Pre-school Laboratory

Located at the

Child Development Center

Policy and Procedure Manual
Eligibility Handbook

3600 Workman Mill Rd.

Whittier, CA 90601

562-908-3494

License # 198001760

The Rio Hondo College Pre-school Laboratory is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. following the Rio Hondo College academic calendar. Part-time and full time enrollment is available.
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Rio Hondo College Pre-school Laboratory located at the Child Development Center is funded by the State of California, Department of Education State Preschool Program. There are part-time and full time enrollment options available. First priority is given to families on TANF, SSI and low income Rio Hondo students and members of the community. Priority families must meet current gross monthly income criteria and may qualify to receive full or partial fee assistance. As space is available, other Rio Hondo students, faculty and staff and members of the community may enroll for parent paid fees.

Enrollment Options
1. Half Day State Preschool Program
   Children attend four to five days per week from 8:30am -12:00pm.

2. Preschool Program (More than four hours)
   Days and hours of attendance are based on the needs of student or working parents.

ELIGIBILITY POLICIES

Age of Child
In order to enroll in the program children must be three on or before October 1st of the 2013-2014 fiscal year (July 1 and June 30) and September 1st for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Children who meet the age criteria to attend public Kindergarten are not eligible for enrollment. The center welcomes all eligible children regardless of gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or special needs. All families applying for enrollment must submit the paperwork to determine eligibility even if the family does not qualify for government subsidized services. Government contracts require that enrollment into the program is based on eligibility for government assistance and need not on a first come first served basis.

Toileting Status
In order to enroll in the program children must be fully toilet trained. Preschool program environments are not organized to deal with ongoing toileting problems as infant/toddler programs are. Although preschool programs expect sporadic toileting problems on occasion with preschool children, ongoing toileting problems become a health risk for the other children in the program and the staff.

Payment for Program
In order to receive subsidized child care and development services, families must meet eligibility and need criteria as specified below. In addition to meeting eligibility and need requirements, to be eligible for services the child’s parent(s) must live and/or work in the State of California. The determination of eligibility shall be without regard to the immigration status of the child or the child’s parent(s). All families applying for enrollment must submit the paperwork to determine eligibility even if the family does not qualify for government subsidized services.
Government Subsidized Payment

State Fee Assistance Eligibility Criteria (Items 1-4 listed below)

1. Family is a **public assistance recipient**. (A MediCal number has to be recorded on the application).
2. Family is **gross income eligible**. When the number of family members and the amount of family income have been determined, eligibility may be established by reference to the family fee schedule.
   a. The documentation of employment shall consist of one of the following:
   b. Statement of Wages which is attached to the check for one month
   c. A written statement from the employer
   d. Documented telephone verification between the contractor’s staff and the employer.
   e. Verification of working hours is also necessary to meet this criteria along with the completion of a specific verification form.
3. The **family is homeless**. A written referral from an emergency shelter or other legal, medical, or social service agency; or a written parental declaration that the family is homeless is required.
4. The family has a child who is at **risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or receiving child protective services** through the county welfare department. The Child Development Center will request a written referral, dated within the six months immediately preceding the date of application for services, from a county welfare department, child welfare services worker certifying that:
   1. The child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and that the family needs child care and development services
   2. The probable duration of the child protective services plan; and
   3. The name, address, telephone number, and signature of the child welfare service worker who is making the referral

Need Criteria shall be established by 1 or 2 below:

1. **Child protective services** or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation: a child who has been identified by a legally qualified professional in a legal, medical, social services agency, or emergency shelter as being at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and referred for child care and development services.
2. The parent (including custodial adults and guardians) and any other adult counted in the family size are **any of the following**:
   a. **Employed**. If the parent or other adult counted in the family size works in the home, the nature of the work must preclude the supervision of the family’s children.
   b. **Seeking employment**. The family’s period of eligibility for this purpose is limited to sixty (60) working days during the fiscal year. Service is limited to no more than 5 days per week and for less than 30 hours per week.
   c. The limitation for families participating in **Cal Works** shall be in accordance with the approved welfare to work plan.
   d. **Vocational training**. Participating in vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofessional or profession. A formal Education Plan and grades must be provided at the end of each semester. The vocational training plan shall be reviewed by the Child Development Center at the beginning of each semester or
quarter to determine that progress (in a graded program, earn a 2.0 grade point average; or in a non graded program, pass the program requirements) is being made toward the vocational goals specified in the certification and eligibility documents.

