

# NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE ASSOCIATION

# PARENT HANDBOOK

*Head Start Programs  
welcome you!*



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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Our Parent Handbook helps families understand our Head Start Program services.

We are a private, non-profit organization funded by federal and state governments.

***We're looking forward to partnering with you!***

**Important Notes:** Throughout the Parent Handbook, the term "parent" is used in the broadest sense of the word. In this context, we include biological, step and adoptive parents, foster/resource parents, kinship/caretaker relatives, legal guardians, and domestic partners of the parent or any other adult living with a child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.

The term "Head Start Program" refers to any program under the Head Start Act, including "Head Start Preschool" (ages three to school-age) and "Early Head Start" (pregnant people and ages birth to three).



# CEO MESSAGE



**Rudolph A. Johnson, III**  
**President/CEO**

Enrolled in a Head Start Program when he was a young child in Southeast San Diego, President and CEO of Neighborhood House Association, Rudolph A. Johnson, III, has a personal commitment to the children and families in Head Start Programs.

I saw an opportunity to give back to the community that had given me so much as a child. To come full circle as the CEO of an organization that helped jumpstart my life as a toddler is something very near and dear to me.

NHA is proud of the many vital programs and services we provide to San Diego County. We've accomplished many things and I look forward to continuing to make NHA strong for the children, families, individuals and seniors who depend on us. ***Together we can make a difference.***

*Welcome to Head Start Program/Early Education and Support Division and the Neighborhood House Association, an agency committed to excellence!*

# GM MESSAGE



**Damon R. Carson, J.D.**  
**Executive Vice-President &**  
**General Manager**

## ***Thank you and congratulations on being a part of the NHA Family!***

That you are part of our continuum of care model through your family's participation in our Early Learning programs means a great deal to our NHA team. Whether it's through Services for Expectant Families, Early Head Start, Head Start Preschool, or our State Funded Programs (CDE/CDSS), you've made the best decision to invest in your child's education. As a former Head Start Program child, I know the results of providing children from low-to-moderate income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs.

Please embrace our philosophy that you are the most important teacher that your child will ever have. We may have your children for a few years, but you have the opportunity to teach them lessons that will last a lifetime. That's why it's important for you to take advantage of opportunities to participate in our program. Whether through volunteering in a classroom, attending a site meeting, or even joining our governing body, you have a chance to do a little or a lot. *We hope you do a lot!*

The Handbook was developed as a tool to help you navigate and enhance your early childhood experience. Our ultimate goal is to do what's reasonably possible to provide many great experiences for our children and families. Please review the table of contents to get an understanding of what's included in the Handbook.

We're providing useful information that will support our journey together in preparing your child for success in school and life. *Welcome!*

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Please see our NHA website for a detailed list and map of our Head Start Program Centers,  
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# NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE ASSOCIATION VISION & MISSION

## Vision

Healthy and educated communities—where dreams become reality



## Mission

To enrich lives through a continuum of education and wellness services



**“A Neighbor You Can Count on...Since 1914”**

# PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

*We believe...*

**Parents are their children's first and most important teachers.  
We're partners in supporting expectant parents  
and those with young children.**

**Together, we promote learning and development through  
healthy, nurturing relationships and playful,  
stimulating learning environments.**

**We respect and honor family structures,  
cultures, and languages, and when helpful, link families to  
community resources to enhance family strengths.**

**OUR PARTNERSHIP LEADS TO THRIVING CHILDREN,  
FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.**





# A “PROGRAM OF **EXCELLENCE**”

## 2023 - 2025

Neighborhood House Association Head Start program is extremely proud to be newly minted as a Program of Excellence by the **National Head Start Association.**

“Receiving the Program of Excellence designation reflects the dedication, innovation, and passion of their entire team,” said NHTA’s Executive Director Yasmina Vinci. “They are, without doubt, role models for the entire Head Start community and (we) are thrilled to shine a national spotlight on their ability to consistently deliver high-quality services, build on and exceed their goals, and—most importantly—meet children, families, and communities with life-changing programming and support.”



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

WHAT  
ARE

## EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS?



**Early Head Start** programs are also federally funded.

**Early Head Start** programs promote healthy outcomes for expectant families and those with infants and toddlers, from birth to 3 years old, by providing comprehensive child development and family support services.

Early childhood care and education services are available at select **Early Head Start** centers and in families' homes. Families partner with either a teacher or a home visitor, depending upon the family's preference.





# WHAT **HEAD START PRESCHOOL** ARE **PROGRAMS?**

**Head Start Preschool** programs are federally funded child development and social services programs for children 3 to 5 years old and their families.

Children and their families receive comprehensive services at our **Head Start Preschool** program centers or in their homes.

Think education, health, nutrition, dental, development, behavior, and family supports.

We partner with our local school districts and other community agencies to provide supportive services for those in need.

Family goal setting, community resources, and parent trainings are provided to help families improve financial and educational self-sufficiency, as well as their overall well-being.



# PROGRAM OPTIONS

We offer various program options to meet the needs of the families we serve:

## **Early Learning Centers**

Our early learning centers provide full-day care and education services for children ages 6 weeks through 5 years. Teachers and family support staff at the centers are the primary providers of services. Some of our centers are funded through Office of Head Start and the CA Departments of Education and Social Services.

## **Home-Based Programs**

Our home-based programs provide expectant parents and/or young children and their families weekly home visits with a qualified parent educator who provides comprehensive services in the comfort of a family's home. As children's "first and most important teachers", parents gain new ways to strengthen their families and help their children grow and develop. Home-based families also get together two times a month for fun learning events that we call "socializations". We partner with families from pregnancy to children through five years of age.



[www.neighborhoodhouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org)

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Head Start is a strong national model for family advocacy and leadership. Parents hold key roles in Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start programs. We engage families as advocates and leaders in program activities, particularly through parent committees and Policy Council. Parents participate in decision-making and policy development.

Volunteer, join a parent meeting, or share your culture and talents in our program! Read a book, teach a song in your language, plant a garden, help make programmatic decisions, or learn new things at a training.

