



**Child Development Center
Laboratory School
Family Handbook**

FY 25-26

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WELCOME LETTER

Dear Families,

We are excited to welcome you and your child to the Río Hondo College Child Development Center (RHC CDC) Laboratory School. We're honored you've chosen to become a part of our vibrant learning community. Our program has been a vital part of Río Hondo College's mission since the 1960s—supporting students, families, and the broader community by nurturing a lifelong love of learning from the very beginning.

Our center is proudly funded by the California Department of Education through the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), the California Department of Social Services through the General Child Care and Development Program (CCTR), as well as parent fees and additional state and federal grants. We also participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), allowing us to provide nutritious, well-balanced meals to children at no cost to families. We know that healthy bodies support healthy minds.

We are proud to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which reflects our commitment to offering a high-quality early childhood education program. Our teaching staff meets or exceeds all state qualifications, and each team member participates in ongoing professional development to ensure they remain current in the best practices of child development and education. All staff undergo thorough background checks, including child abuse index clearance, to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for every child.

At the heart of our philosophy is the belief that families are a child's first and most influential teachers. We see ourselves as partners in your child's early learning journey and are committed to creating a strong, respectful connection with your family.

Our curriculum is rooted in an *emergent approach*, meaning that learning experiences are guided by the interests, questions, and developmental needs of the children in our care. Rather than relying on a pre-planned, one-size-fits-all curriculum, our teachers observe and listen carefully to children, designing meaningful activities that emerge from their natural curiosity. This type of curriculum supports deep, joyful learning and encourages children to think critically, solve problems, collaborate, and explore the world in ways that are relevant and engaging to them.

This handbook is intended to help guide you and your family throughout your time with us. It provides important information to ensure your child has a rewarding and enriching preschool experience. Please take time to read through it and keep it nearby for future reference.

We welcome all eligible children and families—regardless of gender, ethnicity, language, ability, religious affiliation, or immigration status—and are deeply committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful community.

We are truly delighted to have you with us. Welcome to the Río Hondo College CDC family!

Warm regards,



Sincerely,

Cindy O'Neill, Ed.D. Director

ALL ABOUT THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PHILOSOPHY

At Río Hondo College Child Development Center, we believe every child is a unique and capable learner. Our program is based on current child development research, recognizing that children grow at their own pace across physical, cognitive, and social-emotional areas. We support each child's individual development through age-appropriate and personalized learning experiences.

We use an emergent curriculum approach, where teachers observe and respond to children's interests and needs, creating meaningful and engaging activities that foster curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking.

Family and culture are central to our program. We partner with families as their child's first teachers and create an inclusive environment that respects and reflects diverse backgrounds through our curriculum, materials, and daily routines.

As a laboratory school, we also prepare future educators by modeling high-quality early childhood education practices. Our goal is to provide a joyful, supportive, and inclusive space where every child can thrive and develop a lifelong love of learning.

MISSION

The Child Development Center supports the academic mission of Río Hondo College by:

- Providing a safe, healthy, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate environment that equips preschool children with essential skills and fosters positive memories while supporting their individual milestones.
- Supporting our community of staff, parents, and children through positive, respectful interactions that promote empathy, trust, collaboration, and a safe space for risk-taking, exploration, and joyful learning.
- Serving as an educational research facility offering high-quality laboratory experiences and teacher training for Río Hondo College students and staff preparing to work with young children.

VISION

Our vision is to cultivate a nurturing and collaborative community where every child, parent, and staff member feels safe, respected, and valued. We envision:

- A rich and supportive environment that encourages children's exploration, growth, and development of essential life skills.
- Positive interactions built on empathy, trust, and open communication among families, staff, and children.
- A place where children's unique qualities are recognized and celebrated as they create meaningful memories and reach important milestones.
- Transparent and trusting partnerships with parents to foster security and confidence.
- An inclusive space where all children, parents, and staff are treated with equal respect and given opportunities to thrive and have fun.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Río Hondo College CDC has an "open door" policy. Parents/ guardians may visit their children in our facilities at any time aligned with the California Department of Education, Early Education Division and California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, Parent's Rights policy. We ask those who plan to visit their children frequently to follow the classroom flow of the day to maintain classroom routines and structure.

Additionally, please make an appointment if you wish to meet with the Director or a staff member. This is so arrangements for staff coverage can be made, and the supervision and the safety of the children are ensured while you meet with the director and/or staff member.

Observation Rooms with one-way mirrors are for adult use only. **CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE OBSERVATION ROOMS.** Other college students also use Observation Rooms as they fulfill class assignments. Please do not use the Observation Rooms to visit with other Parents/Families. Students from the College or community observe and/or participate in the children's groups. Visitors must sign in at the desk and receive a nametag upon arrival.

RHC CDC LEADERSHIP

The following is a list of designated personnel to assume responsibility for the RHC CDC in case of the Director's absence. Each can be contacted by calling the RHC CDC's main line (562) 908-3494. Dean of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Child Development Center Coordinator, or Designated staff in the Director's absence.

COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING

The Río Hondo College Child Development Centers is licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services, and Community Care Licensing Division. The Center's operations exceed the state standards for childcare. These standards relate to staff qualifications, health issues, facility design, teacher-to-child ratios, records, and nutrition.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has the right to perform the duties authorized in Section 101200(b) and (c) of the General Licensing requirements. This section allows an authorized agent of DSS to come into the center unannounced for the purposes of annual inspection or investigation of complaints against the facility. The agent has the right to interview staff and children without prior notification. Annual Licensing Reports and Complaint Investigation Reports are a matter of public record and copies are available to Parents/Families upon request.

If you SEE something, SAY something.
To report a complaint or concern regarding any licensed facility, Contact the Hotline at: 1-844-LET-US-NO (1-844-538-8766) You may also contact the California Department of Social Services

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Río Hondo College Child Development Center Laboratory School serves children ages 2 to 5 years in a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment that supports each child's unique growth and learning milestones. Our full-time program, available Monday through Friday, encourages exploration, positive interactions, and early childhood skill development. The center is funded through a combination of sources, including the California Department of Education's State Preschool Program (CSPP), the California Department of Social Services' General Child Care (CCTR), parent fees, and Río Hondo College. Families enrolling under CSPP and CCTR must meet eligibility criteria based on need, as determined by the Department of Education and the Department of Social Services.

Our curriculum is carefully planned to include age-appropriate educational activities throughout the day that address all areas of development, following the California Department of Education's Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP). Children engage in experiences that promote social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth in a culturally relevant and inclusive setting.

Our dedicated and trained staff create a warm, respectful atmosphere where every child is valued and supported. We maintain low teacher-to-child ratios to ensure individual attention and foster meaningful relationships. Safety and health are top priorities, and children receive nutritious meals daily through funding from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

We are committed to inclusiveness and welcome all eligible children regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, special needs, or immigration status. Our center promotes a respectful and supportive community for children, parents, and staff, built on empathy, trust, and open communication. *The program does not engage in religious instruction or worship.*

As part of Río Hondo College, the Child Development Center also serves as a learning laboratory where college students observe and interact with children, bridging theory, and practice to develop future educators who understand and respect the diverse needs of children and families. The Río Hondo College Child Development Center Laboratory School is uniquely committed to a dual mission:

- Providing a high-quality early learning program that nurtures and supports the growth and development of every child enrolled.
- Serving as a hands-on training site where Río Hondo College students observe and interact with preschool-aged children, gaining valuable insight into child development and early education.
- Offering college students practical classroom experiences that connect theory to real-world practice, helping them develop professional skills and a deeper understanding of young children and their families.

AGE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN

4-year-old children	3-year-old children	2-year-old children
1:8	1:8	1:4
CSPP-eligible four-year-old children are defined as children who have their fourth birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year they are being served.	CSPP-eligible three-year-old children are defined as children who have their third birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year they are being served.	CCTR- Children who will have their second birthday on or before the day they start the program. We are licensed to serve children starting at 2 years of age.

**Adult Staff Ratios are based on children's ages and are determined by state and federal guidelines.*

Children who meet the age criteria (5 years old on or before December 1st) to attend public Kindergarten are **not eligible for enrollment.*

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Friday 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

CONTRACT HOURS

Although the Río Hondo College Child Development Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., each family is assigned specific contract hours upon enrollment. These hours are based on state requirements and ensure we can provide a consistent, high-quality educational program aligned with the California State Preschool Learning Foundations.

Contract hours help us maintain safe staff-to-child ratios, meet state licensing standards, and support a structured environment where children can fully participate in the day's planned activities. To ensure your child benefits from the full educational experience, we ask that all children arrive by or before 9:00 a.m. each day.

It is essential that families arrive and depart at their scheduled times. Arriving too early or picking up late impacts staffing, compromises safety, and may put the program out of compliance with state regulations—potentially resulting in fines. If your schedule changes, please notify the RHC CDC office as soon as possible. Any adjustments to your child's schedule must be pre-approved and based on special circumstances.

Sticking to your contract hours supports your child's learning, the safety of all children, and the success of our program.

CALENDAR OF OPERATION

The program calendar will coincide with the Río Hondo College Academic calendar, with the exceptions of Staff In-Service and state-required days of operation. A calendar will be available at the beginning of each academic year. The calendar is subject to change, and families will be notified via email of such changes. The full day program operates for approximately 230 days per year and closes for all legal holidays, during the winter and, spring break, and up to three (3) college flex days. Calendars are available online and at the center office.

****Tuition is charged for all holidays and staff development days for which your child is enrolled.***

HOLIDAYS

We observe all the same holidays as Río Hondo College:

Independence Day
Labor Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Holiday
Winter Break
New Year's Day
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Day
Lincoln's Birthday
Washington Birthday
Spring Break (last week of March)
Memorial Day
Juneteenth

CURRICULUM

At the RHC CDC, we follow an Emergent Curriculum. In this process, teachers plan activities and projects based on the specific group of children they are working with, considering their skills, needs, and interests. What happens in side-by-side classrooms will look different because of the varying skills, interests, and needs of the children within those classrooms. A teacher considers what is known about an individual and a particular group of children in each classroom and then plans accordingly.

The RHC Child Development Center atmosphere is intentionally designed to help children grow emotionally, intellectually, socially, and physically. We value and nurture relationships. Every child is treated as an individual and is provided with a diverse and responsive environment. We use a research-based curriculum that understands the developmental stages of children's growth. Our program is committed to providing high-quality, developmentally appropriate care and education for all children, from infancy through preschool. To support this, our curriculum is aligned with California's state-recommended learning foundations and research-based practices tailored to each age group. Daily routines are changed to accommodate the needs of the current children in the classroom and are posted outside of the classrooms on the parent board and handed out at Family Orientation.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER?

- to co-explore the learning experience with the children
- to provoke ideas, problem-solving, and conflict resolution
- to take ideas from the children and return them for further exploration

We believe "Play" is the business of childhood: What children experience is what they will learn. The center staff provides a learning environment with opportunities to explore, interact, and experience their surroundings. Parents and guardians are highly encouraged to participate in the learning experiences at the RHC CDC and at home. Together we help children receive the necessary skills to empower them for future success. We encourage each of the children we care for to grow at their own pace. Our staff embraces the following beliefs:

We believe that by providing the highest quality of child-care, our program will be a place where children and adults can grow to their fullest potential.