- Child care and development services shall be limited to whichever expires first:
  - Six years from the initiation of services pursuant to this section; or
  - Twenty four semester units, or its equivalent, after the attainment of a Bachelor’s Degree

A parent shall report any change in his or her class schedule related to the days and time of any class, including a withdrawal from a class, within five calendar days of requesting the change from the institution. NOTE: Funding is not provided for repeating a class.

e. Family is homeless and seeking permanent housing for family stability.

f. The parent or guardian is incapacitated.

- The documentation of incapacity shall include:
  - A statement that the parent is incapacitated, that the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision for the child for part of the day, and, if the parent is physically incapacitated, that identifies the care and supervision tasks that the parent is incapable of performing.
  - The number of days and hours per week that services are recommended to accommodate the incapacitation, taking into account the age of the child and the care needs.
  - The probable duration of the incapacitation.
  - The name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the legally qualified health professional for verification, clarification, or completion of the provided statement.

- The Child Development Center shall determine the days and hours of service based on the recommendation of the health professional and consistent with the provisions of this article.

When a child’s residence alternates between the homes of separated or divorced parents, eligibility, need and fees are determined separately for each household in which the child is residing during the time the child development services are needed.

All applications must be updated within thirty days whenever there is a change in family size, income, public assistance status, or need.

Families are recertified at least once at each contract period and at intervals not to exceed twelve (12) months. Notices will be given prior to the start of each semester to determine continued enrollment. Failure to return the notice may result in a drop from the program. Enrollment from one semester to the next is not automatic.

Please note: Eligibility and need criteria do not apply to non-certified (fee based) families. Children of staff and/or community are enrolled on a first come first serve basis if space is available.

If a family will temporarily not have a need for subsidized child care, they may be granted a “limited term service leave.” This leave may not exceed twelve consecutive weeks and the family will remain enrolled in the program. The family must request the leave in writing at least two weeks in advance and must receive written approval before the leave can begin. The request must state the reason and the dates of the requested leave.
The use or disclosure of financial or other information in each family’s basic data file will be limited to the administration of the Child Development program. No other use of this information shall be made without prior written consent. Parents shall have access to all information contained in their children’s individual basic data files.

Those who receive state subsidized child development services should be aware that if fraudulent information is used to establish on-going eligibility or if all required documentation is not provided to our program (such as change of work status or income), your childcare services will be terminated immediately and you may be prosecuted for fraud.

To determine your current eligibility status, a brief interview will be conducted with you at the time that you submit your eligibility packet, at your original enrollment appointment and each time that you re-certify your eligibility. Many situations can change your status: employment status, income changes or new members added to your household. State law requires that our program be informed of these changes within five days.

Required Documents to Determine Eligibility for Subsidy

1. **Documentation of Income:**
   - **One month of current income** verification for all working adults in the household must be provided.
   - If one parent of the enrolling child does not live in the household **proof** must be provided of either **support** from the second parent (child support records or arrangements) or **proof of the absence** of the second parent.

2. **Documentation of Family Size**
   - A **certified birth certificate** must be submitted for all dependent children in the household.

3. **Documentation of Need**
   - Students submit a **long term educational plan** prepared by a counselor and a **current class schedule**.
   - Working parents submit the **Employment Verification** form included in the Enrollment Packet.

4. **Documentation of Health**
   - When the Eligibility Packet is submitted a copy of the **child’s immunization records** must be provided.

