff is trained in First Aid and CPR and a marked First Aid kit is kept in each classroom. Each classroom is also equipped with an emergency preparedness container filled with necessary supplies to sustain a classroom for 72 hours.

Parents are advised to become familiar with the established emergency procedures and the First Aid kit's location. Emergency procedures are reinforced by staff through classroom curricula, monthly fire/earthquake drills, and lockdown drills.




Diapering

Our program supplies wipes and hypoallergenic, disposable diapers for children in our care. If a parent or guardian would prefer their child use a different diaper, the parent or guardian may provide them to their child's teacher/caregiver. If a doctor is recommending a different diaper due to a medical reason, speak with your Family Service worker and ask them to notify the health team.

-  It is best practice for your child to come to school in a clean, dry diaper.
-  It is best practice for staff to send your child home with a clean, dry diaper.
-  We request you complete the Daily Information Sheet to ensure communication of your child's wellness.
-  During diapering, we adhere to state licensing and federal policies and procedures in maintaining good health and safety practices.

Toilet Learning and Training

For children being toilet trained, a written toilet-learning plan will be developed with the teacher and parents/guardians to include the following:

-  Methods of toilet training.
-  Introduction and use of training equipment.
-  Introduction and use of appropriate clothing.

Safe Sleep Policy

Our staff is required to practice Safe Sleep for infants. This practice states that an infant will be placed on their back when put down to sleep. There will be no blankets, toys, or pillows placed in the crib and the room will always be at a comfortable temperature for the infant. For children under two years of age, staff will observe and document children under two years of age napping every 15 minutes. All staff is trained on Safe Sleep practices yearly.

Nap Time

In the full-day Program, all children are given the opportunity to nap or rest without distraction or disturbances from other classroom activities. Children are not forced to sleep but are encouraged to lie down and rest. Children sleep/rest on a mat/cot. To maintain a healthful sleeping place, the Program will supply sheets to cover the mats/cots.

Car Seat Safety Law






Parents/legal guardians, and drivers who transport children under two years of age on a highway in a motor vehicle, shall adequately secure the child in a rear-facing child car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or more inches tall. The car seat safety law also requires that drivers shall properly secure that child in a rear seat in an appropriate child passenger restraint system when transporting a child under eight years of age on a highway in a motor vehicle. (California Vehicle Code 27360).

A booster seat may secure children who are 8 years of age OR have reached 4'9" in height, but at a minimum, they must be secured by a safety belt (27363).

Head Start/State Child Development is required by law to notify Child Protective Services and our local police authorities of non-compliance with this regulation. If a car seat is needed, please contact the Family Service Worker, and we will try to assist you in obtaining one. For additional information, please call 1-866-SEAT-CHECK or visit www.seatcheck.org to find a nearby location that will inspect or assist you in installing your child's car seat.

NUTRITION SERVICES

Nutrition education and experiences are integrated into the classroom and in Home-based activities. Nutrition guidance and support are available to parents/guardians on an individual basis and during parent meetings. Topics include anemia, lead poisoning, food budgets, meal planning, physical activity, weight maintenance, USDA food guide pyramid education, or any nutrition-related parent request.

-  Meals are served family-style. Children are encouraged (but not forced) to try new foods. Program meals offer a variety of foods and cultural experiences.
-  Program policies do not allow parents/guardians to bring food for mealtimes.
-  Menus are posted at the center, and a copy will be provided to the families upon request.
-  Each child's height and weight will be monitored throughout the year.
-  Lead and Hematocrit/Hemoglobin (iron) results must be submitted within 90 days of enrollment. Any abnormal results will be discussed with the parent/guardian and will be monitored if needed.

Parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to participate in the Nutrition Advisory Committee (NAC) to assist in menu planning. Please let your Site Supervisor or Family Service Worker know if you are interested in attending a NAC meeting.

Child and Adult Food Care Program

All meals served to children follow U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Head Start Nutrition guidelines. The program receives funds through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for its meal service. CACFP features a nutrition program that meets each child's nutritional needs and feeding requirements, including those with special dietary needs and disabilities (with proper medical documentation).