We believe each child is unique, and by providing a safe environment, each child will learn by exploring, experimenting, and enjoying their learning experience. Play allows the child to discover and develop an understanding of the world.

We believe that parents are the most important people in a child's life, and we want to establish a respectful, culturally sensitive partnership between teachers and parents for the best benefit of the children.

We believe each staff member has a unique gift to offer, and we value the diversity of our humanity in the rich variety of ethnic customs, languages, traditions, and differences in personality and individual perspectives.

We believe that all children, parents, teachers, and staff deserve the right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of gender, cultural, or religious background.

We believe that ongoing communication between staff and parents is a vital link in providing for each child's individual needs in our care.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT?

The 3rd teacher: The environment is recognized for its potential to inspire children. An environment filled with *natural light, order, and beauty*. Open spaces are free from clutter, where every material is considered for its purpose, and every corner is ever evolving to encourage children to delve deeper and deeper into their interests.

Our carefully curated environments encourage collaboration, communication, and exploration. The space respects children as capable by providing them with authentic materials and tools. The space is cared for

by the children and the adults.

Parents often ask us the question- what about academics? Is my child going to be ready for kindergarten when they leave here? We want to assure you that academics are embedded in the curriculum as part of the focus area that each group of children is interested in. When children are interested and engaged, they are ready to learn. Our lesson plan format ensures that our teaching team considers all learning areas when planning and the whole child. Our goal is for all children to leave our program with academic and life skills.

PRESCHOOL/TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN LEARNING FOUNDATIONS (PTKLF)

Our center provides a developmentally appropriate, child-centered curriculum for children from birth to age five. Our teaching practices are aligned with California Department of Education (CDE) guidance for early learning and emphasize the development of the whole child—socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically.

Infants and Toddlers (Birth to Age 2)

For children under age 2, we implement the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) approach. PITC is grounded in child development research and promotes:

- Respectful, responsive, and relationship-based caregiving
- Consistent routines and continuity of care
- Individualized attention and small group sizes
- Cultural sensitivity and inclusion of home language and family values

This approach supports healthy brain development, secure attachment, early communication, and sensory-motor exploration, all essential for lifelong learning and well-being.

Preschool-Aged Children (Ages 3–5)

In 2008, the California Department of Education acknowledged the importance of early learning to long-term school and life success by releasing the first of three volumes of the California Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks. The third volume, released in 2012, highlights the unique characteristics of learning during the preschool years and defines a range of developmental milestones expected at this stage.

The Preschool Curriculum Framework, aligned with the Learning Foundations, sets instructional criteria for classroom experiences that prepare children for a successful transition to kindergarten. As of the 2025–2026 school year, our curriculum is also aligned with the Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF), which represent California’s most current developmental benchmarks for children ages 3–5. These foundations ensure continuity between preschool, transitional kindergarten (TK), and kindergarten by focusing on the following domains:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- English-Language Development /Foundational Language Development (when applicable)
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Development
- Health
- History -Social Science
- Visual and Performing Arts

Teachers use the California Preschool Curriculum Framework to create intentional, engaging, and inclusive learning experiences based on these foundations. For more information on the standards, visit www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp

DOCUMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The CSPP and CCTR programs require that the staff observe and document your child's development and learning utilizing the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) created by the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services and aligned with the Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks. The Desired Results Profile includes information for each child regarding:

1. Personal and social competence
2. How each child learns
3. Physical and motor competence
4. Safety and health

Observation and documentation of each child's development is an integral part of our program. Observation and documentation are central to understanding individual children and identifying their levels of development. Information is used in planning the appropriate curriculum to facilitate and support development and learning.

When difficulties occur, observation is also key to our interpretation of the factors involved. Staff and parents confer together to decide what approach best benefits children. Each child's progress is documented and reviewed periodically by teachers and support staff. Children's artwork, student observation notes, and photographs of children at play are kept in Portfolio Files to use as evidence for the rating for DRDP items.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Developmental screening is an essential tool for parents and staff. Through this tool, staff can identify when a child has met their developmental milestones. Every parent/guardian completes and submits an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). ASQ3 & ASQ screenings are administered at the beginning of the year and before each parent-teacher conference. ASQ will be used as the first screening tool to understand if there are possible needs or arrangements to support the family and child. The earlier support can be provided to a child, the better the overall outcomes. Staff will use this tool to implement appropriate strategies to support the child's growth and development.

PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teachers schedule parent conferences twice yearly to share children's developmental progress with families and collaborate on the learning process. Formal parent-teacher conferences take place each fall and spring semester. During your conference, you will receive information on your child's developmental progress utilizing the Desired Results Developmental Profile Preschool (DRDP-r). During this meeting, teachers and parents will collaborate to develop a plan to support your child's learning and development at school and at home.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A locked file cabinet always stores children's records. The RHC CDC will not release children's information or share it with anyone without the written permission of a parent or guardian. The information gained through the day-to-day interactions in the program will also be kept private and not revealed outside the program by the program staff or by students who participate in laboratory activities.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Data is gathered to inform the program improvement process input secured by staff and parents. A written report is provided for staff and parents at the end of the evaluation process. A technology-based management system is in place to manage program improvement data. The program has a strategic planning process focused on the mission, child outcomes, quality service, and long-term resources. Goals for continuous improvement are developed through evaluation and

strategic planning processes with input from staff and parents. The annual program self-evaluation process includes but is not limited to the following: Environmental Rating Scales, Parent Surveys, Desired Results, Developmental Profile, etc.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

RHC CDC is one of the most diverse campuses in CA, in line with the Río Hondo College vision statement: Río Hondo College aspires to be an evolving community-focused institution that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as a means to achieve personal, professional, and educational goals in a caring and rigorous environment (RHC, 2021).

Our center reflects this diversity. The book *Multicultural Issues in Child Care* by Janet Gonzalez-Mena reflects the beliefs and practices of Child Care Services. The following is an excerpt from her book: It's good for children to receive culturally competent care that is sensitive and has a global, multiethnic view. **Culturally competent care requires that:**

- Adults in children's lives respect each other.
- Adults in children's lives work to understand each other's perspectives.
- Caregivers and Parents/Families understand how program and family values may differ and work together toward blending different value systems.
- Adults in children's lives create ongoing dialogues, which means that information exchange occurs so that good judgment can result from the blending of shared points of view. Dialogues also mean that everyone who works with children is both a teacher and a learner, and that Caregivers view Parents/Families as the experts who know what is good for their children; Parents/Families and Caregivers genuinely listen to each other instead of judging.

CELEBRATIONS

SEASONAL EVENTS

We honor and respect each family's cultural, linguistic, and religious customs and beliefs. Due to the diverse community that we serve, we realize that all of our families do not recognize certain holidays and celebrations. The following policy regarding holidays and celebrations are acknowledged to respect each family's needs: Seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer)

Holidays are introduced as part of the season, and no one holiday is recognized over another. To learn about diversity, children are taught about the different cultural practices for each holiday through books, pictures, celebrations, and music. ****Please do not send any goodies, treats, toys, candy, etc., with your child during the national holidays. Respectfully, any goodie bags or treats brought into the school will be returned to the family.***

Examples of these events are as follows:

- Fall- Fall Festival
- Winter- Snow Day
- Spring: Week of the Young Child/Earth Day
- Summer- End of the Year Celebration Luau

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time, and we enjoy celebrating them in a way that's meaningful and inclusive. At school, we sing "Happy Birthday" during circle time and invite classmates to create birthday wishes for your child to take home. To help us connect classroom and home, you're welcome to send a short video or photos (2–3 minutes) showing how your family celebrates birthdays.

To promote equity and avoid hurt feelings, we ask that **families not bring goodie bags, treats, or party favors**. Instead, teachers will help organize a simple classroom celebration, so every child feels valued. If your child's teacher hasn't contacted you the week before their birthday, feel free to reach out.

If your family chooses not to participate in birthday celebrations due to cultural or religious reasons, your child may: Observe but not join the celebration, participate in an alternate activity, or be given an excused absence.

Thank you for partnering with us to create a classroom environment that celebrates every child with respect, inclusion, and joy.

END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

At the end of each fiscal year, we come together as a school community to celebrate a year filled with learning, growth, and joyful exploration. Our End-of-Year Celebration honors each child's unique journey and participation in our program.

We want families to know that this is not a graduation ceremony. Many of our children will remain in the program, and not all are transitioning to kindergarten. For this reason, and because formal graduation ceremonies with caps and gowns are not developmentally appropriate for preschoolers, we instead focus on celebrating each child's accomplishments in a way that reflects their age and stage.

Young children thrive in environments that recognize their growth through play, relationships, and discovery—not through performance or pressure. Our celebration is designed to be inclusive, meaningful, and joyful for every child, whether they are moving on to a new classroom, a new school, or simply returning after summer break.

We look forward to celebrating with you and honoring the progress, milestones, and memories your child has made this year.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

The RHC Child Development Center works to encourage children to make positive choices during the day. The strategies staff use when working with children include: Positive redirection, Limit-setting, Natural and logical consequences, Problem-solving and role-play, and other developmentally appropriate methods. Children are encouraged to "use their words" to voice their feelings and needs. We do not use corporal punishment, such as shaking or hitting, and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion.

Discipline is a complex topic and is defined differently by everyone. We approach discipline in positive terms. We see discipline as a structure through which a child's involvement helps them become responsible for their actions toward others and towards school property. For the younger child, redirecting words to explain the adult's actions gives the child a clear message about acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Discipline is only effective when consistent age-appropriate limits exist, meaningful language to express their feelings, and a healthy environment. With gentle adult guidance, children gain the confidence to express themselves to work through difficult situations.

We believe in the importance of setting clear, consistent limits to help children learn and grow in a safe, respectful environment. The guidance techniques our teachers use reflect an understanding of each child's developmental stage, cultural background, and family goals.

We recognize that children's behavior is shaped by many factors—including our interactions, expectations, curriculum, and classroom environment. Because of this, we take a thoughtful approach to helping children channel their energy into activities that are both personally meaningful and socially positive.

A key part of our approach is positive redirection, which involves gently guiding children away from challenging behaviors and toward more constructive choices. Instead of focusing solely on what not to do, teachers help children understand what they can do—empowering them to make better decisions and stay engaged in learning.

Our overall goal is to support children in developing self-regulation, the ability to manage their emotions and behaviors over time. We understand that this is a gradual process that requires patience, practice, and strong support from both educators and families.

PROCEDURES FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS AND SUPPORT

If a child has a specific “challenging” behavior that persists over time, the following procedure will be followed: The teacher will...