**Fee Based Enrollment**

Families who do not qualify for subsidized programs may enroll in the Fee Based Program, provided there is space available. Full fees for services will be required. Children must be enrolled for a minimum of 3 hours each day and 3 days per week. Fees must be paid at the Rio Hondo College Cashier’s Office at the beginning of each month before services are provided. No payment will be accepted at the Pre-school Laboratory.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Rio Hondo College Pre-school Laboratory located at the Child Development Center is open to any eligible family regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, ancestry or handicapping condition, including such conditions as AIDS, HIV positive and cancer.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

All children’s records are kept in a locked file cabinet at all times. Children’s information will not be released to or shared with anyone without the written permission of a parent or guardian.
Information provided through day to day interactions in program will also be kept private and not revealed outside the program by the program staff or by students who participate in the laboratory.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your child must have received required immunizations prior to enrollment and a TB test may also be required. Immunizations must be kept current throughout your child’s enrollment in our program. Children who are sent home as result of an illness or health issue must remain at home the following day. For example, if the child is sent home on Tuesday morning because of an illness or health issue the child should not return to school until Thursday.

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS FOR PRESCHOOL

In 2008 the California Department of Education acknowledged the importance of early learning to success in school and in life by releasing the first of three volumes of the California Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks. The third volume was released in 2012. The California Preschool Learning Foundations acknowledges the unique characteristics of learning during the preschool years and establishes a range of development that could be expected during that time. The Preschool Curriculum Framework aligned with the Learning Foundations sets criteria for what will be addressed in the classroom to prepare children for Kindergarten. Our program incorporates these standards into the classroom curriculum and follows the progress of each individual child utilizing the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The results of the Profile is shared with parents in a parent conference twice per year.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Please bring your child to school each day according to your contracted arrival and pick up times. Our program is organized to prepare children for Kindergarten that will not happen if the child does not attend their full schedule. Please arrive on time to pick up your child so that your child doesn’t feel insecure. All changes to your contracted hours must be approved in advance by the office and recorded on the office clipboard. The state requires that all children arrive at school before 10 am each day.

It is very important that your child have good attendance at the school. If your child is going to be absent, please call the center daily to let them know the reason for the absence.

ARRIVING AT AND LEAVING SCHOOL

Upon arrival or when you come to pick up your child please adhere to the following guidelines in order to ensure that everyone is safe, please:

- California law requires that pre-school children are buckled into a booster seat in the back seat of the car.
- The parking at the center is for drop off and pick up only. Students must park in designated student lots. Only staff are allowed to park in the center lot.
- Never leave children alone in your car when you drop off/pick up your child.
- Always park in a designated spot.
- Hold the hands of any children you are escorting to the front door.
- Lock your car when leaving it in the parking lot.
- Please do not leave your car running while you are dropping off your child, this is very dangerous and can cause an accident.
- Please observe all speed limits in the parking lot.
State law requires that each child be signed in and signed out by a parent, guardian, or other person designated by the parent who is 18 years old or older. The signature must include the first and last name and it must be legible. Initials are not legal under the law. Sign in/out sheets are located in individual classrooms. Please make sure to walk into the classroom with your child, assist them with washing their hands (this will cut down the incidents of illness) and make direct contact with a member of the staff before saying good-bye.

Arrive and leave at the time that you are scheduled to, as we assign our staff according to the schedules of the children. When children are not scheduled to be present but arrive early or leave late it changes the numbers of children for each adult present and endangers the safety of both the staff and the children. It can also put our program out of compliance with the law and result in a substantial fine. If your schedule changes, please let us know the details of the change as soon as possible, this will allow us to readjust our staffing plan.

Make a point to talk with the program staff when you pick up your child. That will allow us to communicate any pertinent information to you regarding their day. If someone else will be picking up your child please make sure that the adult is listed on your child’s emergency contact information and that the individual brings identification with them when they come to pick up your child. All individuals on the emergency contact list must be 18 years or older. Children will not be released to individuals who are not listed on the child’s emergency contact forms or if the individual does not bring identification. Changes in the emergency contact information may only be made in person not by phone.