The Program serves a variety of foods and considers cultural and ethnic preferences to broaden the child's food experience. Foods served are high in nutrients, low in fat, sugar, and salt, and conform to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and CACFP meal patterns. Meals and snacks are prepared at, and delivered from, the Partnership's Central Kitchen and/or vendor kitchens if centers located outside of Bakersfield.

Infants are fed "on-demand" and at appropriate intervals. Pre-school/toddler children will receive meals according to their class schedule.

Under Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write or call:

Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building
Attn: USDA Director
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410
(202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD)

Food Allergies

The Program will make every effort to accommodate children with food allergies, which may prevent them from eating foods from our pre-planned menu. If this applies to your child, please notify center staff immediately (a Doctor's note will be required). The Program's registered dietician/Content Area Specialist for Nutrition will contact you, as needed, to develop a plan to address food substitutions.

Inclusion Services

Inclusion Services fosters a positive environment where children with special needs are assisted in reaching their full potential. Our teaching staff provides opportunities for all children with and without special needs to play and learn together and to learn to appreciate each other's abilities.

Our Program supports the individual goals of children with disabilities within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Our Child Development Centers welcome Local Educational Agencies (LEA) into the classroom to provide therapy and special services as needed.

Family Wellness Services

Family Wellness Services provides supportive teaching and parenting practices that promote positive behaviors and social-emotional strategies to reduce stressors at home and in the classroom. The strategies implemented are research-based, utilizing the Pyramid Model Positive Behavior Support (PBS) framework. These wellness strategies promote the physical and mental well-being of both children and families. A Mental Health Consultant is available for parents/guardians (with their consent) to support social-emotional needs through strategies that include observations and access to mental health support/interventions. CAPK Head Start does not practice the dismissal of children due to behavioral concerns.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT




Family Engagement Services focus on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship building with key family members in their child's life. We commit to creating and sustaining an ongoing partnership that supports family well-being. It also honors and supports the parent-child relationships central to a child's healthy development, school readiness, and security.

Male Involvement

Our goal is to create a culture of engagement that encourages and supports males/father figures in becoming more involved in their children's lives. Our Program focuses on a vision that invites, supports, and promotes positive paternal involvement in their children's and family's lives. Males/father figures are encouraged to participate in the numerous events offered throughout the year. Talk to our staff on how you can get involved.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are several opportunities to volunteer within the Program, and we encourage our families to do so. Center staff/home based educators can provide you with more information on the many ways you can volunteer.

-  Volunteers must be up to date on their immunizations and provide proof of such. The following immunizations are required: COVID-19, pertussis (Tdap); measles, mumps, rubella (MMR); tuberculosis (TB) clearance; and influenza (or completion of the flu declination form.) If assistance is needed in obtaining immunizations, staff can provide you with referrals and resources to help with this process.
-  Anyone who volunteers 16 hours a week or more must receive a fingerprint background clearance from the Department of Justice. This requirement is at no cost to the volunteer; the Program will provide you with the necessary paperwork.
-  All volunteers will participate in an orientation and complete a volunteer packet with staff.

The Head Start Program receives 80% of its total funding from the federal government. The other 20% must come from a non-federal source, such as in-kind contributions. When you volunteer, the value of your donated time is considered in-kind. Volunteer services that count as in-kind include assisting in the classroom, reading to your child, school readiness activities that are done at home, preparing classroom materials, and completing Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) observations. Volunteers must document their time on an In-Kind Contribution Record, which will be provided to you by your child's teacher or home-based educator.

PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities to participate in the formal structure of shared governance. These opportunities include Very Important Parent Committee meetings, Regional Parent Committee representation, and Policy Council membership. Meetings may be held in person, virtually or a combination of both.

Very Important Parent Committee Meetings

Very Important Parent (VIP) Committees are established at the center and at the home-based level. The VIP Committee is made up of parents/guardians of children who are currently enrolled in the Program. VIP meetings are held monthly to discuss education and parent topics, review program information, and network with other parents. The VIP Committee may elect officers to lead their meetings and elect committee members to represent their center/home based educator at Regional Parent Committee meetings.

Regional Parent Committee

Regional Parent Committee (RPC) meetings are held at the beginning of the program year (during the fall) and "as needed" after that, up to three times per program year. The purpose of the Regional Parent Committee meeting is to elect representatives to the Policy Council.

Policy Council

The Head Start Policy Council (PC) partners with staff and the Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) Board to decide the Program's overall direction in Kern and San Joaquin Counties. The Council must vote for major program decisions. This may include hiring the Director and other key staff and determining changes in program services and any special efforts that the Program should pursue. Policy Council meetings are held monthly. The Policy Council consists of parents/guardians of currently enrolled children and members of the community.

Childcare and Mileage Reimbursement

To allow for participation, reimbursement for childcare and mileage is available for members attending RPC and PC meetings, as outlined in the CAPK Governance Childcare and Mileage Reimbursement Policy. Please note childcare is *not* provided at RPC or PC meetings. Reimbursement does not apply for virtual meetings participation.

TRANSITION SERVICES

From Expectant Mother Option to Early Head Start:

A month prior to your child's birth, the Home-based Educator will assist you in determining your baby's future placement in either Home based or the Center-based option. Home-based Educators will assist you in scheduling visits to Early Head Start sites and other childcare settings. After the baby is born, he/she will continue in the Home-based option or transition into a center if space is available.

From Early Head Start to Head Start:

When your child turns 28 months of age, you will receive a letter with information to prepare for their transition to preschool. At 35 months of age, your child's teacher, Home-based Educator, and/or Inclusion Specialist (if the child has an IFSP) will have a transition meeting with you. Staff will take your child to a preschool class to participate in a center activity, if available at your center. Staff can assist you in scheduling visits to pre-school centers in your community if needed.





Staff will assist in completing an application for the Head Start program. Should you choose to have your child waitlisted for our Head Start Program, your child will transition to a pre-school setting as space becomes available.

From Head Start to Kindergarten:




Staff will work very closely with you to prepare your child to transition into kindergarten. Children will have kindergarten transition experiences such as the Cafeteria, School Library, and Kindergarten Classroom Experiences. During the transition to Kindergarten, children have many opportunities to explore a new environment and try new activities to increase School Readiness skills. Staff will provide you with information about enrolling your child into elementary school and summer school programs, where applicable. They will provide you with community resources needed to support smooth transition into Kindergarten.

Celebrations

Our Program recognizes that families value the ability to celebrate their child's achievements, birthdays, and other cultural traditions as part of the classroom community. To keep the celebrations and other milestones developmentally and culturally appropriate; parents/guardians and staff will follow guidelines in planning for celebrations in the classroom. Celebrations must follow the guidelines below:

-  Designed to incorporate parent-child activities and planned primarily by parents with guidance from staff on what is developmentally appropriate and allowable under Head Start policies.
-  Approved by the respective Supervisor.
-  Optional for children and families to participate.
-  Reflective of the ethnic composition, traditions, culture, and interests of children and families.

We will help children celebrate their own special day, such as birthdays, with songs and other activities. If you want to bring a special treat to help celebrate the event, please check with your child's teacher and be sure to adhere to the following nutrition policy:

-  Homemade items are not allowed.
-  Foods must be brought in the original, unopened package.
-  Nutritionally acceptable foods include fresh fruit, yogurt, and 100 % fruit juice drinks.

Year-End Celebrations

End-of-year celebrations will be organized by staff to celebrate children's growth and development. Each program year, families will be invited to fully participate in end-of-the-year activities planned by staff and parents. Preschool graduation events with caps and gowns and related activities have strong significance in many communities, however, this form of graduation event is **not allowable under the Head Start Federal guidelines**. Children and families will experience these types of events when children are older and can better understand and appreciate them.

NOTE: In accordance with State Licensing regulations, siblings of enrolled students are not allowed in classroom settings during volunteering or special events. Please talk to your Site Supervisor for possible arrangements.

GENERAL POLICIES

Signing-In Your Child at School

According to Community Care Licensing and program regulations, children **must** be signed in and out daily. Your child must always be accompanied by someone at least 16 years of age upon entering the classroom. Parents/guardians must sign in the child (initials not allowed) with the exact time of arrival clearly indicated. The person signing in the child must remain with him/her until the child's health check has been completed by teaching staff and he/she has been accepted for the day (see Covid addendum).

Picking-Up your Child from School

Children are only released to authorized persons (must be at least 16 years old) with photo ID, listed on the Consent and Emergency Information form, or have a Court Order. Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining current contact information for individuals authorized to pick up their child or who may be contacted in case of an emergency. If you wish for someone who is not listed on the Consent and Emergency Information form to pick up your child, you must notify the center to provide permission, and last name of the person. This person **MUST** show a photo ID.

Children will not be released to parents or authorized persons who appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance.

Late Child Pick-Up

If you will be late picking up your child, please contact the center immediately. If your child has not been picked up from school after the class has ended, staff will contact authorized persons on the Consent and Emergency Information form to pick up your child. If no one can be reached, and the child is still at the site 30 minutes after it closes, if necessary, the Site Supervisor may call the local Police Department and/or Child Protective Services to report the situation.

If your child is picked up late more than three times, staff will schedule a meeting to identify challenges and brainstorm solutions to pick up your child on time.

Pedestrian Safety

Parents are the most important models of proper pedestrian behavior for children. Through education, parents can provide safety training skills essential to avoid injuries. Children have different abilities to receive information and different learning styles. Adults must expose their children to different scenarios when teaching their children pedestrian safety.

Children should **NOT** be allowed to cross the street alone. Teach them who can help them cross the street safely. You can start teaching pedestrian safety to children by holding their hands and teaching them how to cross the street safely. Pedestrian safety is discussed with parents at our monthly parent meetings and is reinforced by staff.

Attendance

We believe daily attendance is essential. A child should be in school every day for continuity of learning and to receive the most benefit from the Program. Regular attendance is necessary to ensure your child's continued enrollment and for the program's full funding. Please contact the center within one hour of the Program's start time when your child will be absent. If we do not hear from you, staff will contact you by phone to verify your child's absence.

After three consecutive days of unexplained absences, staff will conduct a home visit and complete an attendance plan. If attendance is a challenge for your family, we will help you develop a plan of action to improve

your child’s attendance. If your child’s attendance does not improve, we will make every effort to help you make a smooth transition to another option, space permitting.














We want to work with you for your child’s success, which includes regular attendance. Your child may be disenrolled from the program for excessive absenteeism. We understand there may be times that will prevent you from bringing your child regularly; it is in these cases we ask you to communicate with your child’s teacher to avoid the possibility of disenrollment.

Sporadic Attendance

Sporadic attendance is three or more non-consecutive absences. If your child has sporadic attendance of 3 or more within a month, the Family Service Worker/Family Engagement Specialist will work with you to develop a plan to improve attendance.

Holidays

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

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  New Year’s Day |  Juneteenth |  Christmas Eve |
|  Martin Luther King Jr Day |  Independence Day |  Christmas Day |
|  Lincoln’s Birthday |  Labor Day |  New Year’s Eve |
|  Presidents Day |  Veteran’s Day | |
|  Memorial Day |  Thanksgiving Day | |

Please note that If the Holiday occurs during the weekend, it will be recognized either the Friday before or Monday after the Holiday.

Staff Development

Our centers close during scheduled times throughout the school year to provide our staff professional development. A 30-day notification will be made to parents/guardians prior to the closure dates.

Clothing

Bring your child to school in comfortable clothes. Children will need an extra set of clothes because they will be participating in painting, water, and sand play that may require a change of clothes. Please see your teacher for guidance regarding extra clothing as determined by the individual needs of your child.

For safety, shoes with closed heels and toes or straps in the back and rubber soles are required.

Infants and toddlers: Children under three and their teachers spend a great deal of time on the floor in the classroom. For this reason, teaching staff wears shoe covers, socks, or a different pair of shoes. Children will be asked to remove their shoes when indoors.

Health and Safety

Children are best able to reach their full potential when they are healthy. Our Program has established routines and procedures to ensure that participating children are safe and healthy while in school. All health requirements must be current and up to date within the appropriate timeframes. Your Family Service worker will assist and collaborate with you to keep your child current with all necessary requirements.

Emergency/Disasters

Fire and disaster drills are held regularly at each school site. In case of an emergency or natural disaster, such as an earthquake or fire, all children will follow the School Site Disaster Plan. Children will be kept at the site until a parent/guardian or other authorized adult picks them up. An adult listed on the Consent and Emergency Information will be requested to present picture identification before the child is released.

No Smoking Policy




Our Program prohibits the use of tobacco products under State Law. This prohibition applies to all employees, visitors, and other persons at any center or program-sponsored function.

Discipline Policy

Our Program refrains from any use of corporal or unusual punishment/violation of personal rights. We believe that all children should be treated fairly and respectfully and provided a safe, caring, and nurturing environment. Staff uses positive reinforcement to address challenging behaviors in children. Staff does not use physical, verbal, or emotional abuse as a form of discipline.

Our Program incorporates the Pyramid Model practices to prevent and address behavioral challenges in children. The Pyramid Model is a positive intervention tool and is used to support and promote young children's social and emotional development.




As an agency, we have established the following Program-wide expectations:

-  Be Friendly
-  Be Safe
-  Be Respectful

We have established a multidisciplinary team process to address challenging behaviors in children. Parents/guardians will be expected to participate in developing and implementing a behavior support plan to address children's challenging behaviors. Your involvement in creating and implementing this plan is essential to your child's success.

Mandated Reporting









Under the California Department of Child and Family Services, all staff members 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 are any signs of:


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

Parent/Guardian's Rights

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

As the parent/guardian of a child participating in the Program, you will be:

-  Treated with respect and courtesy.
-  Welcomed in the classroom.
-  Informed regularly about your child's progress.
-  Participating in setting your child's school readiness goals as part of two home visits and two-parent conference opportunities per year.
-  Provided information about your child's individual development and activities you can provide at home to support their learning.
-  Informed of and connected with community services related to health, education, and family life improvement.
-  Encouraged to volunteer in the classroom.
-  Encouraged to participate in a variety of parent training and meetings.

 Informed of and encouraged to participate in decisions affecting the planning and operation of the Program.

Staff work in partnership with the family and community. We value you as the most important influence in your child's life and invite you to become involved in classroom activities, local parent committee meetings, Policy Council, and other special activities and events.

Confidentiality and Records






We are required to collect and maintain information about enrolled children and their families. All information that is obtained orally, in writing, or through observations is considered confidential.

The staff has access to confidential information solely to provide comprehensive services to children and families on a "need to know" basis. We follow all release of procedural information safeguards outlined in the provisions of Federal and State Administrative Codes: Health Insurance Portability and Private Act (HIPAA), 2003; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 1974; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), 2004; and Head Start Performance Standards (1301, 1304, 1305, and 1308).

Parent Admission Agreement



Each Center-based parent/guardian is provided with a copy of the Parent Admission Agreement and asked to review and sign it. The agreement asks parents/guardians to make commitments, give permission for their child's participation, and acknowledge other rights and responsibilities as parents/guardians.

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

-  Teachers and agency staff providing services to the family.
-  Those for whom the parent/family has provided a written and signed "Release of Information."
-  Representatives of funding source and Community Care Licensing (CCL).
-  Appropriate authorities to comply with a subpoena or other court-order without prior written consent from the enrolled parent.
-  The child's parent/guardian or authorized representative who has submitted a prior written request to review their family file.

Visitation and Security

We practice an "open-door" policy; all parents and guardians of enrolled children are encouraged to visit and participate in our many activities while observing the following:

-  All visitors must sign in at the front desk each time they visit the site.
-  Visitors accompanying you will be asked to wait in the lobby while you are visiting the center or while dropping off or picking up your child.

Parent Conduct

Verbal or physical misconduct is a violation of the State Education Code, which protects teachers and children in these situations. Please refrain from loud and abusive conduct around staff and children. Anyone engaging in such behavior will be asked to leave the facility immediately and may be subject to legal repercussions. Law enforcement will be contacted if needed.

Communication with Parents



Parents are expected to participate in two home visits and two-parent conferences each school year. Home visits must be conducted in families' homes or another safe location at the parent's request. The teaching staff will schedule the home visits and conferences with you to discuss your child's classroom experiences and developmental progress and set school readiness goals. It is important that open communication between

parents and teachers is ongoing. If you have specific concerns that may need additional time with the teacher, it is important to know that it is challenging for the teacher to address your concerns during class time. If you feel that you will need more time, please schedule a date and time to talk to your teacher to give you his/her full support.

Identifying and Resolving Concerns

All concerns will be addressed with respect and confidentiality according to the Agency’s grievance procedure. If you have concerns, we ask that all attempts be made to resolve them first through direct feedback and problem-solve with the staff and supervisors involved.

Starting at the classroom or home-based level, the parent addresses his/her concern with the Teacher/Home - based Educator by:

-  Describing precisely what has occurred, when it occurred, and why it is a concern.
-  If the parent believes that the concern has not been addressed, the matter is taken to the Supervisor if related to the teaching/Home-based staff.

If the Supervisor or the parent feel the concern has not been addressed, the Supervisor will consult with the Manager and schedule a meeting to bring a positive outcome. The Manager will keep the Director informed on the status of these concerns.

It is our priority to bring resolution to any concern or complaint shared. All communications will be kept confidential.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING STATE-BLENDED CLASSES

Eligibility

Eligibility can be based on either child or family eligibility. Parents/guardians must provide a verifiable document of eligibility in one or more of these categories:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Child Protective Services/At risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. |  McKinney-Vento Eligible (homelessness) |
|  Current Aid Recipient. |  Income Eligibility. |

A family’s adjusted gross income cannot exceed the income ceiling guidelines established by the CDE at the time of enrollment, except for Child Protective Services children.

Family Size

Parents/guardians requesting services through Head Start/State Child Development are required to provide documentation of the reported family size. Documentation includes at least one of the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Birth Certificates |  Child custody court orders |
|  Adoption documents |  Legal document of Foster Care Placement |
|  County welfare department records | |

Need for Service (Full-day, Full-year Program only)

Need is established at initial certification. Services are certified for no less than 12 months. When requesting full-day services, parents/guardians counted in the family size must meet at least one of these categories:

-  Employment
-  Incapacitation
-  Seeking Employment
-  McKinney-Vento Eligible
-  Vocational Training
-  Welfare to Work Activities (CalWORKs program)
-  Engaged in an Educational Program
-  Permanent Housing

**Families whose eligibility criteria is CPS or At-Risk are not required to meet a "need" criteria.*

Verification of Documentation

Any documentation submitted to Head Start/State Child Development to establish eligibility and need for services is subject to verification. Parents/guardians are required to complete a Release of Information Form for this reason.

12-Month Eligibility








The need and/or eligibility information provided during the certification process is used to authorize services for no less than 12 months.

The Requirement to Report Change: When a family's calculated adjusted monthly income exceeds the 85% of the Standard Medium Income (SMI) threshold for the verified family size, it is the family's responsibility to notify the Program within 30 calendar days of this change.

Right to Voluntarily Report a Change: A family may report a change at any point during the 12-month period if the change to the family can increase service days/hours or a reduction in fees.




Family Monthly Fee (Full-day, Full-year Program only)

According to the fee schedule prepared by the California Department of Education, family fees may be assessed based on family size and income.

-  Fees are collected monthly prior to providing service; are non-refundable; are due by the first business day of the month; and are considered delinquent if not paid in full within seven (7) calendar days of their due date.
-  Families will be notified of unpaid fees via a Notice of Action (NOA).
-  Fees must be paid by personal check, cashier's check, or money orders, payable to "Community Action Partnership of Kern."
-  Fees may be mailed or paid at the CAPK main office at 5005 Business Park North, Bakersfield, CA 93309.
-  A receipt for fees is issued. The parent should retain the receipt for income tax purposes.
-  A family fee credit may be granted, equal to the amount paid another childcare provider when a family's childcare needs cannot be fully met through CAPK's childcare programs. A childcare receipt must be presented to be granted the credit. The maximum credit allowed per month will be the equivalent of one month's family fees.
-  A Childcare Provider receipt is available through CAPK.