- Work with the child to support changes in behavior.
- Stop the challenging behavior (gently and respectfully). An example may be the teacher will extend out his/her arm, to get in-between a child who is attempting to hit to prevent another child from getting hit.
- Observe and try to determine what is motivating misbehavior.
- Document over a period of time to look for patterns in behavior.
- Use positive guidance techniques of active listening, staying close, and assisting the child verbally expressing their needs.

At our center, we believe in nurturing the social and emotional development of each child while maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all. When a child exhibits persistent or serious behaviors that interfere with their own learning or that of others, we are committed to understanding and addressing the underlying causes with empathy and consistency—not to punish, but to support.

In alignment with [California Welfare and Institutions Code 10491.1](#) for CDE and [§ 10281 \(2024\)](#) for CCTR we do not suspend or expel children except under extraordinary circumstances, and only after all documented efforts have been made to support the child's safe participation in the program. See details below:

Everyday Guidance

Teachers use developmentally appropriate strategies to guide behavior and resolve conflicts. When unacceptable or unsafe behavior occurs, staff will:

- Separate the children involved and comfort the injured child.
- Acknowledge and name the feelings of both children, supporting the development of empathy and self-expression.
- Set clear limits, e.g., stating firmly: “It’s not okay to hurt anyone at the Center.”
- Model conflict resolution, including teaching the injured child to say “no” assertively when appropriate.
- Complete an Incident/Accident Report and notify families verbally at pick-up, if the incident involves significant injury such as a bruise, cut, or lump. (Minor hits and pushes common in group settings may not be documented unless part of a pattern.)

Progressive Response to Ongoing Challenging Behavior

If a child’s behavior becomes repeatedly disruptive, unsafe, or unresponsive to typical guidance, the following steps will be taken:

- Track the behavior over time to identify patterns, triggers, or unmet needs.
- Consult with the Center Director and classroom staff to ensure appropriate supervision, environment, and responses are in place.
- Meet with the family to discuss observations and work together on strategies for improvement.
- Develop a Family and Center Plan for Action, which may include shared goals, classroom support, and referrals for developmental screenings (e.g., vision, hearing, behavior).
- Monitor progress, keeping families informed regularly and adjusting the plan as needed.
- Recommend additional resources, if necessary, such as parenting workshops, counseling, or behavioral support services.
- If the team and family determine that the Center cannot currently meet the child's needs, the Director will work to connect the family with external resources while continuing to support the child’s participation as safely possible.

Documentation and Collaboration

All steps taken, including parent meetings, observations, referrals, and plans—will be documented as part of our commitment to transparency and partnership with families. Our goal is always to support the child’s inclusion, not exclusion.

We encourage parents and guardians to read incident reports with their child and use them as tools to reinforce positive social behavior. When families and staff work together consistently, children benefit from a unified, supportive environment.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION CSPP

Except in specific circumstances listed in the “Directives for Implementation” section, per *Education Code (EC)* Section 8489.1(a) and (b), a program must not:

- Suspend a child due to a child’s behavior.
- Encourage or persuade a child’s parents or legal guardians to prematurely pick up a child due to a child’s behavior before the program day ends.
- Expel or unenroll a child because of a child’s behavior.
- Persuade or encourage a child’s parents or legal guardians to voluntarily unenroll from the program due to a child’s behavior.

Notification to families prior to expulsion or suspension in CSPP

Beginning July 1, 2023, upon enrollment, the RHC CDC staff will inform the child’s parents or legal guardians (via this handbook) of the policy on disenrollment, including expulsion and suspension. This notification is in writing and informs parents on how they may file an appeal to the California Department of Education (CDE) in the event of the expulsion or suspension of a child.

Expulsion or suspension is a **last resort** and only allowed under specific legal circumstances (e.g., serious safety risks). If this happens:

- You will receive a **Notice of Action (NOA)**, described in 5 *CCR* Section 17783
- You have the right to **appeal to the California Department of Education**, with the CDE by submitting a written request for an appeal hearing to EEDappeals@cde.ca.gov, no later than 14 calendar days after receipt of the notice. **Note:** This is a change to current requirements. State law now includes a specific appeal procedure for suspension and expulsion of children in CSPP, which differs from the procedure required in 5 *CCR* Section 17785.
- Your child **may not attend** during the appeal process if there is a safety concern.
- The effective date of any action will be **no sooner than 24 hours after the NOA is served**.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION IN CCTR

Effective January 1, 2023, prior to expelling or disenrolling a child because of a child’s persistent and serious behaviors, CCTR (center-based only), contractors must meet the requirements described in WIC Section 10491.1 and comply with the due process requirements identified in 5 *CCR* sections 18119-18122.

Except as provided in the paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of WIC 10491.1(b)(2)-(4), a program shall not do either of the following:

- Suspend a child due to a child’s behavior.
- Encourage or persuade a child’s parents or legal guardians to prematurely pick up a child due to a child’s behavior before the program day ends.

Suspension shall only be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances when there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated without removal. To the greatest extent possible, a program shall endeavor to ensure the full participation of enrolled children in all program activities.

Informing families of the limitation on expulsion and suspension (CCTR)

Beginning July 1, 2023, upon enrollment of a child, a program shall notify the child's parents or legal guardians of the limitations on disenrollment, including expulsion and suspension.

- This notification shall be in writing and shall inform parents on how they may file an appeal to the department in the event of the expulsion or suspension of a child.

In the event a program expels or suspends a child, the program:

- Shall issue the child's parent or guardian a written "Notice of Action, Recipient of Services," as described in Section 18095 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, with the exception that the effective date of the action may be no less than 24 hours after service of the notice. If a program suspends a child, the NOA must be provided to the parent or legal guardians at least 24 hours before the suspension may go into effect.
- The program shall, at the same time, inform the parent or guardian in writing of their right to file an appeal of the action directly with the department no later than 14 calendar days after receipt of the notice.
- Because the action to suspend or expel a child involves persistent and serious behaviors that impact the safety of children, the action shall not be stayed during the pendency of any appeal.

BITING

It is the policy of the Child Development Center to practice positive behavior modification by working closely with the parent, child, and teacher to redirect the child's behavior. For two-year-olds, biting is a natural reaction to stress, lack of language, teething, etc. Staff will work to redirect this behavior to a more acceptable one.

If biting occurs, the following actions will take place:

1. Provide immediate care to the injured child.
2. Complete an "Incident/ Accident Report."
3. Inform both parents and discuss with them privately.
4. If the child continues to bite and is not responding to staff redirection, the RHC CDC will meet with the director and/or coordinator to follow the sensitive issues protocol.
5. Teachers Will:
 - Observe what might be causing the child to bite and keep a log of occurrences.
 - Follow sensitive issues protocol, which outlines setting up a meeting with the teacher, coordinator and/or director.
 - Create a plan for child and family that may include specific services, providing extra support in the classroom, and reaching out for more resources within the community.
 - The RHC CDC will conduct follow-up meetings on a need-by-need basis to continue meeting the needs of the meeting while ensuring the health and safety of all children enrolled.
 - Ultimately, we will need to consider whether this placement is appropriate for the child.
 - Please see RHC CDC termination policy

COMMUNICATION/PARENT-FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

It is encouraged for families to consistently take the opportunity to communicate with the teachers regarding their child's concerns during drop-off and pick up each day. Please direct any questions that you may have to the professional teaching staff.

As your child's first and most important teacher, getting involved in your child's education is critical. We highly encourage all families to get involved by participating in the following:

- Maintain and keep open lines of communication with program staff
- Participate in parent-teacher conferences
- Join or participate in the Parent Advisory Committee
- Attend and participate in special events and parent meetings.
- Share your talents and help us find out what your talents are.
- Attend workshops and/or pieces of training offered to parents.



COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

- A program monthly newsletter
- Announcements
- Incident Reports (regarding accidents and injuries)
- Curriculum information from each classroom, i.e., what children are learning, parent meetings, pieces of training, and workshops.
- Invitations to participate in a parent/teacher conference to discuss their child's progress. Parent evaluation forms and Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)
- E-mail notifications with center updates and information
- Important information for parents will also be posted on the office entry doors and counters and classroom doors and will be communicated digitally as well.

CHANGES TO CONTACT INFORMATION

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

- If you move, please let us know.
- If you change your phone number please let us know.
- If you change your emergency contacts, please let us know.

We need to know how to reach you by phone in an emergency.

PARENT/FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Parent/family involvement at the RHC CDC's is an important component of the program. Parents/families' involvement in their child's school enhances the success of the program and the child. The variety of parent participation options offered each school year allows single-parent families and working Parents/families to contribute even if they cannot come to the school to do so such as volunteering, being a part of our parent advisory meeting or joining us on a trip. All adults must receive prior approval and check in before engaging directly with children, to ensure a safe and secure learning environment. Here is some more information about how you can participate.

Volunteers (Title 22 101216)

Title 22 requires that all students and volunteers, including parents who work in the classroom, be in good physical health and shall be verified for the following: (THIS INCLUDES RÍO HONDO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS, and STUDENTS):

- All volunteers must complete and submit the Volunteer Request Form
- A statement signed by each volunteer affirming that they are in good health.
- Results of a test for tuberculosis were performed not more than one year before volunteering in the classroom.
- Criminal Record Clearance is required if a volunteer spends more than 16 hours per week at the facility.
- HR will ask a volunteer to complete a Live Scan. **Fingerprinting is a mandatory requirement.**
- Human Resources (HR) must first approve the volunteer request. The volunteer's name will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for approval after HR approval.

The above items are presented to the Director before any student or volunteer can stay in the classroom. All volunteers and students will never be left alone with the children, and professional staff members will directly supervise them.

Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) comprises parents of children currently enrolled at the center, the center director and or coordinator, a teacher representative, and a Río Hondo College campus representative. The Parent Advisory Committee provides the parent perspective in policy and procedure revisions and program review. They also assist events via organization, preparation, and implementation efforts. We genuinely value your input and feedback. Our goal is for you to become involved in maximizing the opportunities we offer. We look forward to collaborating with you as we help lay a solid educational foundation for your child.

Field Trips

Field trips may be planned and organized when funding permits. These trips will be related to some aspect of the curriculum and are developmentally appropriate for children. Children may only participate in field trips after parents have signed a Field Trip Permission form for that particular trip. "Blanket" Field Trip Permission forms are not acceptable. Field trips are planned in collaboration with the director, teachers, and parents. Vehicles used for transportation are licensed and insured in accordance with federal and state laws. The required safety equipment will also be utilized where appropriate, including first aid kits.

Nature Walks

As part of our curriculum, children participate in weekly walks around the campus. Please ensure that your child wears comfortable shoes, a hat, and sunscreen on those days. We may ask for family members to join us on these walks to ensure maximum supervision and safety measures can be met.

Professional Boundaries

We strive to have close yet professional relationships with the families that we serve. Please respect the personal boundaries of RHC CDC staff and teachers by not asking to “friend” or follow them on social media sites or asking for their cell phone or home phone numbers. All RHC CDC staff members are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with families. Questions about acceptable behavior should be discussed with the center director.