***As trusted partners, we invite you to identify strengths, needs, and interests, and to develop family goals. When we work together, our children thrive!***

### **More Opportunities:**

Ask your Head Start Program Site Supervisor or Program Assistant/ Family Engagement (PAPE) about the following Family Engagement opportunities: Center Parent Committee, Parent Advisory Committee, Health and Mental Health Advisory Committee, Policy Council, Family Engagement, and Father Engagement events.

### **What Head Start Says:**

Through community partnerships, Head Start Programs build collaborative relationships with community organizations to support positive child and family outcomes. These may include libraries, health centers, schools and school districts, sources of economic support, higher education, human services agencies, faith-based organizations, businesses, and others.





# NHA School Readiness Goals

## Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



### Social and Emotional Development:

Children will understand more about their own and other people's feelings and actions, and will participate in copying, pretending, and role-play with others during play.



### Language and Literacy:

Children will communicate with others through pointing and other non-verbal gestures, and increasingly with words. Children will become more interested in literacy through activities such as looking at books, listening to an adult reading, pretending to read, singing songs, rhyming, listening and telling stories, drawing pictures, and acting out a story.



### Approaches to Learning:

Children will, with the support of a familiar adult if needed, use their personal skills such as self-comfort and self-control of feelings to manage their behavior so they can attend to learning.



### Cognition:

Children will know more about the real, natural world around them and increase their understanding of measurement.



### Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development:

Children will stay physically healthy by practicing health and safety routines, and by participating in personal care such as dressing self.



July 2023, NHA Training & Staff Development

For Head Start programs, school readiness means “children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.” Head Start programs view school readiness as children gaining knowledge, skills, and attitude for success in kindergarten and for later learning. With support, all children can be successful learners

We promote children's school readiness in the areas of social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and communication, literacy, cognition, mathematics development, scientific reasoning, movement, and physical development. School readiness support services are family-oriented, address children's developmental goals, and link families to community resources.



## *Staff Development*

Strengthening our early childhood workforce is a priority. Staff are offered a variety of learning opportunities, for example, coaching and mentoring, workshops and conferences, onsite college courses, on-line early education course work, and peer learning groups. Professional development plans are created to guide each staff person's individual professional development.

## *High Quality Environments*

We provide high quality, safe, and healthy learning environments for infants, toddlers and preschool age children, and well-equipped space for staff. The **Environmental Rating Scales** is a tool we use to assess space and furnishings, personal care routines, language, learning activities, interactions, program structure, parent engagement, community resources, and staff professional growth.

## *Developmental Assessments*

Teachers use the **Desired Results Developmental Profile** to assess children's growth and development. The DRDP informs staff and parents of the child's progress and provides information for lesson planning of each child's individualized learning activities. Similarly, our home visitors partner with parents using the **Child Observation Record** to help parents understand and promote their child's development.

## *Monitoring for Quality*

We are committed to offering high-quality services and regularly visit each classroom in NHA-operated and subrecipient agency centers to monitor for this. The Quality Assurance team is made up of professionals who are knowledgeable in early childhood education, health, nutrition, social services, parent engagement, and disabilities. They give us reports that identify both strengths and opportunities for growth, the latter of which are readily addressed to ensure high quality services.



# FAMILY PLEDGE



***I am my child's first teacher! I will support my child, to build the skill required for success in school and life. I will:***

**1. Bring my child to school every day.**

- Attending school on a regular basis helps my child learn, expanding knowledge and skills.

**2. Stick to a daily routine.**

- A predictable and consistent schedule helps my child to feel secure. Daily routines help my child understand what is expected and improves behavior.

**3. Provide my child with nutritious and healthy snacks.**

- Healthy food helps children grow and learn. I will allow my child to help plan, shop for, and prepare healthy meals. I will talk about the meals eaten at school and encourage my child to try new foods.

**4. Keep my child physically active.**

- Regular exercise helps my child build strong muscles and bones, prevents childhood obesity, and increases my child's self-esteem. I will encourage and join in active movement and play with my child.

**5. Read to my child each day.**

- Reading to my child helps them to build vocabulary, recognize words in print and develop a love for reading. When reading to my child, I will encourage questions and discuss the story together.

**6. Listen and talk to my child and be curious about their discoveries.**

- Simple conversations help build vocabulary and my child's ability to express thoughts and feelings. I will ask open-ended questions and listen to my child's responses.

**7. Make sure that my child gets enough sleep each day.**

- Infants need between 12-16 hours of sleep each day, toddlers need between 11-14, and preschoolers need between 11-13, including nap times. Lack of sleep can affect my child's growth and behavior, impact motor skills and concentration, and lead to poor performance in school.

**8. Play learning games and activities with my child.**

- Playing supports my child's academic, physical, and social-emotional skill development. I will play games, explore, and try new activities with my child. I will limit my child's exposure to television and electronic devices such as cell phones and computers.

**9. Take my child to the dentist and doctor for regular exams and complete any needed treatment.**

- Regular medical and dental visits ensure that my child's health needs are met and provide me the opportunity to ask questions about my child's behavior, health, or development.

**10. Participate in Family Engagement opportunities.**

- When I am involved in my child's school, I learn more about what my child is learning and I have better communication with the school staff.

[www.neighborhoodhouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org)

# ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW!

01

## MAKE GOOD ATTENDANCE A HABIT

By attending early education services on-time and daily, young children build the routines, habits, and skills needed for success in school. They are more likely to be successful in higher education, work, and life in general, too.

02

## BOOST BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Between birth and age 5, 90% of a child's brain develops. Every interaction, such as talking, singing, reading, and playing, stimulates their growing brains and sets the stage for future learning, behavior, and relationships.

03

## KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY

Children living in poverty are 2-3 more times likely to be chronically absent (18 or more days!) and they face the most harm from this. To prevent illness, develop healthy habits like washing hands, getting enough rest, and eating nutritious foods. Unless truly sick, bring your child to preschool.