Notice of Action

A Notice of Action (NOA), Application for Services, must be issued within 30 days of a parent's/guardian's signature on the EESD 9600 Application for Services. NOA, Recipient of Services, must be issued when changes are made to the service agreement. Changes include:

-  Update to the CD9600.
-  Decrease in fees.
-  Increase in certified childcare hours.
-  Family has not provided requested information to recertify services.
-  Family is delinquent in fees.

**The back of the NOA describes the Rights of Appeal for a parent should they disagree with the agency's decision.*

Appeal Process

If you disagree with a decision stated in the Notice of Action (NOA), you may appeal the intended action. To protect the right to appeal, you must follow the instructions as described below. If you do not respond by the required due dates or fail to submit the necessary appeal information with the appeal request, it will be considered abandoned.

Step 1: Complete the appeal information found on the reverse side of the Notice of Action.

Step 2: Mail or deliver the written local hearing request within 14 calendar days of receipt to Community Action Partnership of Kern, 5005 Business Park North, Bakersfield, CA 93309.

Step 3: Within 10 calendar days following CAPK's receipt of the appeal request, the agency will contact you to establish a date and time for the hearing. You, or an authorized representative, are required to attend the hearing. If you or the authorized representative do not attend the hearing, you abandon the right to appeal, and the action of the agency will be implemented.

Step 4: Within 10 calendar days following the hearing, CAPK will mail or deliver the written decision to you.

If you disagree with the local hearing's final decision, you may ask for a review with the CDE. To request a review, the parent must write a letter explaining why they feel CAPK's decision is incorrect. The request consists of the guardian's letter, a copy of the NOA, and a copy of CAPK's decision letter. The request must be received within 14 calendar days from the date on the written decision letter.

Mail or fax the review request to:

CSPP

California Department of Education
Early Education and Care Division
Attn: Appeals Coordinator
1430 N. Street, Suite 3401
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 322-1273 / **Fax:** (916) 323-6853
Email: ELCDappeals@cde.ca.gov

CCTR & CMIG




California Department of Social Services
Child Care and Development Division
Attn: Appeals Coordinator
744 P Street, MS 9-8-351
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (833) 559-2420 / **Fax:** (916) 654-1048
Email: CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov

Attendance and Records






The CDE and Community Care Licensing require attendance records and daily attendance tracking. The parent or an authorized representative must record the child's actual arrival time and departure daily with a full, legal signature.

If your child is not going to be at school on a day they are scheduled to attend, please contact the center to report your child's absence prior to or within an hour of the start of class.

Upon returning to class, you must:

-  Ensure that the reason for the absence(s) is noted on the Attendance Record.
-  If the child's absence was due to an illness, the reason for absence should specify who was ill (child or parent).
-  Sign, with a full legal signature, next to each reason.

From time to time, your child may need to miss a day of school. Each child is given a maximum of ten (10) Best Interest/Excused days per year. These include any one of the following:






-  Vacation.
-  Visiting relative or friend.
-  Attending school program/field trip of sibling.
-  Religious observance, holiday, or ceremony.
-  Any absence the guardian determines to be in the best interest of the child/family.

After ten (10) Best Interest days are used, additional absences in the Best Interest categories are considered Unexcused. There is a maximum of 10 Unexcused absences allowed per program year.

Staff will make every effort to work with you to offer support and develop a plan if you are experiencing challenges affecting your child's attendance.

Disenrollment

We are committed to serving eligible families in our programs. In certain circumstances, it may not be possible to offer or continue providing services. Families may be disenrolled from services for any of the following circumstances:

-  Failure to comply with agency policies, state, federal, or Community Care Licensing regulations.
-  Excessive unexcused absences.
-  Abusive or threatening behavior towards children, staff, volunteers, or anyone who enters the center.
-  Failure to report income changes that exceed the 85% SMI threshold.
-  Knowingly and willfully providing inaccurate eligibility information.