Babysitting/Childcare arrangements

It is not the mission of the RHC CDC to provide childcare for its clients in any location other than the RHC CDC’s during normal hours of operation. Parents/families and staff should understand that a babysitting arrangement is not within the course and scope of the staff member’s duties. The RHC CDC respectfully requests that Parents/Families do not employ the teaching staff after hours for babysitting services or otherwise. This puts the Center at risk and places the teacher in a compromising position.

RHC CDC STAFF

All staff at the Río Hondo College Child Development Center (RHC CDC) hold or qualify for a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Child Development Permit, authorizing them to provide care and instruction in early childhood settings as outline in Title 22 101216 (Personnel Requirements) per their hired job description. State law requires all staff to meet the following requirements:

- Meet the requirements of Health and Safety Code Section 1597.055
- All childcare center staff, over the age of 18, must submit fingerprints to Community Care

Licensing for a Criminal Clearance Check and a Child Abuse Index Check through the California Department of Justice.

- Keep up to date records in their personnel file on site

Staff receive ongoing professional development in areas such as safety, curriculum, care, and supervision.

- CPR & First Aid certification (renewed every two years)
- Child Abuse Mandated Reporter training (every two years)
- A minimum of 105 hours of professional development annually

Additional adults in the classroom may include behavior specialists, practicum students, student workers or observers who are under the direct supervision of qualified staff. All volunteers and students will never be left alone with the children, and professional RHC CDC staff members will directly supervise them.

PREPARING FOR THE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE

SUPPLIES NEEDED

A set of extra clothes

CHILDREN MUST ALWAYS HAVE AN EXTRA SET AT SCHOOL. Please bring a change of clothes to be kept in the classroom. Label all items brought to school with your child's first and last name. If clothes get soiled while at school, the teachers will inform you. Please return with a new set of clothes for the following day. Our school does not use aprons as we feel children experience learning through all of their senses. Dirt, paint, water, and other fun experiences will cover your child's clothes.

Emergency supplies:

Provide two-gallon-sized zip lock bags, one labeled clothing, a family picture, and a note for your child. Please see the detailed emergency list included in the enrollment packet you received.

Sunscreen:

Please make sure to provide sunscreen and sign a permission slip to allow the application of sunscreen. Please supply additional sunscreen as needed. Teachers will then apply sunscreen on children as required. Please be sure to bring contactless sunblock (spray bottles or roll on).

CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINT/CAR SEAT REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with California law, the Child Development Center is committed to ensuring the safety of all children, including during arrival and dismissal.

Under Senate Bill 255 (Kaitlyn's Law) and California Vehicle Code Section 27360: It is illegal to leave a child age 6 or younger unattended in a motor vehicle at any time.

Children under age 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat of the vehicle.

Children age 8 or older OR who are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall may wear a regular seatbelt.

RHC CDC staff are legally obligated to enforce these rules. If a child is observed left unattended in a vehicle, staff will take immediate action, which may include contacting law enforcement to ensure the child's safety.

We ask all families to follow these laws for the protection of their children and others in the community. Thank you for your cooperation.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING THE CENTER

Upon arrival and pick up of your child, please adhere to the following guidelines to ensure the safety of your child and other children:

- Please observe all speed limits in the parking lot.

- Always park in a designated spot. The center lot is for drop-off/ pickup only.
- Hold the hands of any children you escort from the car to the front door.
- Once inside the center, turn your cell phone off or on vibrate and refrain from using the cell phone until you leave the building.
- No drinks, water, food, or cell phone use is allowed in children's environment.

DIGITAL SIGN IN AND OUT

Parents must sign in and out using a digital device. State law requires that each child be signed in and signed out daily 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 a **complete and legible signature**; **Signatures are required for audit purposes.**

For the safety of all children, only individuals listed on the child's Emergency and Identification Information form will be allowed to pick up your child. **A valid photo ID must be presented at the time of pickup.** Only the authorized parent or legal guardian who enrolled the child may make changes or additions to the emergency contact list. All updates must be made in person, we cannot accept changes over the phone, by email, or from unauthorized individuals. We ask that parents or guardians ensure that all individuals listed on the emergency form are informed of our policies, including the requirement to show identification and follow check-in/out procedures.

Anyone who does not meet these criteria will not be permitted to pick up the child under any circumstances.

**Disclaimer: If a parent/ guardian's signature is not legible, a RHC CDC staff member will add a notation to the sign-in sheet to document this. The signature must match the Application for Services signature on file.*

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The key to a smooth adjustment to a new learning environment is preparation, information, and patience. Spend time carefully reading all the information the program provides for you, so you know what to expect, and then talk with your child over a reasonable time about what they should expect. Talk about the environment, toys, food, teachers, and other children they will become friends with. Allow your child to assist you in selecting and preparing items for school. For example, what they will wear to school or which extra clothes they should wear. Maintain a positive attitude yourself and have reasonable expectations regarding the adjustment period. Naturally, your child has fears and excitement regarding a new group experience. Prior to starting at the center, you and your child will have the opportunity to have a meet and greet with your child's teacher. Here are some pro tips:

- Plan to arrive early in the first few days to allow some adjustment time during goodbyes.
- When the time comes to leave your child in the program on their own, let them know that you are leaving by giving them a hug and a kiss goodbye.
- There may be tears, but it is important that you leave when you tell your child goodbye.
- Remember to tell your child that you will be back.
- You must be on time to pick your child up every day, but it is especially important on the first day.
- When you get home, ask questions about your child's day to let them know that you think school is an important part of life.
- Don't be alarmed if they say, "I did not do anything!" Prepare for that response by communicating with the staff regarding the day, reading the communication via Learning Genie, posting curriculum materials on the parent boards in each classroom, and taking any of your child's work for the day. If you do this, you can remind your child of what happened during the day and enjoy a more detailed response.

DRESS CODE

To support active learning, safety, and comfort, we ask that children be dressed in weather-appropriate, comfortable play clothes that can get dirty, wet, or worn during the day.

Choose clothes that your child can move freely in and that won't cause concern if they become soiled or stained from messy play, outdoor exploration, or art activities. We do not offer aprons or smocks, as they may limit children's full participation in hands-on learning experiences.

We believe that children learn from the natural elements and will play outdoors as much as possible. Water play is offered all year long. We follow guidance from the National Weather Service on hazardous conditions. Please dress children for the weather, including jackets, hats, and layers for cooler temperatures, and sun-protective clothing when appropriate. *We reserve the right to restrict a child's activities or offer them alternative clothing.* All children need the opportunity to feel included in each daily activity, dressing your child in layers will ensure their comfort as the temperature changes throughout the day.

For safety reasons, avoid long skirts, dresses, scarves, jacket hood strings, or any clothing that could get caught on equipment or restrict movement during active play. Closed-toe shoes with rubber soles are recommended for safe outdoor and indoor play. Shoes that fasten or tie are preferred because they provide more security when children use large motor equipment.

The parent/family must provide an extra set of seasonal clothing, including underwear and socks, in case of accidents or spills. Please return any borrowed clothing.

Children learn best when they are comfortable, safe, and free to explore their environment. Inappropriate clothing—such as items that are unsafe, overly restrictive, or too delicate for messy play—can prevent a child from joining in important activities like outdoor exploration, art projects, or movement-based learning. Please help us support that by dressing them appropriately each day.

**Protip – Label each clothing item with your child's name*

TOYS/PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME

Children are encouraged to share their thoughts, feelings, and family experiences, including special events or traditions. We also welcome families to participate by sharing elements of their culture, such as music, stories, or items that reflect their heritage, with prior coordination with the teacher or Director.

To maintain a focused and inclusive learning environment, we ask that families refrain from sending toys or personal items from home unless they are specifically approved by the teacher and Director as part of a curriculum-related activity.

This policy helps us:

- Prevent loss, damage, or confusion over personal belongings (the center cannot be responsible for lost items)
- Avoid disruptions or distractions during the school day
- Ensure that all children feel included, especially if not everyone can bring similar items

Thank you for helping us create a safe, respectful, and engaging learning space for all children.

ATTENDANCE

It is extremely important that children attend the program regularly. Parents/Families are asked to phone the Center each morning the child will be absent and give the reason for the absence. If the child will be out consecutively for 5 days due to illness, a doctor's note is required upon the child's return. Please see the Health and Safety Section of this handbook for more information on the RHC CDC's attendance policy as it relates to illness.

Parents/Families must sign their name using their full legal and legible signature (no initials) on the child's sign-in and sign out sheet and verify the specific reason for the absence (i.e., flu, cold, cough, fever, appointment, etc.). Below is a list of excused and unexcused absences.

We feel strongly that your child will benefit greatly by being in school every day they are scheduled. However, we realize that some absences are unavoidable. The following is at the discretion of the Director, below is a list of some examples of excused and unexcused absences, including what constitutes a best interest day:

Excused Absences	Best Interest of the Child	Unexcused Absences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness of child or parent • Family emergencies- situations that cause the parent to keep the child with them and out of school that can be documented and is out of the parent's control. • Extended illness, quarantine, or death of a family member or close family friend. • Travel away from home for legal issues such as court or visa-related issues, travel due to work or school, • Car problems or housing problems (car breaks down, broken water pipe at home). • Custody issues or incarceration/arrest of a family member, • Cancellation of class on campus. • Time spent away from home is required by a formal court order (such as shared custody of a child). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Vacation • Cultural or Religious Activities • Spending Quality Time with Parent or Relatives • 10 days per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) are allowed for absences that revolve around special events for children and their families, such as vacation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My child did not want to go to school. • I didn't feel like taking my child to school today. • Child/ parent work up late • Weather is too hot/ cold • Running errands • No reason stated for being absent

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

We understand that there may be circumstances where children may be out if they are ill, family emergency, best interest days, etc. All absences are billable. The Río Hondo College CDC office will track all absences (fee-based and subsidized) as this is a requirement by the Department of Education (CSPP) and Department of Social Services (CCTR).

Please call the RHC CDC office or add your child's absence to the digital M-sign portal by 9:00 a.m. on the day of your child's absence. The school office number is **562-908-3494**. When your child is absent, please specify the reason for the absence. There is also an answering machine so messages can be left the night before.

- Children who are sent home due to an illness or health issue must remain at home for 24 hours and may return to school once they are symptom-free. (*See Illness Policy)
- Children not attending school for more than **5 (five)** consecutive days because of illness must submit a "Return to School" notice from their health care provider indicating doctor approval to return to school.

ABANDONMENT OF CHILD CARE (18066.5)

When a child has been absent for 7 consecutive calendar days and has not notified the provider of the reason the family is not using services, abandonment of care is considered. Additionally, when the school personnel has made every effort to contact the parent and has been unsuccessful, services will be deemed abandoned by the parent/ guardian after 30 consecutive calendar days.

Communication attempts will occur using the contact information on file, the contractor shall attempt to contact the parent through a variety of communication methods. At least one communication attempt shall be in writing, which may be through electronic methods. The RHC CDC shall keep documentation of all communication attempts, including a copy of all written communication, in the family data file. The RHC CDC will inform the parent in these communications that failure to communicate with the contractor or provider may result in termination of early learning and care services. The RHC CDC will provide/mail a Notice of Action to disenroll the parent/ guardian on the basis of abandonment of care.