**LATE PICK UP AFTER 5 PM CLOSING**

Rio Hondo College procedures and state Title 22 regulations requires that we notify the proper authorities, Whittier Police Department, if you are more than one-hour late picking-up your child and we have not had any communication with you.

Please make every effort to pick your child up on time. A fee of $10 will be assessed for 1 to 10 minutes and $1 for every minute thereafter.

**KEY PAD**

Entry to the Pre-school Laboratory classroom area is protected with coded key pad entry. Only individuals with children formally enrolled in the program are allowed to enter. Each family is assigned their own key code in order to enter the secure classroom area. **ONLY ADULTS MAY ENTER THE FAMILY KEY CODE.**

**SUPPLIES NEEDED**

- Bring a back pack with a complete change of clothes to be kept in the classroom. Be sure all items brought to school by your child are labeled. **CHILDREN MUST ALWAYS HAVE A SET OF EXTRA CLOTHES AT SCHOOL.** If clothes get wet while at school a new set must be returned the next day.
- Children who are enrolled after 12:30 p.m. will need a blanket and a pillow in order to rest. These items should be washed each weekend and returned when you return for the new week.
- Emergency supplies are also requested. Provide two gallon sized zip lock bags one with labeled clothing and another with emergency food. See the list included in the enrollment packet for specific items needed. The kit will be returned to you at the end of each school
year or when your child leaves the program. Parents who leave the program during the year should request their child’s emergency supply kit upon their departure. Unclaimed kits will be utilized by our program or donated to other charitable organizations.

- **Sunscreen**: Please make sure to sign a permission slip to allow administration of a spray on sunscreen your child goes outside. Please bring a new container of spray on sunscreen at the beginning of each semester.

### FOOD SERVICES

Our program emphasizes good nutrition, encouraging children to enjoy selections of foods from various cultures, as well as familiar foods prepared in different styles. We avoid foods that have “empty calories” and encourage that the parents do the same at home. **Pre-school children have extensive nutritional needs and a relatively small stomach capacity.** All the food that pre-school children eat must be full of nutrients.

**Appropriate serving sizes for each food item is also important.** If a child eats more than a serving size of one food they will not have enough room in their stomach to eat another with different but equally important nutrients. **Healthy lifelong eating habits are established early in life. Adults must set up a child’s environment in order to facilitate healthy eating habits.**

The foods served in our program are prepared from scratch at our site with minimal salt and sugars by trained Food Service staff. We invite you to review the monthly menu posted on the office door near the key pad and in the classroom. Individual copies of the monthly menu are also available near the office door near the key pad.

We are part of the State funded program, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which allows us to provide breakfast, lunch and snack to all children without charging separate fees. Our program is reimbursed by the state depending on the eligibility of the children enrolled in our program. This state reimbursement for food helps us with our food costs and enables us to keep our fees as low as possible. Eligibility falls in three categories Automatic (migrant workers, homelessness), Categorical (case work number for Food Stamps, CalWorks or Kin-GAP) and Income Eligible (household size and income). We have children with allergies and therefore, we cannot allow food from home into the classroom during program hours. The Laboratory Clerk Typist is designated to enroll children and families in the Food Program and to maintain up to date enrollment records. The Senior Food Service Worker is designated to oversee and meet program meal production and service requirements, gather meal count data and produce a monthly reimbursement report.

### ALLERGIES

If your child has an allergy or a food restriction, we must have a physician complete a “Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations.” The food program does not allow any substitutions to the menu unless this form is completed.

Our program recognizes and respects the personal and religious beliefs of all families. If your child has a food restriction due to a personal and/or religious belief, we will work with you to accommodate reasonable requests.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this agency is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
BIRTHDAYS

The Child Care Food Program only allows children to eat food items prepared at our center but we recognize the importance of the celebrations related to birthdays. Your child’s teacher and classmates will individualize the celebration of your child’s special day. Talk with your child’s teacher for further information. Please refrain from bringing food items. Some suggestions would be stickers, pencils or erasers.

WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL

Pre-school children learn by experimenting, exploring and actively experiencing their environment. Therefore, in order to learn your child should be dressed in washable, sturdy clothes that allow the child to move freely. Please keep the party clothes and long skirts at home. This also applies to shoes, your child must wear sturdy closed toed tennis shoes. No boots, flip flops and sandals are allowed.

Before you dress your child for school, consider the activities that they may participate in during the day. Your child will be running, climbing, digging and pedaling in the outside environment. Your child will be painting, participating in water play and science experiment in the inside environment. To decide if you child is appropriately dressed before leaving home ask yourself, “Will I be upset if my child comes home with dirt or paint on the clothing?”

Remember to label everything that can come off of the child. It is very frustrating to lose a new jacket or favorite sweater because someone else has taken it home by mistake.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The key to a smooth adjustment in a new learning environment is preparation, information and patience. Spend the time to carefully read all of the information we provide for you so you know what to expect and then talk with your child over a reasonable span of time about what they should expect. Talk about the environment, toys, food, teachers and the other children. Allow your child to assist you in selecting and preparing items for school. What backpack will they use? Which blanket and pillow will they bring if they nap? Which extra clothes should they use?

Maintain a positive attitude yourself and have reasonable expectations regarding the adjustment period. It is natural that your child has some fears as well as excitement regarding a new group experience. Often a few visits to the program with your child before the first day will diminish fears. During visits tour the environment, meet the staff and spend some time observing the children participating in the program.

Plan to arrive a bit early the first few days in order to allow some adjustment time during goodbyes. When the time comes to leave your child in the program on their own let your child know that you are leaving by giving them a hug and a kiss good-bye. There may be tears, but it is important that you leave when you tell your child good–bye. Remember to tell your child that you will be back. It is important that you are on time everyday to pick your child up, but especially important the first day.

When you get home, ask questions about their day and let your child know that you think school is an important part of life. Don’t be alarmed if they respond with “I did not do anything!” Prepare for that response by communicating with the staff regarding the day, reading the posted curriculum materials on the parent boards in each classroom and picking up your child’s work from
their file. If you do this you can remind your child of what happened during the day and enjoy a
more detailed response.

ANY CHANGES? PLEASE LET US KNOW
♦ If you move, please let us know.
♦ If you change your phone number or employment, please let us know.
♦ If you change your emergency contacts, please let us know.
    It is very important for us to know how to reach you by phone in case of an emergency. All
emergency contact information or changes must be made in person in the center office.

Please keep your contact information up to date at all times.

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION
♦ Please phone the school office at 562-908-3494 or send a note each time that your child is absent
  and specify the reason for the absence.
♦ Children who are sent home as result of an illness or health issue must remain at home the
  following day.
♦ After a long or communicable illness, a child needs to bring a note from the doctor.
♦ Remember that five consecutive absences without contact with the school may result in your
  child being dropped from the program.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES
Each child is allowed 10 unexcused absences per year. Absences are considered “unexcused”
when a child is absent and the center is not called or if the reason given is not clearly in the best
interest of the child. Children who exceed 10 “unexcused” absences per year may be terminated.

BEST INTEREST DAYS
Each child is allowed 10 “best interest days” per year i.e. vacation, trip to the zoo, spending
the day wit grandmother, etc. Children who exceed 10 “best interest days” per year may be
terminated.

TERMINATION POLICY
A child may be terminated from the program if all enrollment documents have not been
turned in or have been found to be inconsistent, fees have not been paid, or due to any person
exhibiting uncooperative, hostile, intimidating, or threatening behavior including the use of
inappropriate language to any child, parent, or staff member.

ENROLLMENT PACKET AND REGISTRATION APPOINTMENTS
Please submit your complete Eligibility Packet and all the required documents to the Laboratory
front office. Once eligibility has been determined, you will be required to complete an Enrollment Packet.
After submission of the complete Enrollment Packet schedule a registration appointment in order to finish
the enrollment process. Failure to appear for a scheduled appointment may exclude your child from
further consideration into the program. A 24 hour notice must be given to reschedule your registration
appointment.