04

## PREPARATION IS KEY

- Create bedtime and morning routines
- Have a backup plan for transportation
- Ask trusted friends and relatives for help, when needed
- Schedule appointments and family trips to avoid absences
- Use "Keep Me Home If" to guide decision-making about illness (pg. 22 )

05

## CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Partner with your child's teacher every step of the way!

[www.neighborhoodhouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org)



# COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY SERVICES

**Resilient kids, strong families, and a thriving workforce are what we aim for!**

Life can be hard at times, so we need to take care of our minds, bodies, and spirits to handle whatever comes our way. Our top priority is building resilience and overall wellbeing because when we take care of ourselves, we can better care for others.

**We focus on five key areas of wellness:  
physical and mental health, finances,  
purpose, community, and relationships.**

Workshops, socializations, and exercise sessions are just a few examples of what we offer to help grow in these areas. We also provide support to children, families, and teachers to manage stress and address challenging behaviors in the classroom, as well as helping parents with challenges at home.

Creating a culture of wellness takes time and care. We're here to build upon your strengths, support you on your journey, and help you set goals for yourself and your family...

*EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.*

# Medical & Dental



## Health & Wellness Screenings

With parent permission, our staff and community partners help with wellness screenings for children enrolled in our program, including: vision, hearing, height, weight, blood pressure and dental.



## Connections to Care

It's important for families to feel confident their physician or dentist meets their child's unique needs. We offer referrals to clinics and specialists in the community to ensure each child receives high-quality medical and dental care.



## Care in the Classroom

Children grow and change rapidly! If new health or dental concerns arise, our team works with families to create individual care plans to ensure health and safety in the classroom for every child.

# Nutrition



## Meals & Snacks

We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Our Central Kitchen has a team of professionals to design a menu of fresh, fun foods that give children the nutrients they need to grow and play. Meals are free of charge to participants and we offer foods from a variety of cultures, giving children the opportunity to try new foods and flavors!



## Family Style Meals

We use the “offer” method for meals, which means we allow children to serve themselves a portion of each item. With support, children learn to serve food and pour liquids. They listen to their body’s hunger cues to tell them when they are hungry and full, as well as develop fine and gross motor skills, and learn to socialize during meals.



## Nutrition Consultation & Special Meals

Nutrition plays a big role in a child’s growth! If families are seeking information about a health condition or need, our Registered Dietitian can help. If a child has dietary restrictions or needs different types of food, our team will provide special meal accommodations upon request and ensure any allergens are avoided during meal and snack times.

View our menu:

<https://www.neighborhoodhouse.org/nha-programs/nutrition-services>

# Our Health Protocols

## Contagious Disease Management

It's important that families are made aware of any risk of contagious disease in a timely manner. We will inform parents of a confirmed case of an infectious disease in their child's classroom. We follow all Community Care Licensing reporting protocols and recommended public health policies related to infectious disease management.

## Daily Health Check

When you arrive each day, we will screen your child for any signs of illness. This includes but is not limited to: *fever, cough, runny nose or congestion, stomach ache, diarrhea, vomiting, open sores, rash or other indicators* of an infectious disease. If your child is ill, our team will advise you on next steps to ensure your child receives care for their symptoms and can return to school ready to learn!

## Keep Me Home If...



<p>I'm vomiting</p> <p>2 or more times in 24 hours</p>	<p>I have diarrhea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 loose/watery stools more than normal for child in 24 hours; OR</li> <li>• Any blood or mucus in stool</li> </ul>	<p>I have a rash, sores, lice, ringworm, or scabies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rash (requiring ointment or medication)</li> <li>• Cold sores</li> <li>• Skin lesions in the secretion stage</li> <li>• Pink Eye</li> <li>• Live head lice</li> <li>• Chicken Pox, Ringworm, or Scabies</li> </ul>	<p>I have a fever and/or cold symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature of 100.4°F or higher</li> <li>• Swollen glands</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Persistent cough</li> <li>• Congestion</li> <li>• Abnormal nasal mucus</li> <li>• Headache or earache</li> <li>• Stomach pain</li> </ul>	<p>I'm just not feeling very good</p> <p>Unusually tired, low activity level, pale, lack of appetite, cranky, or crying more than normal</p>
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## When your child is sick:

1. Have plans for back up child care
2. Contact your Center and notify them of child's absence.

# Family and Community Engagement

Parents and families are essential to their child's education and development. We respect the strengths, culture, and backgrounds of each. By working together, we can create a supportive and inclusive environment where your child can thrive.

The **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework** helps us strengthen the partnership between families, staff, and the community:

- **Parenting:** Parents are their child's first and most important teachers. We provide resources, workshops, and support to help you understand your child's growth and development, and encourage healthy, positive parenting practices.
- **Childhood Development:** We support your child's early learning and development through nurturing care and activities that promote physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth. We also offer guidance on age-appropriate milestones.
- **Family Well-Being:** Family well-being is crucial for a child's success. We offer referrals and support to connect with community resources that can help address challenges your family may be facing, such as housing, healthcare, or employment.
- **Family Engagement in Transitions:** Change can be challenging. Whether it's starting Head Start Preschool, joining a new classroom, or getting ready for kindergarten, we provide support and resources to help children and families with transitions.
- **Community Engagement:** We believe in building strong connection. We encourage families to get involved in community activities and events and provide opportunities to share your skills, knowledge, and talents to enrich our program.

**We aim to create a partnership where parents are empowered and supported in their role as their child's first and most important teacher.**

**Together, we can provide a nurturing learning environment that helps children and families thrive.**

\*Applicants and Head Start parents/guardians with Limited English Proficiency have the right to free language assistance upon request.



## Mental Health

Our goal is to help build positive mental health. We work to help children, parents, and staff manage stress, increase social-emotional skills, and reduce challenging behavior.

Social-emotional development is the foundation of all learning. Each site is assigned a program specialist, overseen by a licensed mental health professional, who can work with staff to support all children's social-emotional learning.

When needed and with parent permission, we also work with families, teachers, and outside service providers to help support children in being more successful at home, too.

We also provide workshops for both staff and families on mental wellness, including topics such as social-emotional development, positive discipline, stress-management, and Trauma-Informed Care. We help connect families with mental health resources, as needed.

## Family Support

At some point, all families need support. Families may need help with stress, health issues, unemployment, or difficulty paying bills. We provide support and referrals to community resources. Please speak with your teacher, home visitor, family service advocate, or site supervisor for resources and referrals!

Families may qualify for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, which provides benefits to purchase nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, and nutrition counseling to eligible pregnant and postpartum women and children up to age 5. We provide WIC informational brochures upon request.

For free community resources, families can also contact [www.211sandiego.org](http://www.211sandiego.org) or dial 2-1-1. 211 is available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and provides assistance for food, employment, health, housing and transportation, as well as over-the-phone help in completing Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and Prescription Assistance applications.



## Disabilities & Participation

We welcome children and families, with and without disabilities, providing learning environments that:

- Promote participation of everyone—children, families, and the community;
- Foster connections by building relationships among children, families, and the community;
- Acknowledge and celebrate the uniqueness of each person.

To achieve these goals, we actively recruit and enroll children with varying abilities and needs, tailoring curriculum and facilitating access to specialized services. Our staff collaborates closely with families to support service requests and resource access. Additionally, we provide training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities for both parents and staff, while actively engaging in agency-specific and community-wide initiatives.

If your child receives services through the San Diego Regional Center, local school districts, or has providers offering speech therapy or other specialized support at home, please share this information with your child's teacher. We will work together to tailor services to meet your child's and family's needs. If you have any concerns about your child's development, please don't hesitate to reach out.





## Classroom Policies For NHA Operated Programs– Head Start Programs/CDE/CDSS

### Attendance

Daily attendance is important for young children to make friends, learn daily routines, and develop skills that will help them succeed in school and throughout life. Children who are frequently absent miss key opportunities that help them become good citizens and valued employees.

**We miss your child when they do not attend.  
Please bring them to school each day they are well!**

#### Excused Absences

1. Best Interest of the Child/Vacation  
(Maximum of 10 days per year July 1-June 30)
2. Court Ordered Visitation
3. Health Reasons, Illness or Quarantine
4. A Family Emergency that makes it difficult for the child to attend

#### Best Interest of the Child

“Best Interest of the Child” absences include family vacation, non-court ordered time with parent, time with relatives, family friends, religious or cultural events or family celebrations. A Best Interest of the Child Absence is considered excused when the parent has notified the center in advance that the child will be absent. Vacation is included in the ten (10) total Best Interest days per program year (July 1-June 30).

#### Court Ordered Visitation

Court ordered visitation is only excusable in the event that the court has issued a judgment/court order declaring when the child will visit the other parent. The court order must be on file. A mediation agreement is not a court order.

## Health/Illness/Quarantine

Your child may be excused from school due to health, illness or quarantine of the enrolled child or parent. For example, if a sibling is sick, the enrolled child may not have an excused absence.

If your child is sick with the following symptoms, we ask that you please keep them home: fever of 100° degrees or more; nausea; vomiting or severe stomach pain; diarrhea; frequent, loose or watery stools; sore throat; acute cold or persistent cough; earache; red, inflamed or infected eye(s); swollen glands around the jaws, eyes or neck; live head or body lice; skin lesion in the weeping stage; and any other symptoms suggesting acute illness.



If your child's absence is due to communicable illness, written documentation from the child's doctor will be requested stating that the child may return to school.

## Unexcused Absences

Any absence other than those described above as "excused absences" are considered unexcused. For CCTR/EHS, families are still responsible for family fees regardless of attendance.

## Birthdays

Birthday invitations are to be mailed unless the entire class is being invited. This is simply to avoid hurt feelings that can occur at this young age. If you need an address, please leave a note for that parent in their child's cubby, asking them to provide this information for you. Children may not bring birthday treats to share in class.



## Clothing

Dirt, water, paint, or a combination of these things are an important part of the learning process. Children leave school with evidence of a good day! Please send them in clothing that is comfortable and practical.



Many activities involve climbing, kicking balls, riding bikes, and running. Please protect your child's feet with rubber-soled shoes to avoid slipping. Tennis shoes are best. **NO SANDALS OR JELLIES MAY BE WORN ANY DAY.**

Accidents do happen. Please keep a change of clothes that is ALWAYS weather-appropriate in your child's cubby, marking all items with your child's name. When an accident occurs, please return a fresh change of clothes the following day so we do not have to call for an immediate change of clothes.

## Cubbies

Each child has their own cubby to keep belongings in. Please check this each night for artwork, papers, notes, or other items that may need to go home.

## Discipline

Constructive methods will always be used for group discipline and to help with individual behaviors. Corporal punishment and other humiliating or frightening techniques will not be used.

We strive to help children continue to develop in self-regulation and self-control. We define the established limits so that they know what is expected of them. Rules are lovingly, consistently, and firmly enforced.

As much as possible, we use logical consequences as discipline. For example, if a child is playing in the block area and throws blocks, the blocks may be removed from the block area. A child who is exhibiting challenging behavior may be given a brief opportunity to practice deep breathing, learning calming and self-control skills.

We use the following methods during the learning process:

- Remind the child of the limits
- Redirect the child before they cross limits
- Reinforce positive behavior
- Remove the child from an activity



A parent conference may occur in case of very challenging behavior.

## Lesson Plans

Weekly lesson planning involves teachers reflecting on how children responded to experiences and activities in previous weeks, their interests, family feedback, and learning goals of individual children. Lesson Plans are posted in the classroom after being approved by the Site Supervisor and are sent to parents upon request.

## Notices

All notices are sent home or posted on the door or next to the Sign-In/Sign-Out clipboard. It is the parent's responsibility to check their child's cubby daily.

## Lost and Found

From time-to-time, mix-ups occur. Occasionally, one child goes home with another's jacket, toy, or other item. If your child should accidentally take something that does not belong to them, please return it as soon as possible. Please label all items, including coats, sweatshirts, and sweaters.



# SIGN-IN AND OUT POLICIES

Parents **must** sign their children in and out each day, using their full legal signature and the correct time. Sign In and Out documents will be used by the State to monitor program compliance.

Children **must** be picked up at the agreed upon time. Failure to be consistent in this may result in a refusal of center services. The child may be transferred to a more appropriate program option, such as Home-Based.

Should an emergency arise, please take the following steps:

1. In accordance with the *NHA Late Drop Off and Pick Up Policy*, if a parent is unable to pick up the child on time, the parent must make arrangements with an authorized adult who is on the emergency card to pick up the child.
2. If the authorized adult is not on the emergency card to pick up the child, the parent must first call and identify that alternate person's first and last name with a physical description of the adult picking up the child.
3. The parent is to give the center a password that the alternate person will give to the center's staff. The staff person taking the call will write down the password in the child's file. A new password must be given each time an alternate person picks up the child.
4. The alternate person **must show identification**, have the full name of the child and the child's classroom number, which will be compared to the Children's Log that is located in each Site Supervisor's office. The alternate person must also know the password.

The parent may also fax written authorization to the center, including the full name and physical description of the person they are authorizing to pick up the child, the parent's signature, and the date.





## DROP-OFF, PICK-UP, AND MANDATED REPORTING

### **Drop-Off**

We expect your child to arrive at school on time every day, per your contract hours. It is important that you bring your child to school on time every day so that they can receive the full benefit of the school day. If a child is regularly being dropped off late, the child may be transferred to a more appropriate program option, such as Home-Based.

### **Pick-Up**

It is important that children are picked up promptly when their contract hours end each day. Emergency contacts will be called for any child who is not picked up by the end of contract hours. If staff are unable to reach an authorized adult, the police may be contacted to take custody of the child. If a child is regularly picked up late, the child may be transferred to a more appropriate program option, such as Home-Based. Center staff will not release a child to anyone who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances (including recreational drugs).

***If there are any changes to your emergency contacts during the program year, you must make these in person with center staff who will update your emergency card information.***

### **Mandated Reporters for Suspected or Known Child Abuse**

California law states that all employees of childcare centers are mandated reporters of child abuse. We are required by law to immediately report any known or suspected instance of child abuse, including neglect, to a child protective agency immediately.

California law defines child abuse as, "A child is physically injured by other than accidental means. A child is subjected to willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment. A child is neglected by a parent or caretaker who fails to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision."





# WHAT IS THE CA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES?

**The CA Department of Education and Social Services** is an early childhood care and education program for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers funded by the CA Department of Education (CDE) and CA Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Children eligible for CDE and CDSS (preschool-aged children 3-4 years old and infant/toddlers 6 weeks - 3 years of age) are enrolled in classrooms and NHA "braids" CDE and Head Start Programs/CDSS and Early Head Start funds to allow for a full-day (more than 6 hours daily) of comprehensive child development and family services.



# CA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES (CDE/CDSS)

## **CCTR - General Child Care & Development - CA Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Care and Development Division (CCDD)**

For infants and toddlers (6 weeks through 36 months), the CCTR program is a full-day, full-year program designed to meet the needs of parents with low incomes who are working, looking for a job, going to school, and/or are in vocational training. Families must meet income eligibility and establish a need for service.

[Information  
on CCTR](#)

## **CSPP - California State Preschool Program - CA Department of Education (CDE), Early Education Division (EED)**

For preschool-age children (3 & 4 years old), the CSPP program offers child development and education services for 3 hours a day. The remainder of their day is spent in the Head Start Preschool program. This arrangement allows us to provide a third teacher in the classroom in the morning, and in some cases, provide longer hours of care for parents who are working and/or going to school. Age 3 is determined by the local school district as any child whose birthday occurs on or before September 1.

[Information on  
CSPP](#)



## CCTR & CSPP Eligibility According To Priority

Families are ranked on the waiting list according to priority, and are not ranked on a first come first serve basis. Priority is given to a family/child in the following order:

- **CCTR – General Child Care & Development Families with children 6 weeks to 36 months old who have need (school, work, job or housing search, etc.)**
  - *First:* Children who are recipients of CPS/Children at Risk
  - *Second:* Families with the lowest documented family income under/at 85% of State Median Income (SMI).
- **CSPP – CA State Preschool Program Part-Day Families with children 3 to 5 years old.**

When the CSPP contractor is also a Head Start Program recipient or subrecipient agency or has a signed collaboration agreement with a Head Start Program recipient or subrecipient agency, the contractor shall utilize the CSPP waiting list in conjunction with the Head Start Program waiting list and enroll children in the following priority order:

- **1st priority** shall be given to CSPP age eligible children that have been identified at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation or who are receiving child protective services;
- **2nd priority** shall be given to all three- and four-year-old children with disabilities from families with incomes below the income eligibility threshold. This priority is for children with disabilities that are enrolling in CSPP after the percentage of funded enrollment set-aside pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of EC 8208 is filled;
- **3rd priority** shall be given to CSPP age eligible three- and four-year-old children Head Start Program income guidelines, and have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent income ranking schedule adopted by the SSPI;
- **4th priority** Head Start Program income guidelines, and have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent income ranking schedule adopted by the SSPI; and that meet applicable Head Start Program priorities as stipulated in the Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance requirements (45 CFR Section 1305).

## CCTR & CSPP Definition of Family

The definition of family used by the CA State Department of Education is, “the parents and the children for whom the parents are responsible, who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living.” A parent is defined as, “a biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, foster parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, and domestic partner of the parent or any other adult living with a child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.”

The parent is required to provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family. The number of children can be documented by providing at least one of the following:

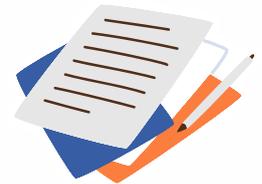
- Birth certificates/adoption documents
- Court orders regarding child custody
- Records of foster care placement
- School or medical records
- County welfare department records

We may ask for more documentation to determine family size and income, as needed.

## CCTR & CSPP Establishing Eligibility

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

- Child has open case with Child Protective Services (CPS), or is identified as At Risk
- Three or Four-year old children who have exceptional needs
- Family receives public assistance with CalWORKs
- Family is income eligible
  - Family income is the “total countable income” of all individuals in the family size. “Total countable income” may include but is not limited to gross wages or salary, tips, overtime, bonuses, gross income from self-employment, disability, unemployment compensation, workers compensation, spousal support, survivor and retirement benefits, child support, or other as specified in Title 5, section 18078, subsection q.
  - Centers reserve the right to ask for additional documentation to verify income. Income documentation is from either month of the two-month window immediately preceding the initial certification, or the annual certification of eligibility for services.
  - Families may have a Family Fee. See the Family Fee section in this Handbook for more information.
- A family member in the documented family size currently receives assistance through any of the following means-tested government programs:
  - Medi-Cal
  - CalFresh
  - CA Food Assistance Program
  - Women Infants and Children (WIC)
  - Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
  - Head Start Preschool or Early Head Start
  - CalWORKs
- Family is Experiencing Homelessness
  - The *McKinney-Vento Act* defines homeless children and youths as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. In order to meet the eligibility requirement, one of the following must be provided:
    - A written referral from a legal, medical or social service agency
    - A written referral from a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and
    - A written parental declaration that the family is homeless and a statement describing the family’s current living situation.



# CDE/CDSS

It's the parent's responsibility to provide all the information and documentation necessary for the agency to determine if the parent meets both eligibility and need qualifications. If the documentation provided by the parents is inadequate, the agency is required to ask the parent for more documentation.

Other eligibility notes to consider:

- Enrollment is for a 24-month eligibility. During a family's 24-month eligibility period, it is expected that their child attend and use their contracted child care hours whenever the center is open.
- Families must provide proof of California residency.
- Families must also meet Head Start Program age and income eligibility requirements.
- A family is considered to meet all eligibility and need requirements for those services for not less than 24-months before having their eligibility and need recertified.
- An annual certification must be completed within 50 days following the last day of the 24-month certification period.
  - At the bi-annual certification, families are required to provide documentation to support continued Eligibility and Need for services.
  - Center staff notify the family of the required documentation necessary for the bi-annual certification process to be completed.

## **CCTR – Demonstration of Need**

The General Child Care and Development Program (CCTR) requires a need for service and is based upon guidelines and priorities in accordance with the Welfare Institution Code Sections 10260, 10271, 1027.5., and California Code of regulations Title 5 sections 18078, 18081, 18083, 18085.5, 18086, 18086.1, 18086.5, 18087, 18088, 18090, 18091, 18092, 18191.

In order to be considered for CCTR services, the child's family must meet both eligibility and need for service at all times.

The following reasons have been deemed as eligible categories of need; please note that all the below listed categories are subject to additional Program approval:

- Child Protective Services/At-Risk of Abuse & Neglect
- Employment
- Self-Employment
- Participating in a Job Training/Education Program
- Seeking Employment
- Seeking Permanent Housing
- Parental Incapacity
- Homeless
- Vocational Training



## CCTR – Family Fees

The General Child Care and Development Program (CCTR) requires some families to pay Family Fees. Family Fees are based on family income and family size. Full-Time and Part-Time fees are determined by the number of hours a child is certified to attend.

- Full-Time is 130 hours or more in a calendar month
- Part-Time is less than 130 hours in a calendar month

State Guidelines require fees be collected in advance. Fees must be paid no later than seven(7) calendar days after the due date.

If fees become delinquent, written notification (via Notice of Action) will be given or mailed to the parent stating that services will be terminated unless payment is received within two (2) weeks. If a parent receives a Notice of Delinquent Fees more than twice, services will be automatically terminated even if payment is received within the two-week timeframe. Please keep in mind that it may take several weeks to process payments made by check. A reasonable repayment plan will be accepted and the parent must comply with the repayment plan for continued services. Parents must meet with Site Directors to determine payment plans.

## CCTR – How and Where to Pay Family Fees

- Fees can be paid with a money order or personal check.
- Checks are made payable to the NHA – CDE & CDSS Program.
- Checks must have the child’s name and dates of care the payment is for and may be dropped off at your child’s center or the NHA CDE/CDSS office.
- Cash payment can only be accepted at the NHA CDE & CDSS office located at:

NHA – CDE & CDSS Office  
2820 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 214  
San Diego, CA 92108  
(619) 624-3373

- A receipt will be mailed for each payment that is received. Parents may find it valuable to save receipts. If a parent pays a fee to other providers at any time during the service period, these “other fees” shall be deducted from the family fee paid to the center when proper documentation is presented.
- If a parent is unable to pay fees on the due date, please call CDE & CDSS staff to make alternate payment arrangements.
- A reasonable repayment plan will be accepted and the parent must comply with the repayment plan for continued services. Parents must meet with Site Directors to determine payment plans.
- For further questions regarding parent fees, please contact the Program Specialist at (619) 624-3373.

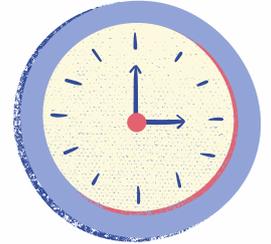
## CCTR & CSPP Contract Hours

Contract hours are based upon the need for childcare services. Failure to adhere to contract hours may result in the termination of services.

Families who do not follow their contract hours will need to attend a case conference. If contract hours are not followed three or more times during the program year (July 1st – June 30th), childcare services will be automatically terminated.

**CCTR & CSPP – Changing My Contract Hours**

Families who request a change to the originally contracted childcare hours must make the request in writing and obtain approval from the Site Supervisor or CDE Program Specialist before the change can occur. Approval of changes is subject to availability based on Title 22 capacity, and/or Title 5, or Head Start Program.



**CCTR & CSPP Family Reporting During Service**

Parents are responsible for reporting changes in writing. Examples of reportable changes include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in income (to reduce or eliminate family fees)
- Changes in school or work schedule/hours (to change contract hours)
- Changes in family size (to reduce or eliminate family fees)

If a family’s income exceeds the State Median Income (SMI), during the family’s 24-month certification, it must be reported to the Site Supervisor within 30 days, at which time CDE/CDSS Program Staff reevaluates eligibility.

**CCTR & CSPP Notice of Actions (NOA)**

Notice of Actions (NOA) are required by California Department of Education, Early Education Division and the California Department of Social Services Child Care and Development Division to communicate and document changes to the family services including approving or denying services, dis-enrollment from the program, change of schedule, change of family size, change in family fees, and annual certification. The Center maintains copies of all NOA documentation provided to parents in the child’s file.

- CCTR & CSPP Parent Rights to Appeal a NOA –Due Process If the parent(s) disagrees with an action, the parent(s) must complete the appeal information on the back of the Notice of Action (NOA). The parent(s) may file a request for a hearing with the Center within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date the NOA was given to the parent(s) or 19 days if mailed by the U.S. Postal Service. Upon the filing of a request for a hearing, the intended action shall be suspended until the review process has been completed.

**CCTR & CSPP Abandonment of Care**

When the family has not been in communication with the center for seven (7) consecutive calendar days and has not notified the center staff of the reason for not using services, the center staff shall attempt to contact the parent through a variety of communication methods.

The center staff informs the parent that failure to communicate with the center may result in termination of services.

The center staff issues a Notice of Action (NOA) to disenroll the family on the basis of “abandonment of care” when there has been no communication with the center staff for a total of 30 consecutive calendar days.

# CDE/CDSS

## **CCTR & CSPP Confidentiality**

All information provided to the Head Start Program/CDE & CDSS Program is considered confidential. At any time, centers are subject to inspections by authorized representatives from the California Department of Social Services and the California Department of Education. CDSS and CDE representatives have authority to review child and staff files, interview children and staff, and inspect any part of the center including staff supervision of the children.

## **CCTR & CSPP Dis-enrollment**

We want to work with you in every way possible to prevent non-voluntary dis-enrollment. At times, however, we will be required to dis-enroll a family from the program. Although not all-encompassing, some examples are:

- Eligibility and need criteria are not met
- Delinquent family fees
- Program policies and procedures are not observed
- Contract hours are consistently not followed
- Recertification is not completed
- Fraudulent, false, or misleading information regarding family size, single parent/training/student status, employment, income, or eligibility relating to medical incapacitation is provided
- Disruptive, abrasive, or abusive behavior of the parent/guardian is demonstrated. It is not our intent to prevent parents from expressing their views but we must prevent scenes which frighten children and disrupt activities or minimize the respect and rapport between children, staff, and teachers.

## **Suspensions & Expulsions**

As a Head Start Program, we prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior. We do not expel or unenroll a child from Head Start Program because of a child's behavior. Neighborhood House Association determines appropriate intervention for children requiring additional support due to chronic and persistent aggressive behaviors. A detailed Intervention Plan that is overseen by a licensed mental health professional and includes input from family members and staff outlines preventive strategies to assist the child in succeeding in the Head Start Program classroom. For more information on how Neighborhood House Association supports children in behavior management, please ask the Site Supervisor for a copy of the NHA Standard Operating Procedure MH-03a Standards in Action Preventing Suspension and Expulsion.



# CDE/CDSS

## Open Door Policy

Early Head Start Program/Early Learning and Care employs an “open door policy” for parents/guardians, are welcome to come to the center to visit their child(ren) and the staff at any time during the program’s operational hours.

## No Religious Instruction or Worship

The Centers do not include or implement any religious instruction or worship

## CCTR & CSPP Uniform Complaint Procedures

It is the intent of Neighborhood House Association (NHA) to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Individuals, agencies, organizations, students, and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding NHA’s alleged violation of federal and or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (Education Code sections 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135) in any program or activity funded directly by the State or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

If a participant is not satisfied with a written decision from NHA, a complaint can be submitted within 15 calendar days to the California Department of Education or California Department of Social Services. The complaint must be in writing, signed, and filed with the:

California Department of Education  
Early Education Division  
Complaint Coordinator  
1430 N Street, Suite 3410  
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Department of Social Services  
Child Care and Development Division  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
744 P Street, MS 9-7-354  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Email: CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education or California Department of Social Services, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of choice in this event.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.

# COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING



California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing (CCL) Division licenses and oversees both day care and residential facilities for children and adults in the state of California. The Department has the authority to:

- Inspect, audit and copy child or childcare center records upon demand during normal business hours; records may be removed if necessary for copying
- Interview children or staff without prior consent

For additional information on Community Care Licensing, families may visit the CCL website at [www.ccl.d.ca.gov](http://www.ccl.d.ca.gov).

[www.neighborhoodhouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org)

# SAFE & HEALTHY CENTERS

Positive relationships between adults who care for children are critical to children's healthy development and to equip them for school, relationships, and life success. Parents of children enrolled in our Head Start Program are key to helping us ensure safe and respectful interactions and learning environments.

**Respect is the foundation for healthy relationships. By enrolling my child(ren) into NHA's EHS/HS programs, I agree to the following:**

01

**Communicate positively with one another.** Parents and staff are expected to always be courteous and respectful to one another and to take part in constructive, problem-solving when misunderstandings occur. If unhelpful discussions occur, they may be halted until a time when adults are calmer. Behavior that will be addressed includes, but is not limited to:

- Disruptive behavior that interferes with or threatens to interfere with our services or program's operations
- Loud or offensive language
- Threatening, in any way, children, fellow parents, staff, or visitors
- Damaging or destroying NHA property
- Sending abusive or threatening emails/texts/voicemails/phone messages or other written communications to staff or volunteers
- Defamatory or derogatory comments on social media regarding our program, staff, or volunteers

02

**Differences are celebrated as strengths.** Parents and staff will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family, and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability. Culture and language acquisition should be considered when communicating, verbally and non-verbally, to better understand one another and avoid misunderstandings.

03

**Parent(s) will address misbehaviors of their own children through positive support and guidance.** While on our premises, physical or verbal punishment of one's own child(ren) is not allowed by parents nor by staff or volunteers.

04

**Parent(s) will direct concerns regarding other children to staff immediately.** It is never okay to discipline another child in one of our classrooms or during a program function. It is not our intent to stop help for a child who is in immediate danger, but to ask parents to refrain from disciplining children who are not their own.

CONTINUED

05

**If parents have disagreements or concerns with other parents or staff while on NHA Head Start Programs premises, individuals will respectfully address concerns.** Together, we will follow the Community Complaint Process, pp. 43-44.

06

**To ensure the safety and health of all children, we request that children always be placed in appropriate vehicle restraints or approved car seats.** Please let us know if you need support to get one.

07

**Parents will update emergency contact information to center staff as changes occur.** It is the parent's responsibility to keep emergency contact information accurate and up to date.

08

**Our centers are designated as alcohol and drug-free campuses.**

If a staff member suspects that an adult who comes to pick up a child from the site is under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs and is unable to safely care for the child, staff may contact the parent or their emergency contact(s) to identify an alternative adult to pick up the child. Law enforcement may be notified, if necessary.

09

**Individuals may not use, carry, transport, or sell firearms or any other weapon on any NHA premises.** Law enforcement will be notified, as appropriate.

10

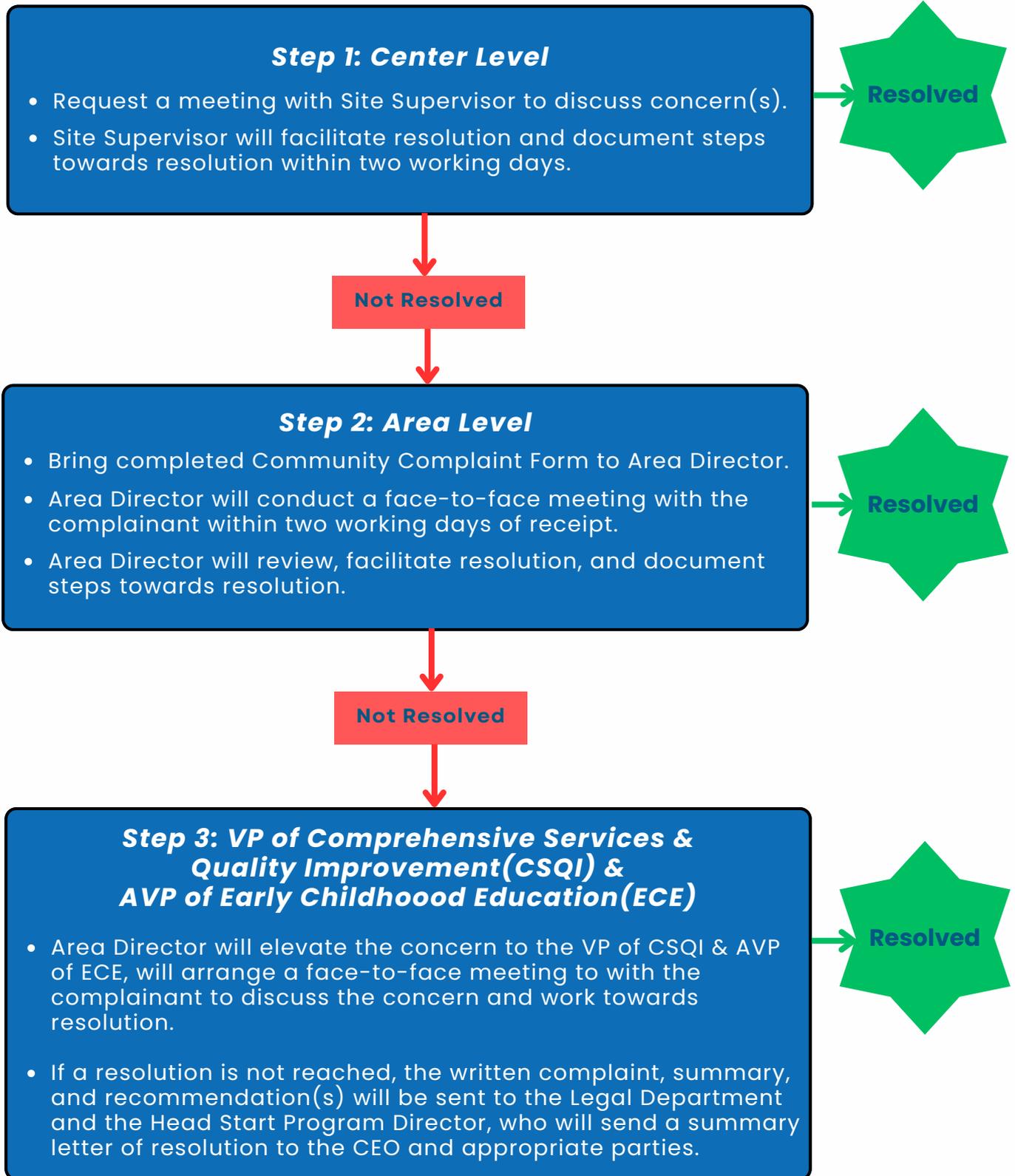
**Pets are not allowed on any NHA premises.** This includes, for example, dogs, lizards, snakes, etc.

**As caregivers who are role models for young children, we're committed to partnering in a safe and respectful manner.**

Please contact your child's teacher or the site supervisor for help with navigating any misunderstandings or report any observed hazard in the building or playground that may cause injury. It is every parent's right to express concern(s) or file a formal written complaint using the Community Complaint Process outlined on pages 44-45.

Take a  
deep  
breath

# COMMUNITY COMPLAINT PROCESS FLOWCHART



# COMMUNITY COMPLAINT FORM

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to call you back: \_\_\_\_\_

Early Head Start/Head Start Child (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Early Head Start/Head Start

Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your complaint in detail (if needed, use back of paper):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.neighborhoodhouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org)





# THANK YOU



Phone call  
**858-715-2642**



Email Address  
**[headstart@neighborhoodhouse.org](mailto:headstart@neighborhoodhouse.org)**



Website  
**[www.neighborhoodhouse.org](http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org)**



Office Address  
**5660 Copley Dr., San Diego, CA 92111**