EARLY PICK-UP & LATE DROP-OFF POLICY

Timely drop-off and pick-up are essential for maintaining consistency in children's routines. This policy applies to all families, both fee-based and subsidized, and follows contract hours outlined in the Notice of Action. After 9:00 a.m. drop-off without pre-approval or pick-up after 5:00 p.m. will be documented.

- 1st occurrence: Verbal reminder with parent signature recorded.
- 2nd occurrence: Written notification with parent signature on file.
- 3rd occurrence: Written notification and a meeting with the coordinator or director to discuss support.
- 4th occurrence: Written notification; further late arrivals or pickups may result in additional actions such as service termination.

**Pre-approval of late drop-offs are given on a case by case basis and may need a letter from a doctor or agency for the reason for late drop-off.*

**Late pick-up that exceeds the center's business hours of 5 p.m. will be charged late fees. A fee of \$10 will be assessed for the first 10 minutes, plus an additional \$1 for every minute after that. All late fees must be paid within a week of receiving the invoice.*

HEALTH AND SAFETY

DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH & IMMUNIZATIONS

Upon enrollment, a parent/ guardian will be asked to submit a Physician's Report (LIC 701) and a copy of the child's immunization records. Before being admitted, a child shall be immunized against diseases as required by the California Code of Regulations: Title 17. A child can be "exempt" or excused from shots *only* if they have a temporary medical exemption. The following immunizations are required:

**One Hib dose must be given on or after the 1st birthday regardless of previous doses.*

If a child does not have all immunizations up to date, the parent/ guardian will be asked to obtain up-to-date immunizations before enrollment. If needed, the center will work with the families to help meet this requirement. Also, if a physical is not up to date, the family has 30 days to submit it from the day of enrollment. Failure to submit a physical may result in termination from the program.

2 years to 5 years	3 Polio	4 DTaP	3 Hepatitis B	1 Varicella
On or after 1st birthday:	1 Hib* and 1 MMR			

WELLNESS POLICY

Adults and children are expected to be in good health and able to participate in the planned activities. To reduce the spread of illness, please keep your child home if he or she has had a non-clear nasal discharge, unexplained rash, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach/earache, swollen glands, fever over 100° without medication, or strong cough during the previous 24- hour period.

Upon arrival at school, the center staff will conduct a health check for each child and will not allow a sick child to stay at school (101226.1). The parent must remain at the center until the child is accepted. Children must be symptom and fever free without medication for 24 hours to attend school. Staff will ensure that children with apparent symptoms of illness, including, but not limited to, fever or vomiting, are not accepted at school. RHC CDC center staff shall pay additional attention to children who:

- Have been absent because of illness.
- Have been exposed to a contagious disease.

***Pro tip: It is helpful to check for these symptoms prior to leaving your home. See the list of symptoms below.*

ILLNESS POLICY

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you immediately. Parents/Guardians must arrange for their child to be picked up within an hour. All sick children will be isolated (in the Director's office) from the other children until they are picked up. According to our Illness Policy, if a child leaves school because of illness, the child will not be allowed to return to school until 24 hours have passed. Per the illness policy stated above, the child may return to school with a doctor's clearance after 5 consecutive days due to illness.

SYMPTOMS YOUR CHILD MUST REMAIN AT HOME UNTIL:

- **Fever-** 101° or above: 24 hours after the fever has subsided and the temperature returned to normal without medication.
- **Colds/Flu:** Thick yellow or green mucus discharge is no longer draining from the nose, and

coughing has subsided.

- **Diarrhea/Vomiting:** Loose stools have subsided, and the child has returned to normal eating without stomach upset for 24
- **Unexplained Rash:** Until the rash disappears, or it is determined that the rash is not contagious.

OTHER COMMON CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

Pediculosis (Head lice)

Head Lice is very common among preschool children and is a seasonal issue in temperate climates like California. When the weather is warm, the incidence increases. For children with head lice, the RHC CDC will notify the parent/guardian, who will need to pick up the child. The RHC CDC will provide parents/guardians with Treatment General Guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control And Prevention (CDC). Children may return to school when there are no head lice or eggs present in the child's hair. Upon returning to school, a RHC CDC staff member will recheck the child for eggs or lice.

Coxsackievirus (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease)

Infection caused by Coxsackievirus is more common in summer and fall. If RHC CDC staff find tiny blisters in the mouth, fingers, palms or hands, buttocks, and/or soles of feet, then the RHC CDC will contact the parent/guardian. Additionally, common cold-like symptoms (sore throat, runny nose, cough, fever) may be present in some children. Children may return to school with a doctor's clearance indicating the child may return to school.

Epidemic and Outbreaks

*The RHC CDC will notify all families at the center of any epidemic or outbreak. The RHC CDC will provide the parents with general guidelines on treatment and care as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) including isolation guidance.

"Not contagious"

A child is determined to be "not contagious" by a written doctor's note only.

ALLERGIES

Please ensure that staff are informed of all your child's allergies and that this information is clearly documented on the **Parent Consent for Administration of Medication** form and the **Child's Health History – Parents Report** form.

If your child has allergies or food restrictions, RHC CDC staff will provide you with a Medical Statement to Request Special Meals and/or Accommodations form. This form must be completed and submitted by your child's physician for the RHC CDC to make appropriate meal accommodations. Substitutions to the menu cannot be made without this completed form.

For the health and safety of your child, children with known allergies will NOT be allowed to attend or return to the program unless:

- All required medical forms are fully completed and on file
- Any necessary medication (e.g., EpiPen, inhaler) is provided and kept on site

This policy ensures we can respond promptly and appropriately to allergic reactions. Meal accommodation information and requirements will be reviewed during enrollment.

MEDICATION POLICY

If your child requires medication (i.e., asthma, diabetes, food allergies, etc.). A parent must notify the RHC CDC staff, and the following will occur:

- The parent will obtain and complete the form- Parent Consent for Administration of Medication and Medication Chart (LIC 9221).
- A prescription from the doctor indicating the medication prescribed by the physician.

- The parent will fill out the Individualized Plan for Incidental Medical Services (IMS), which outlines:
 - Procedure for administering medication
 - Precautions that RHC CDC staff will follow when administering IMS.
 - What to do with unused and expired medication
 - When RHC CDC staff will call 911 & when to notify the child's authorized representative.
 - Staff training.

**Please note that your child may not begin at the center unless all emergency medication is onsite, paperwork is received, and staff is trained.*

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

In the necessity for the administration of incidental medical services, such as Epi-Pen, Inhalers or Nebulizers, the medication, whether prescription or non-prescription can be given to children only when there is a note from their doctor AND written permission from Parents/Families. Medication may be given to a child during program hours if the parent completes the "Parent Consent for Administration of Medication" form. The form must contain dosage, method, and directions for administering the medication and possible side effects. The parent/guardian must bring the medication to the center in its original container along with tools to administer medication via syringes, medication cups, etc. After completing the form, a meeting with the parent/ or guardian and teaching staff will finalize the details of the medication administration process in the classroom.

The RHC CDC staff must review the doctor's documentation and the medication container's instructions for accuracy. A designated teaching staff member will be responsible for giving the medicine to the child and keeping a dosage schedule. They should also be knowledgeable about the medication and any possible side effects.

Administrative staff will administer medication if the teaching staff is unavailable. The Director will designate available staff to administer the medication. The RHC CDC will keep a log on the site indicating the time and person who administered the medication. This form will be available for the parent or guardian to review at any time.

All medications must be stored out of reach of children in a centralized locked cabinet. If the medication requires refrigeration, it must be stored and labeled. Assuring this storage is the responsibility of the designated teaching staff member giving the medications at the center.

**Over-the-counter medication will not be administered to any child by staff.*

ACCIDENTS WHILE AT SCHOOL

*As children are learning about the world around them, it is imperative that they can explore their environment, and that may include taking risks. Developmentally taking risks is healthy for young children as it allows them to develop confidence as they learn to deal with challenging situations. In the event a child has an accident, the staff member who witnessed the accident will complete an "Incident Report.". The RHC CDC will place a copy of the incident report in the child's file and will give a copy to the parent.

Parents will be notified by phone of any accidents involving head injuries or severe bleeding. Child must be picked up within one hour of initial contact. If the RHC CDC cannot reach the parent after several attempts, the Center will call emergency numbers on the Enrollment Card. State licensing requires the RHC CDC to note/document any occurrence of unusual behavior and/or signs of illness in the child's file.

**Please keep emergency information (persons to contact and phone numbers) current on your child's Enrollment Card.*

Let a staff member know, if you will not be in the usual place.

If a child is stung by a bee or gets a splinter, the RHC CDC staff will not remove it. RHC CDC staff will clean the affected area with soap, water, and ice for comfort. RHC CDC staff will notify parents so they can decide on the treatment.

CHILD RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER INJURY

Please notify the school promptly if your child sustains an injury, whether on or off school premises. Your notification should include the date, time, cause, nature of the injury, and any medical advice or restrictions. Additionally, inform us if the injury affects your child's ability to participate in school activities.

For serious injuries, RHC CDC requires medical clearance from a healthcare professional confirming your child is fit to return to school, including any necessary accommodations. Please note that your child cannot return to school until this clearance is provided. RHC CDC staff will work with you to develop a plan for your child's return, which may include activity modifications. Open communication throughout the recovery process is essential. Where possible, RHC CDC will provide reasonable accommodations and support, such as physical assistance or emotional care, to ensure a safe and comfortable return.

Parents/guardians will also be required to sign a Parent Acknowledgment and Liability Waiver Form prior to their child's return, confirming their understanding of the school's policies and any related risks.

SANITATION POLICIES

Clean hands are the most effective way to keep illness out of our Center and away from your child. The first thing you will be asked to do everyday is help your child wash their hands. All adults and children need to wash hands with soap and water:

- upon entering the classroom,
- before handling food, after toileting,
- after assisting a child with toileting,
- after using a tissue.

Hand washing procedures are posted near the sinks. Remember to turn off the water using a paper towel, **NOT YOUR CLEAN HANDS**.

TOILETING

Only the program staff is allowed to assist children with toileting in the classroom restrooms. Other adults and children are not permitted in the classroom restrooms. A family restroom is available in the pavilion at the center and is also available for adult use. At drop-off and pick-up, please use the bathroom in the pavilion to assist an enrolled child with toileting or if their siblings have a toileting need.

Children will be supervised at all times while toileting. If the child is soiled, the staff will assist the child in changing themselves but generally will provide verbal assistance rather than direct physical assistance to protect the child and staff. The children and staff are required to wash their hands after toileting thoroughly.

Every year the parent advisory committee votes if the RHC CDC will use funds for diaper/toileting needs. For **FY2025-2026** the PAC voted against the RHC CDC providing diapers to all children.

- Parents are required to provide diapers and wipes for their children.
- Parents must ensure that the child has diapers in order for services to be rendered.
- The RHC CDC will provide resources for those families who need assistance obtaining diapers, etc.

TOILET LEARNING

This is a monumental milestone for young children. Toilet learning is an intricate process that requires time and patience, among other things, as this will ensure that the overall experience is good for

the child and parent.

How do you know if your child is ready to learn how to use the toilet?

- Child is uncomfortable in a soiled diaper.
- Children may be able to follow simple directions.
- Child is often dry when changing a diaper.

- Child pulls down & up bottoms.
- Child seems to be interested in the toilet.
- Nighttime dryness

Techniques Used:

- Be familiar with the words the child describes when they need to use the potty.
- Check in with family to ensure consistency at home and school
- Begin to use pull-ups
- Invite children to sit on the potty.
- Reading books, songs, and playing games support children through potty training.
- Invite children throughout the day to use the potty (i.e., before lunch, after nap time, after snack, etc.).

At the RHC CDC children will never be forced to sit on a toilet; they will be encouraged to use it. Children will always be supervised by a staff member while using the toilet.

NUTRITION

The RHC CDC participates in the California Department of Social Services, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Families are required to fill out a food application each school year for continued funding. The Child Development Center and Lab, as a state funded program, does not charge for food, including breakfast, snacks and/or lunch. The CDC serves hot and nutritious meals that comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

RHC CDC is a nut-free school. For this reason, we ask that parents do not bring food from home, as we ensure all food purchased has no nuts.

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

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

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

NAPPING (101230)

During a 2-hour period, children are given an opportunity to rest daily. Children are never forced to sleep but are encouraged to rest quietly. A napping space, cot, blankets, and sheets are provided for your child. No child shall be forced to stay awake or to stay in the napping area longer than the normal napping period. Children who are not sleeping are provided with alternative, quiet activities such as books, puzzles, drawing journals, etc.

CENTER SAFETY

Happiness is feeling safe. The first responsibility of all center staff, participating adults, and visiting students is to provide a safe indoor and outdoor environment for children and adults at the RHC CDC. Disorderly conduct, verbal abuse, or profanity towards anyone present at the program may cause termination of services.

We aim to keep all traffic pattern areas free of objects (blocks, toys, paper towels, etc.) and ensure that all spills are wiped up immediately. RHC CDC Staff conducts an environment parameter check for any unsafe materials. Children are encouraged to wipe up their own spills and to pick up what they have dropped.

If, at any time, you are concerned about the safety of a particular situation, please ask your Child Development Teacher, or Director.

RULES OF CONDUCT

The RHC CDC prohibits the following behavior on its premises. Any parent/guardian or authorized representative who displays any of these behaviors may be prohibited from participating in a RHC CDC related activity.

No child or adult will be physically abused, including shaking, grabbing, hitting, pushing, at the RHC CDC or at a RHC CDC related activity.

- No child or adult will be verbally abused or harassed, and no adult will use profane or obscene language at the RHC CDC or at a RHC CDC related activity.
- No alcoholic beverages will be allowed at the CDC. No child will be released to anyone who appears intoxicated.
- No illegal drugs will be allowed at the RHC CDC or at a RHC CDC related activity. Any prescribed or over-the counter medications must be out of reach of children at all times. No child will be released to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs.
- Smoking is prohibited at the RHC CDC or at a RHC CDC related activity.
- Theft or damage of RHC CDC property is prohibited.
- Failure to follow these rules of conduct will result in dismissal from the program.

SUPERVISION

There are many important things that we do at the Child Development Center, but the most important task, the one that makes all of the parent, student and child learning possible is to keep the children in our care safe. The #1 way we keep children safe is by making sure that all children are observed by an adult at all times. For Parents/Families this can be very different from home, where we trust that the children out of our sight in the living room or back yard are safe. At school Parents/Families and teachers work together to make sure that all of the children are watched while at play.

The following is a list of reminders for when you are working in the classroom with children at our Center.

- If you are assigned an area to watch, know that you are assisting to watch all of the children who enter that area.
- Know that you are not alone, the teachers and other Parents/Families are working with you as a team to keep all of the children safe.
- Alert the nearest teacher if there are too few or too many children in your area--they will find assistance for you or ask you to assist in watching a nearby area as well.
- If you are watching a particular area, it is up to you to enforce safety limits. For example, if you observe a child riding a bike without shoes, don't wait for someone else to set a limit with them--stop them and let the child know you will hold their bike for them while they get their shoes.

SUNSCREEN

It is strongly recommended that children wear sunscreen to prevent sunburn. Parents/Families should apply sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher before children come to school. Staff will reapply sunscreen, with parent permission, if the parent supplies a contactless or spray sunscreen bottle labeled with the child's name after nap time.

USING WHEELED EQUIPMENT

Each child is encouraged to wear a bicycle helmet while riding on any wheeled equipment and must wear shoes. The CDC does not provide knee or elbow pads. Like the importance of establishing healthy eating habits, establishing safe practices early in life can make an important difference in lifelong safety.

SMOKING & DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Our program has a policy of NO SMOKING on any part of the property, including the parking lot. Smoking is also not permitted on field trips. Our program will not tolerate drug use, which may jeopardize the employees' and children's health and well-being. This includes

- Illegal or Prescription Drugs
- Controlled Substances
- Alcohol
- Smoking



Our smoke and drug-free environment include all areas around the school and on field trips. By law, if a parent is under the substance of any drug, the RHC CDC will not release the child, and another person on the emergency contact list will be contacted. If the RHC CDC cannot contact anyone, then the RHC CDC will contact the Whittier Police Department.

MANDATED CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING

Effective January 1, 1985, the child abuse reporting law in the State of California requires all employees who work in positions where they may observe suspected child abuse victims to sign a statement acknowledging such a reporting requirement and consent to abide by it. All staff will report any and all suspected child abuse and maintain confidentiality. By law, the staff is not required to inform parents of any reports. All staff are required to take the Mandated Reporter training every two years as required by law AB 1432.

ADULTS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP

Any adult (age 18 or older) authorized on the Enrollment Card by the enrolling parent. A photo I.D. will be required. Authorization for Pick-Up – Your child will only be released to authorized individuals. Initial authorization must be made on the Identification and Emergency Information and/or Enrollment Card form provided. Any changes to this form must be made in writing, either to add or delete an individual. When an authorized person arrives at the center for pick-up for the first time, his or her photo ID will be checked at the reception area and the child's file checked to verify information. This can occur for the first several visits as staff becomes acquainted with the new person, so please ask those assisting you with pick-up to be patient with us and always have their ID ready. All persons authorized to pick up your child must be at least 18 years of age. If an unauthorized person should arrive at the RHC CDC, the parent will be called immediately, and the child will not be released except to an authorized individual. If necessary, the Whittier Police Department will be notified.

If a parent or other authorized person arrives to pick up a child and appears in the judgment of the staff in any way to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, the Whittier Police Department will be called immediately. A child will not be released to any person under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The RHC CDC staff will attempt to call someone from the child's emergency list to pick up your child.

LEGAL CUSTODY

If you are experiencing custody difficulties, we strongly urge you to keep the RHC CDC director and staff fully advised of circumstances which might affect the RHC CDC and your child. It is the responsibility of the Parent to keep the authorized list of people allowed to pick up a child current and accurate. Unless legal documentation is submitted to the contrary, the RHC CDC assumes that both Parents/Families listed have equal rights to drop off and pick up a child. If there is a change in legal custody and one parent is granted sole custody of your child, and the other parent is no longer authorized to pick up your child, you must inform the Center of this fact and provide the Center Manager with a copy of the court order confirming custody. The copy will be placed in the child's file and we will abide by what the court has listed.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES & BOUNDARIES

For the safety of all children, we ask all families to refrain from sharing and/or posting children and staff images without prior consent to any social media sites. Additionally, we ask that you please refrain from “friending” staff members through social media. We want to establish these boundaries to maintain a professional environment. We ask you to respect these boundaries and guidelines to help us protect our school community.

All families signed a media release and consent form during enrollment, acknowledging these guidelines. The RHC CDC asks each family to sign a photo release, giving the RHC CDC permission to use photographs or other images of children/ adult students for documentation, art projects, displays, the RHC CDC website and school promotional materials. As a model lab school at the college, observing students sometimes photograph children as part of their class assignments. If you are opposed to having your child’s image used in any way, please make note of this on your RHC CDC contract/paperwork.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please practice extreme caution while driving or walking to and from the Center. Hold children’s hands, use crosswalks where available, and model safe practices for your child. When car-pooling, keep your adult-child ratios safe, and discuss and agree on safety rules with adults and children. During hot days, please do not leave your cars idling (running) in the parking lot. It is recommended that children under 100 pounds ride in the back seat away from air bags.

Never leave any child alone in the car!
NO matter how short the time! It is not only unsafe, but illegal.
Always watch for children and moving vehicles!

EVACUATION & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency/epidemic outbreak, it may be necessary to evacuate the center completely. If necessary, the RHC CDC center staff will take your child to student Parking Lot C until it is safe for you to come and pick up your child. Your child's safety and well-being are our primary concerns. All public employees are declared emergency disaster service workers during an emergency/disaster. Please be assured that we will take care of your child.

As part of your enrollment process, we ask that all families provide an emergency kit, including emergency clothes and a family portrait for your child. The RHC CDC staff will keep the emergency kit in a safe place for one year and provide a list of emergency kit items upon enrollment. The kit will be returned to you at the end of each school year or when your child leaves the program. Our program will utilize unclaimed kits or donate them to other charitable organizations.

The RHC CDC provides an emergency supply of water and food during an emergency. The program also performs monthly evacuation, lockdown, active shooter, fire, and earthquake drills. An Evacuation Plan is available for viewing on the Parent Bulletin Board, in the Office, and near the entry doors in each classroom. At least one staff member with pediatric first aid, including rescue breathing, is always present. All staff must have current CPR and First Aid training. First Aid kits are readily available in each classroom and are maintained monthly. A Defibrillator is located in the front office, and the staff has been trained to use this equipment.

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Certification of Enrollment

The enrollment process is the same for both subsidized and private pay families. If a family meets eligibility and needs criteria, the next step is to certify their enrollment into the program. Before certification is complete, Parents/Families must complete necessary enrollment forms and bring in relevant documentation. An application for services will be completed by staff in consultation with the Parent/Family. Once certified, a family is eligible for not less than 24 months.

Exceptions:

- Families who are certified as income eligible & during their certification period, their income exceeds **(CCTR 85%)/(CSPP 100%)** of the state median income (SMI)
- Families who do not follow agency policy (Attendance policy, delinquent fees, etc.).

Required Documentation

Each need and eligibility criterion requires distinct documentation for verification. Center Administrative Staff will let you know what documentation your family will need in order to complete the enrollment process. No family will be enrolled until all required forms are completed and all required documents are submitted.

Documentation and Determination of Family Size ([5 CCR 18100 and 18083](#))

The RHC CDC shall use the information provided on the application for services to determine family size. A parent shall provide the parents' names and the names, gender, and birthdates of children under 18 in the family. The parent shall provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family. The number of children shall be documented by providing one of the following documents, as applicable:

- a. Birth certificates;
- b. Court orders regarding child custody;
- c. Adoption documents;
- d. Records of Foster Care placements;
- e. School or medical records;
- f. County welfare department records; or
- g. Other reliable documentation indicates the relationship of the child to the parent.

When only one parent has signed the application and the information provided pursuant to subdivision (a)(1) indicates the child(ren) in the family has another parent whose name does not appear on the application, then the presence or absence of that parent shall be documented by providing any one of the following documents, as applicable:

- a. Records of marriage, divorce, domestic partnership or legal separation;
- b. Court-ordered child custody arrangements;
- c. Evidence that the parent signing the application is receiving child support payments from that person, has filed for child support with the appropriate local agency, or has executed documents with that agency declining to file for child support;
- d. Rental receipts or agreements, contracts, utility bills or other documents for the residence of the family indicating that the parent is the responsible party; or
- e. Any other documentation, excluding a self-declaration except as provided in subdivision (a)(3), to confirm the presence or absence of a parent of a child in the family.

Total Countable Income ([5 CCR 18078 and 18084, 18096](#))

The parent is responsible for providing documentation of the family's total countable income. For

consistent income it is the one to two month window and for inconsistent or intermittent income it is 12 months worth of income. The RHC CDC staff is required to verify the information for all the individuals counted in the family size, as described below:

- Gross Salary/ Wages
- Public Assistance
- Disability/ Unemployment
- Workers' Compensation
- Spousal Support
- Survivor Benefits
- Retirement Benefits
- Dividends/ Interests
- Rental Income
- Financial Assistance for Child
- Veterans Pension
- Annuity/ Pension
- Inheritance
- Housing Included in Pay
- Auto included in Pay
- Grants/Scholarships Living
- Insurance Settlements
- Net Gain From Property
- Other Income

Changes in Status

As a participating parent, you must notify the RHC CDC when your income exceeds 85% (CCTR)/100% (CSPP) of the SMI within 30 days. Parents/Families have the right to voluntarily report changes to

- Reduce family fees
- Disenroll from the program due to no longer needing services
- Change service schedule (days and/or hours of service).

Recertification of Enrollment

After initial certification and enrollment, the RHC CDC shall verify eligibility and need and recertify each family/child once each contract period at intervals not less than twenty four (24) months.

Notice of Action

A Notice of Action will be sent to Parents/Families to:

- 1) inform them of the agency's decision to approve or deny services;
 - 2) when any changes are made to the service agreement.
- Application for Services –Approving or Denying Services (5 CCR 18081, 18083, 18094, and 18095)
 - After initial certification, a decision to approve or deny services will be communicated to the family through a written NOA, Application for Services, in accordance with 5 CCR 18118.
 - Instructions for the parent(s) on how to request a hearing if they disagree with the contractor's decision as stated in the NOA, Application for Services in accordance with procedures specified in 5 CCR 18120 and 18121 and the Due Process section.
 - An appeal process is clearly defined on the back of the Notice of Action and explains how to appeal the agency's decision. It is not connected to certification or recertification of families.

[CCTR Appeal](#) (English) (Spanish)

- If a parent/ guardian proceeds with an appeal, the Notice of Action must be completed, signed, and returned to:

Please address the appeal to Cindy O'Neill, Director of the Río Hondo College
CDC. 3600 Workman Mill Rd., Whittier, CA 90601, 562- 908-3494.

SUBSIDIZED CARE INFORMATION

The California Department of Education/Early Education Division (CDE/EED) and California Department of Social Service (CDSS) funds a portion of our full day programs. According to the State Funding Terms and Conditions for Child Development Programs, fees are assessed based upon the family's adjusted gross monthly income, family size, need and contract for services provided. Most families enrolled at the RHC CDC will have to meet CDE/EED or CDSS eligibility requirements in order to qualify for services.

ELIGIBILITY AND NEED CRITERIA

The RHC CDC offers subsidized services to families who meet eligibility criteria and who demonstrate a need for child care.

Subsidized Eligible Enrollment

RHC CDC uses the most recently approved [family fee schedule](#) prepared and issued by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services when determining whether a family fee is applicable and the amount of a family's fee. The following factors determine the fee for each family: *Please refer to the countable income section for all countable income.

1. The total adjusted monthly family income;
2. Family size;
3. The certified family need, based on the total number of hours approved.

Eligibility and Need Criteria

Eligibility is based on either family or child eligibility. Parent's/Guardian's must provide documentation of eligibility in 1 or more of these categories: **Families** must meet one of the following eligibility criteria in order to qualify for services:

- **Public Assistance** – The family is a public assistance recipient
- **Income** – The family meets state income guidelines based on family size and income
- **Homelessness** – The family is experiencing homelessness
- **Categorical-** Medi-Cal •CalFresh •California Food Assistance Program •California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) •The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Head Start •Early Head Start

-OR-

Child must meet one of the following eligibility criteria in order to qualify for services:

- **Child Protective Services** – The child has an open case and is receiving Child Protective Services (CPS).
- **At-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation**– The child has been identified as at-risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Child has an identified disability and is receiving services (IEP/IFSP)* *CSPP ONLY*

Need Criteria for Full Day Program

Parents/Guardians, and all adults in the family's household, must meet and provide documentation of at least one of the following need criteria:

- **Employment** – a family member must be employed and employment must be verifiable. If the parent (or any other adult counted in the family unit) works in the home, the nature of the work must preclude supervision of the family's children. Therefore, child care providers are not eligible for child care services.
- **Seeking Employment** – Child care services for the purpose of seeking employment may occur:
 - No more than 5 days per week
 - Less than 30 hours per week
- **Vocational Training** – a parent may participate in a training or education program leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofessional, or profession.
- Continued eligibility under this need criterion is contingent upon Parents/Families meeting certain academic progress requirements. The Center Administrative Staff will provide additional information as needed.
- **Engaged in an Educational Program** – Parents/Families engaged in an educational program for English Language Learners (ELL) or a program to attain a high school diploma or general educational development (GED) certificate.
- **Seeking Permanent Housing** – Parents/Families need time to seek permanent housing for family stability. Child care services for the purpose of seeking permanent housing may occur:
 - No more than 5 days per week
 - Less than 30 hours per week
- **Homelessness** – Documentation must include a referral letter from a legal, medical, or social services agency.
- **Parental Incapacitation** – The temporary or permanent inability of the child's Parent(s)/Family to provide care & supervision of the child for part of the day due to a physical or mental health condition.
 - No more than 5 days per week
 - Less than 50 hours per week
- **Welfare to Work Activities** (CalWORKs programs)
- **No Need** - last enrollment priority **CSPP ONLY*

ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES (18106)

(CSPP PRIORITIES)

Education Code sections 8210(a) and 8211(a) specify that the first priority for CSPP enrollment must be families with children who are receiving child protective services, or children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Second priority for services is for children with exceptional needs whose family's income is below the income eligibility threshold. After the first two priorities, families must be enrolled following *EC* sections 8210 and 8211 and use the Income Ranking Table when enrollment priority is based on income ranking. Beginning July 1, 2024, at least 5 percent of a CSPP (Preschool) funded enrollment must be reserved for children with exceptional needs.

Beginning January 1, 2023: Families who have a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from Medi-Cal, CalFresh, the California Food Assistance Program, the California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, the federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Head Start, Early Head Start, or any other designated means-tested government program, as determined by the

department, will be categorically eligible. The CDE has determined that CalWORKs is a means-tested government program that families can use also under this provision to get categorical eligibility. **(New eligibility category beginning January 1, 2023)**

(CCTR PRIORITIES)

First priority:

- a) Must be given to families whose children are recipients of child protective services, or who are at risk of being neglected, abused or exploited or at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency.
- b) Within the first priority for services children receiving protective services through the local county welfare department shall be enrolled before children identified as at risk of being neglected or abused, or exploited.
- c) If an agency is unable to enroll a child in this first priority category, the agency shall refer the child's parent or guardian to local resources and referral services so that services for the child can be located.

Second Priority:

- a) All children and families who are not within the first priority for admission shall be admitted in accordance with family income, with the lowest income ranked families admitted first.
- b) Eligible families whose primary home language is a language other than English after families that have a child with exceptional needs when two or more families have the same priority.
- c) For purposes of determining the order of admission, families with the lowest gross monthly income in relation to family size as determined by the income ranking schedule adopted by the CDSS shall be admitted first. Public assistance grants are counted as income.
- d) When two or more families have the same income ranking, the family that has a child with exceptional needs shall be admitted first.
- e) If there is no family of the same income ranking with a child with exceptional needs, the family with the same income ranking that has been on the waiting list the longest shall be admitted first.

WAITING LIST AND SIBLING PRIORITIES (18106- CSPP & CCTR)

Applicants will be contacted in order of priority from the waiting list as vacancies occur. Families shall be enrolled following the admission priorities above. Eligibility factors determine the ranking for subsidized services established by the California Department of Education (CDE).

Children are not enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. Siblings of children currently enrolled in the RHC CDC will receive special consideration, but no guarantee is made that siblings will be enrolled.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

A child must live in the State of California to receive services. Any evidence of a street address or post office address in California will be sufficient to establish residency. A person identified as homeless pursuant to section 18078(h)(2) is exempted from this requirement and shall submit a declaration of intent to reside in California.

The determination of eligibility for childcare and development services shall be without regard to the immigration status of the child or the child's parent(s).

RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

Families shall be recertified for services by the contractor no later than 50 calendar days following the last day of the 24- month certification period, which starts with the day the agency's authorized representative signed the last application for services.

In order to recertify families, the contractor's authorized representative shall:

- 1) Notify the parent in writing in the final 30 days of the 24-month certification period, which starts with the day the contractor's authorized representative signed the last application for services, of:
 - a. The requirement that families be recertified in order to receive ongoing services.
 - b. The date that the recertification must be completed by.
 - c. The recertification appointment date, which can be no earlier than one day following the last day of the 24-month certification period.
 - d. Information on the recertification process.
 - e. Required information/documentation needed for the recertification appointment; and
 - f. A telephone contact number and an optional email address in the event the parent may have any questions regarding the recertification process.
- 2) Recertify or deny each family's/child's eligibility and need for early learning and care services after reviewing the completed application and documentation contained in the family data file, as provided for in chapter 19, subchapter 3, (commencing with section [18077](#)); and
- 3) Issue a Notice of Action pursuant to section [18095](#) to recertify eligibility for services or disenroll the family.

Once recertified as eligible to receive services, except as otherwise provided in law or regulation, the contractor shall consider the family to meet all eligibility and/or need requirements for 24 months, at which point the family's eligibility and/or need must be recertified as set forth in this section. When a family is recertified as income eligible, the contractor shall at the same time provide notice to the family of the requirement to report if their income exceeds the income threshold, as provided in section 18082.2.

Potentials Changes Identified during Recertification:

Except as otherwise provided for in law or regulation, disenrollment cannot occur prior to the end of the 24-month certification period, even if disqualifying information is discovered during the preliminary collection of documentation for recertification, with the following exceptions:

- 1) When the recalculation of income, pursuant to section 18082.2, based on the provided documentation indicates that the family's adjusted monthly income, adjusted for family size, exceeds the income threshold set forth in Education Code section 8263.1 and the family does not meet the requirements for another eligibility basis pursuant to section [18083](#); or
- 2) When the parent changes residency outside of California, as reported by the parent; or
- 3) When there is substantiated evidence of fraud that invalidates the initial certification or recertification; or
- 4) When the family has abandoned care pursuant to section 18066.5.

Families disenrolled prior to the last day of the 24-month initial certification or recertification period shall be issued a Notice of Action for disenrollment pursuant to section [18095](#).

The contractor shall make every effort to make the recertification process convenient for families by providing early morning, evening, weekend appointments, or appointments at alternative locations as needed. The contractor may use technology to complete the recertification process if there is no reasonable way for the family to complete the process in person.

Per California Code, Education Code 8214, If families have to be disenrolled from subsidized preschool services, families shall be disenrolled in reverse priority order for services, as specified in Sections 8210 and 8211, as applicable.

MISLEADING INFORMATION

Fraudulent, false, incomplete, deceitful or misleading information provided to the Río Hondo College Child Development Center regarding status of income, family size, employment, seeking

employment, school/training program enrollment, and /or medical incapacitation that is used to determine initial or ongoing eligibility for subsidized childcare services or parent fees, may be grounds for termination of childcare services. Families who provide misleading information to obtain services will be removed from the waiting list and may not reapply for services for six months.

FAMILY FEES, TUITION, AND LATE FEES (5 CCR 18108, 18109)

Fee-Based Enrollment Tuition Rates for Private Pay Families

Families who do not qualify for subsidized programs may enroll in the Fee Based Program, provided space is available. The fee is \$237.50 per week Monday through Friday/Full time.

***Tuition rates may be increased annually at the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1) or at other times of the year, to cover the costs of increased expenses. Parents/families will receive a minimum of one month's notice of tuition increase.*

**Please note: Need and eligibility criteria do not apply to fee-based families.*

Family Fees

In accordance with EC 8273 families will be assessed a flat monthly fee at the time of initial certification and only be reassessed when a family is recertified or when the family data file is updated due to a self-reported change in income. Fees will be assessed and collected in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 5 (5 CCR) Section 17734 (CSPP) and (5 CCR) Section 18109 (CCTR).

Disclaimer: Collection of fees subject to change. Families will be assessed only at certification, recertification, or request of parents, either a flat monthly full-time fee or part-time fee, based on hours of care certified for the month, income, and family size. Families with a certified need of 130 hours or more per month will be assessed a full-time fee. Contractors cannot, under any circumstances, recalculate fees based on a child's actual attendance.

Billing

Tuition for subsidized and fee-based families is due on the 7th of each month. Our operating budget is set up on a 12-month basis, divided into 51 segments. Río Hondo College CDC does not offer any credits for holidays, sick days, or vacation days. On the 20th of each month, bills for the following month are issued. Payments are due in ADVANCE of services.

Parent/guardian may make payments at the Río Hondo College Cashier's Office or by using the online Family Portal.

Delinquent Fees

If payment has not been received by seven calendar days after the due date, a Notice of Action (NOA) with a termination of services date will be given to the family. All past-due fees must be paid by the date on the NOA to avoid termination. All payments must be made at the Cashier's Office.

Payment Plans

Payment plans must be agreed upon, prior to billing due dates. All payments must be made at the Cashier's Office. Failure to make payments may result in termination of services.

No Refund Policy

The Child Development Center has a "No Refund" policy for fees paid. Please note that there is no credit/ refund on family fees paid for any type of absence including but not limited to illness, family emergency, best interest, vacation, etc.

Additionally, there are no refunds for unforeseen or unexpected closures. All paid fees are final and there will be no refunds or adjustments issued for any situation. Furthermore, Río Hondo College does not distribute refunds for any paid fees.

Other Fees (Late Pick-up)

The center's business hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The RHC CDC will charge late

fees for hours of care that exceed the center's business hours. The child development center closes at 5 pm each day. Río Hondo College procedures and state **Title 22 regulations** require that we notify the proper authorities if you are more than one-hour late picking up your child and we have not received any communication from you. The RHC CDC is required to contact the Whittier Police Department if need be. Please make every effort to pick your child up on time. **A fee of \$10.00 will be assessed for the first 10 minutes, plus an additional \$1 for every minute after that.** All late fees must be paid within a week of receiving the invoice.

TERMINATION POLICY

Either the parent or the RHC Child Development Center may initiate termination of services. A **two-week** notice must be given by the parents when terminating services. A Notice of Action and "Exit form" must be used to give notice of termination. If the parent does not provide a two-week notice, the parent will be charged the required fees for childcare for the two weeks. All fees must be paid during that billing period.

Río Hondo College Child Development Center/Lab School aims to provide opportunities for every child/ family enrolled in the program to be successful. Nevertheless, some situations may cause the termination of a child's enrollment in the program. These situations are as follows:

1. Excessive late child pick-up, absences, or absences without notification to the Center.
2. Providing fraudulent information at the time of enrollment regarding eligibility information, i.e., income, family size, family situation, etc.
3. Disorderly conduct, verbal abuse, or profanity towards anyone present at the program may cause termination of services. See Center Safety.

Additional grounds for termination of enrollment include but are not limited to Guidelines, Fees & Contract:

- Failure to provide necessary paperwork such as recertification paperwork requested to determine need and eligibility criteria or falsifying paperwork.
- Failure to make fee payments in a timely manner. (Please communicate with us if you are experiencing financial difficulties)
- Failure to continuously complete attendance records such as signing in/out.
- If services are abandoned by the family, as stated in the abandonment policy above.
- Failure of parent/guardian to continuously pick up their child from school outside business hours.

Parents/Guardians Conduct:

- Disorderly conduct that threatens the mental and physical wellbeing of the children and/or staff.
- Parents swearing, cursing, calling staff out of their name, or using foul language towards staff or others, specifically in front of children.
- Verbal or written harassment toward other parents, their children, and/or staff.
- Arguing or mistreating children and/or staff.
- Using drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

Families who have fees are still responsible for any balance on their account until written notice is received. Failure to pay could result in grades, transcripts, diplomas, and registration privileges, or any combination thereof, will be withheld from any student or former student who has been provided with written notice that he/she has failed to pay a proper financial obligation. Any item(s) withheld shall be released when the student satisfactorily meets the financial obligation.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Río Hondo College follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, public services, including public and private transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunication services. Our program welcomes all children and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, age, disability, medical condition, marital status, ancestry or national origin, sexual orientation, and status as a Vietnam-era veteran. We strive to make reasonable accommodations for children. If it is determined that this program cannot meet the needs of a child, we work with the family to find an appropriate placement.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The program intends 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 the Río Hondo College Child Development Center's alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (ED 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. Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the State Department of Education at the following address: Early Education and Support Division Complaint Director, 130 N. Street, Suite 34-10, Sacramento, CA 95841, 916-322-6233

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

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

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632- 9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

or

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442

or

email: Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

12/09/2022 obtained from: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/civil-rights/usda-nondiscrimination-statement-other-fns-programs>

PARENTS' RIGHTS (LIC 995)

As a Parent/Authorized Representative, you have the right to

1. Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office.
3. Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
6. Receive from the licensee the name, address, and telephone number of the local licensing office.
Licensing Office Name: Department of Social Service
Licensing Office Address: 1000 Corporate Center Dr., Suite 200B, Monterey Park, AC 91754
Licensing Office Telephone #: 323-981-3350
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the child care center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
8. Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form.

NOTE: CALIFORNIA STATE LAW PROVIDES THAT THE LICENSEE MAY DENY ACCESS TO THE CHILD CARE CENTER TO A PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE IF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PARENT/AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE POSES A RISK TO CHILDREN IN CARE.

For the Department of Justice "Registered Sex Offender" database, go to www.meganslaw.ca.gov

PERSONAL RIGHTS (LIC 613A)

Child Care Centers Personal Rights. See Section 101223 for waiver conditions applicable to Child Care Centers.

- (a) Child Care Centers. Each child receiving services from a Child Care Center shall have rights which include but are not limited to the following:
- (1) To be accorded dignity in their personal relationships with staff and other persons.
 - (2) To be accorded safe, healthful, and comfortable accommodations, furnishings, and equipment to meet their needs.
 - (3) To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
 - (4) To be informed and to have their authorized representative, if any, informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints, including, but not limited to, the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving unit of the licensing agency and information regarding confidentiality.
 - (5) To be free to attend religious services or activities of their choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of their choice. Attendance at religious services, either in or outside the facility, shall be on a completely voluntary basis. In Child Care Centers, decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual advisors shall be made by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - (6) Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night.
 - (7) Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.

THE REPRESENTATIVE/PARENT/GUARDIAN HAS THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE APPROPRIATE LICENSING AGENCY TO CONTACT REGARDING COMPLAINTS, WHICH IS:

Name: Department of Social Service

Licensing Office Address: 1000 Corporate Center Dr., Suite 200B, Monterey Park, AC 91754

Licensing Office Telephone #: 323-981-3350

THANK YOU AND WELCOME TO RÍO HONDO CDC

The Child Development Center would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to select our school to help your child grow and develop to become lifelong learners. We would like to welcome you to come and visit or volunteer in the classroom or for any special events. Working together, we can make a difference in your children's lives.

**All policies and procedures in this Family Handbook are subject to change. You will receive addendums as needed.*

** Family Handbook revisions were made in collaboration with the Río Hondo College Child Development Center Admin Team and Dean of Behavioral and Social Sciences.*

Río Hondo College

Child Development Center

Laboratory School

Receipt of Family Handbook and Enrollment Information Sign-Off Sheet

Child's name:
Child's date of birth:

I have participated in an enrollment orientation and received e-mailed materials from the Parent Handbook. I agree to read the Family Handbook carefully and keep the document readily available for future reference regarding the Child Development Center Policies and Procedures. I agree that I am responsible for adhering to the Child Development Center's Policies and Procedures.

_____ I have received a family handbook and have read all policies and procedures.

_____ I agree to follow all policies and procedures outlined in the family handbook.

_____ I agree to follow the pick-up & drop-off policy.

_____ I agree to follow the illness policy if my child is ill.

_____ I agree that if my child's behavior seriously threatens the health and safety of him/herself or other children at the center, my services may be terminated. Every effort will be made on behalf of the RHC CDC to ensure that the child's needs are met.

_____ I attest under penalty of perjury that all the information on my application forms are true and correct.

*Please initial next to each statement above and sign an acknowledgment below.

Parent / Guardian Name:	Date:
Parent/Guardian Signature:	Date:
Staff/ Name:	Date:
Staff Signature:	Date: