

# PARENT HANDBOOK



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## PLAZA DE LA RAZA CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, INC.

***Our mission is to empower families to become self-sufficient by providing educational opportunities, support services and community resources.***

Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc. (Plaza) is a non-profit organization that provides free Head Start, and Early Head Start services to low-income families since 1965. We operate 17 centers and partner with two (2) Family Child Care (FCC) Providers. Plaza serves the communities of Alhambra, Avocado Heights, Bellflower, Downey, East La Mirada, El Sereno, Industry, La Habra Heights, North Whittier, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, South Whittier, West Whittier-Los Nietos, Whittier, and Whittier Narrows.

Our agency objectives are to:

- Prepare children to become ready for school (School Readiness) or a successful transition into Early Head Start, Head Start and or Kindergarten.
- Assist families in achieving their Family Development Plan goals.
- Provide relevant information in a timely manner to all stakeholders.

We believe that:

- All culture and beliefs should be respected and acknowledged.
- Every child deserves a safe and secure learning environment.
- Families are essential partners in their children's education.
- Early intervention is the key to educational success.
- Embracing diversity enriches children's learning.
- Parents/guardians (parents) should be empowered as advocates for their children.
- All children deserve an early childhood education that inspires them to reach their full potential.

**Plaza operates on a non-discriminatory basis offering preschool services to children of all races, gender, religion, national origin, and different abilities or physical challenges. In accordance with the Constitution of California, Article XVI Section 5, Plaza refrains from the practice of religious instruction or worship.**

### OUR PROGRAMS

We offer four programs that include Head Start, Early Head Start, California State Preschool and General Child Care. Our programs are funded through the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the State of California Department of Education. Plaza programs are designed to provide each child with the maximum opportunities to develop cognitive, social, physical and emotional skills. Our centers, home-based program, and Family Child Care (FCC) homes offer safe, attractive environments, developmentally appropriate materials, and opportunities for children to make effective choices and decisions as part of their School Readiness preparation.

#### **Early Head Start (EHS)**

The EHS program provides comprehensive services to pregnant women and children 0 - 3 years of age. Plaza offers a center-based program option, serving children from the ages of 12 months through three years and, home-based program option, serving children from 0 – 3 years of age. The goal for families participating in an EHS program is to establish the foundation for learning in children and to empower parents as the child's first teacher. Children participating in EHS are supported with transition into a Head Start or State Preschool program based on the family's needs.

## **Head Start (HS)**

The HS program provides comprehensive services to children 3 to 5 years of age. Plaza offers two options: center-based & the Family Child Care option. The goal for children and families participating in a HS program is to improve their school readiness to successfully transition them into kindergarten.

## **California State Preschool Program (CSPP), (CCTR)**

The program is funded by the California State Department of Education. In partnership with Head Start, Plaza can offer full day/part-year services to families that work and/or are attending school. A monthly service fee may be assigned to families participating in CCTR program option. The fee is determined by using a sliding scale that takes into consideration the family size and the family's monthly-adjusted gross income.

## **PROGRAM OPTIONS**

### **Full Day Center-Based Option**

Our full-day Head Start classes offer all families 6.5 hours of educational services 5 days a week. Our Early Head Start classes are designed for working families, those attending school, and families seeking employment. Early Head Start contracted hours may be extended up to 10 hours, five days a week, depending on the family's need. After the contract hours are established, parents agree to be punctual in bringing and picking up the child from the center. It is the family's responsibility to notify Plaza if their needs change. If the family requires an increase in hours, the parent must provide a new employment verification and/or training verification. The approval processes of the hour extension may take up to 2 weeks.

### **Part Day Center-Based Option**

In Head Start, families have the option to receive center-based services for 6.5 hours, Monday – Friday. Children are provided breakfast and lunch in this program option. They also participate in a variety of engaging educational activities. It is important that your child arrives to school on time, so he/she can take advantage of all program activities. A typical routine for children includes meals, small group activities, large group activities, and outdoor activities.

### **Family Child Care (FCC) Option**

The FCC option provides educational services in a licensed home environment for 7 hours, Monday – Friday. These homes are licensed according to county and state laws and regulations. Children are provided with breakfast and lunch that meets state and federal guidelines. In the FCC option, children are in a setting with six (6) children to one (1) adult. Children participate in developmentally appropriate educational activities that improve school readiness outcomes.

### **Home-Based Program Option**

The home-based program option helps parents create rich learning opportunities that build on everyday routines and support their child's development. This program option occurs weekly for 90 minutes in the child's home. Home-based Visitor will support parents and provide planned activities to engage with the child. **The home visit is intended for the parent, so it is not recommended to have visitors that may be a distraction to the child/parent learning time.** After the home visit, parents continue working with their child, implementing activities that are left by the Home Visitor. The typical structure of a home visit includes greeting and family check-in time, parent/child activity and planning for the following week. Families enrolled in the home-based option are also required to participate in Group Connection activities with other children and families, (usually done in a center, community facility and/or the park) twice per month. These Group Connection activities are an integral part of the home-based program as they help children meet and interact with other children. Children's participation during Group Connection is important for their social and emotional development. **Safety precautions during Group Connections are a priority for children enrolled in the program; therefore, other siblings not participating in the program are not allowed to attend. Parents are responsible for the Care and Supervision of their children during home visits and socializations.**

### **Services for Pregnant Women and Expectant Families**

Pregnant women enrolled in our program are provided services through a home-based program option. Home Visitors visit the pregnant women and their families every week for 90-minutes for the first visit, and then 45-minutes subsequent visits. The focus of these home visits is on understanding pregnancy; fetal development, understanding

pregnancy risks, nutrition information, health education, and ensuring pregnant women obtain proper prenatal care. In addition, we encourage pregnant women to participate in socialization activities twice per month, where they have an opportunity to engage in workshops on nutrition, health, and education.

A nursing staff member visits the pregnant mother within two weeks after the baby is born. Once the baby is born, the family is transitioned into a home-based program option for the baby to receive services.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY STATEMENT**

Our centers have an open-door policy, and we urge you to visit our classroom at any time and volunteer in various capacities that strengthen outcomes for children. Parents can visit as much or as little as their schedules will allow. We do ask parents who plan to visit the classrooms frequently to follow the classroom routine to avoid disrupting activities.

### **Parental Access Policy**

Parents will have site access during normal hours of operation and when children are under the supervision of teaching staff. Management monitors to ensure that this policy is strictly adhered to and will investigate any complaints that claim custodial parents and guardians are denied access to the facility.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Volunteering is highly encouraged. It is a way to become more involved in a child's education, learn how to help children continue to work on their skills at home, and become more familiar with the curriculum. In addition, volunteering is also a way to contribute to In-Kind. Volunteering can be done through various activities:

- Volunteering in the classroom. (Up-to-date immunizations; influenza, pertussis, measles and TB clearance are required) Volunteering more than 15 hours in the classroom per week requires the volunteer to be fingerprinted.
- Participating in parent/child home activities and documenting the time spent on the In-Kind Forms.
- Attending parent meetings, conferences, workshops and training.
- Assisting with special projects/activities at the site.
- Sharing talents such as gardening, dancing, singing, music or storytelling with the children.

**Note: Siblings are not permitted to stay in the classroom. In the home-based program option, siblings may participate in the home visit, as Home Visitors are trained to encourage the entire family's participation in the child's learning.**

Parent leadership opportunities include participation in formal governance committees:

### **Parent Committees**

Parent Committees meet on a monthly basis at each Center/Family Childcare (FCC) for approximately one hour. The Parents/legal guardians of children currently enrolled are considered members of the committee. During the meeting, parents are provided with program information, resources, and opportunities to suggest, plan and implement activities, as well as to provide input on school readiness activities. Each Parent Committee will elect Center Committee Officers to work closely with program staff to plan and facilitate the monthly meetings.

### **Policy Committee (PC)**

The PC consists of the elected representatives from the Centers/FCCs, as well as Community Representatives. Participation in the PC provides parents and community representatives with opportunities to enhance and/or learn new skills in leadership, decision-making, finance, communication and advocacy. The PC meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. of the month at a pre-determined location.

### **Other Special Committees**

Plaza also has other special committees that meet throughout the year. For example, the Health Services Advisory Committee meets at least twice a year. Members of this Committee work closely with program staff, other LACOE delegate agencies and community representatives to develop policies and procedures on children's health.

## **Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Policy Council**

The LACOE Policy Council was developed to provide parents/legal guardians of children enrolled in the program with the opportunity to participate in program decision-making at the county level. The PC elects four (4) representatives from the Policy Committee to represent Plaza at the LACOE Policy Council. The representatives share their gained knowledge with members of the PC at their monthly meeting.

### **Parent Interest and Feedback Surveys**

On an annual basis, parents will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their interests and on how we are meeting their needs. The Parent Interest and Feedback Survey is conducted in January. We use the results of this survey to plan parent workshops throughout the year, improve the program, and determine our effectiveness. Your feedback is very important to us!

### **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Volunteers, consultants and parents in the program must abide by the following standards of conduct:

1. Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability, sexual orientation, or family composition.
2. Will avoid behaviors that may be deemed as unprofessional, inappropriate or offensive.
3. Will follow Plaza's confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members.
4. Will not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including that staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers will not:
  - a. Use corporal punishment.
  - b. Use isolation to discipline a child.
  - c. Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth.
  - d. Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward.
  - e. Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child.
  - f. Use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child.
  - g. Physically abuse a child.
  - h. Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family; or
  - i. Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.
5. Not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or anything of significant monetary value from staff, other parents, contractors or potential contractors.
6. Refrain from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, and tobacco at the site or at any activity funded by federal or state funds.
7. Engaging in practices or procedures that violate sources and regulations or other mandates that regulate the conduct of the Agency and its programs.
8. Participating in any civic or professional organization where confidential Agency information would be required to be shared.

### **TEACHING STAFF**

Each classroom has an assigned Teacher or FCC Provider and Assistant Teacher for every 10-20 children. Home Visitors work with groups (caseloads) of 10-12 families, between the ages of 0-3 years. Our Teaching Staff and FCC Providers possess a Child Development Permit issued by the State of California Commission. Most have or are working towards college degrees. They each complete 15 hours of staff development training each year, which includes CPR/First Aid, and Child Abuse Reporting. They receive regular support from their supervisors, training, and are monitored on a regular basis. This support ensures that families and children receive the best quality services possible.

## CURRICULUM

In the center-based program options, our teachers utilize the *Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, *Creative Curriculum for Infant, Toddlers & Twos* and FFC Providers use the *Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care* as tools to encourage children to be active and creative explorers.

The Creative Curriculum focuses on building relationships, responsive care, routines and experiences that lay the foundation for language, literacy, math and science. The curriculum is based on five fundamental principles:

- Positive interactions and relationships with peers and adults
- Social-emotional competence
- Constructive and purposeful play
- Interactive learning environments
- Teacher-family partnerships

Each classroom is equipped with interactive areas (Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers and Outdoors). The teachers then foster learning experiences that are encouraged to be child-initiated activities. Teachers take these learning experiences and target the five developmental principles. Every child's progress is noted on a weekly basis and shared with the parents during parent conferences and home visits. As a result, every child will develop the skills necessary to promote independence, self-confidence, inquisitiveness and become enthusiastic learners. Teachers also develop lesson plans and identify the study topic of the week. Parents are highly encouraged to share ideas during the planning process.

In the home-based program, our Home Visitors use Parents as Teachers (PAT) as the curricula that guides home visits. Parents as Teachers is designed to engage families understand how to improve birth outcomes, strengthen families, enhance school readiness, and promote family stability and economic self-sufficiency. Because the home environment is so important to the home visit, Home Visitors are trained to utilize materials from the home to inspire learning. For example, pots and pans may be incorporated into a music activity or dish soap may be used as a science project.

### **Discipline approach**

Plaza uses a positive behavior support approach to help the child develop pro-social behaviors. Positive Behavior support is a process of guiding the learning of self-control, respect for others and responsibility. In this process, the following behavior guidelines are in place at all sites:

- Children assist with making clear and concise rules and limits.
- Adults give positive instructions; reinforcement/attention.
- Adults reinforce appropriate behavior.
- Adults anticipate and redirect inappropriate behaviors.
- Adults give verbal visual reminders of expectations, rules and limits.
- Adults will encourage children to respect other people and property.
- Adults will assist children when they are frustrated, engage children in cooperative play with others and share and take turns with others.
- Adults help children use words to express anger, resolve conflicts and express needs and desires.
- Adults will assist children in the conflict resolution process.
- Adults may redirect a child from an activity if inappropriate behaviors persist and help the child to find an appropriate activity in which to engage.

Teaching staff/FCC providers at Plaza are responsive, respectful and purposeful in their interactions with children. The adults take steps to prevent potentially challenging behaviors by:

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- Evaluating and changing their responses based on the child's individual needs.
- Modeling turn taking, sharing, compassion, empathy and other caring behaviors.

- Helping children negotiate interactions and materials with others.
- Helping each child feel he/she is an important part of the classroom community.
- Helping children develop self-control in order to improve their social emotional skills.

If a child displays persistent, serious challenging behavior, staff/FCC providers will work with the family to provide support that will enable the child to experience success. In these instances, Child Development staff will work in partnership with the Integrated Services Program Managers, the Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinators to develop and implement an individualized behavior plan during Multi-Tiered System of Supports leadership team meetings that supports the child's success.

In the home-based program option, Home Visitors work with parents on demonstrating positive discipline techniques. Parents are provided with ideas on how to discipline their children, how to manage emotions, help children learn how to self-regulate, and how to redirect children's behavior before it escalates. Parents expressing concern with behavior management of children will be referred to Plaza's Mental Health Coordinator to provide additional techniques that can be used in the home.

### SERVICES

Plaza provides families and children with comprehensive service through an integrated approach that can range from child development programs to meeting family needs related to food, shelter, disabilities services, nutrition education and all health-related issues. Our Service Coordinators provide these services in collaboration with community partners, agency staff and parents. The intent of these services is to ensure that all children and families are prepared to successfully transition to kindergarten.

#### **Screening & Assessment**

In order to ensure that we are meeting the unique needs of children, we administer screenings and assessments for all children within the first 45 days of being enrolled in the program.

Parents must complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) & Ages and Stages: Social/Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ: SE-2) for children. These forms are important in providing information on how your child is developing and identifies any area(s) of concern. In collaboration with parents, staff will identify the appropriate strategies to use in addressing each concern.

Our program assesses children's developmental progress three times per year. We utilize the Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP). After each assessment period, our teaching staff/FCC provider and home visitors will review the results with parents. In the center-based program, these results are reviewed during parent-teacher conferences or home visits. In the home-based program, results are reviewed during a regularly scheduled home visit. Teaching staff/FCC provider and Home Visitors utilize the results of these assessments to individualize the classroom daily activities and lesson plans for children.

Age-appropriate hearing and vision screenings are conducted by Plaza staff and/or outside community agencies to determine any concerns that are present. When a child fails, either screening, results are communicated to the parent and the child is referred to his/her Primary Care Physician.

Growth assessments are completed by Plaza staff to assess if children are growing as appropriate to their age, height/length, weight, and other related factors. A Registered Dietitian may contact parents if any concern(s) is/are noted.

The information from these assessments is also reviewed for all children to help our agency make necessary changes to our educational activities, and to help us plan for staff training. The information is also important in letting us know how effective we are in helping your children be ready for kindergarten. We share the results of our children's school readiness through our Agency annual report.



## Family Services

Family Service Assistants (FSA) and Home Based Visitors (HBV) work with parents on establishing a family goal(s). A family goal is a family centered partnership between the family and the FSA/HBV. The FSAs and HBVs work closely with parents to achieve their goals by providing support, resources and referrals. The goal setting process is to help families thrive and achieve their desired outcomes. The partnership process also focuses on helping families become advocates for their children and their education in preparing the family for kindergarten while linking the families to community resources.

## Disabilities Services

The Teacher/Home Visitor/FCC Provider and the Disabilities Coordinator work closely to assist in referring children who are suspected of having a disability to the appropriate Local Education Agency (LEA) and/or Regional Center, with the parents' written consent. Disabilities Services supports families and children in various ways, including but not limited to:

- Ensure our program and staff meet the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act; every child/adult with disabilities is treated equally, regardless the severity of their disability.
- Inform parents of their Rights and Due Process in Special Education
- Provide resources and ideas to work with your child at home.
- Provide workshops.
- Advocate for the special education services the children are entitled to.
- Attend Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings with the families.
- Collaborate with the school districts and regional centers to provide appropriate program options to families.
- Connect families to special education community resources upon request.

Our teaching staff /Home Visitors and FCC providers are trained to work with children of all abilities. Classroom and home-based instruction are modified, when appropriate, to meet the unique needs of our children with disabilities.

## Health Services

The health of each child is essential to their participation and learning in the program. Health staff ensure that health services are rendered to children enrolled in our program. These services include the monitoring of the child's development by reviewing the child's health history, physical exam, immunizations, dental exam, nutrition screenings, or any other medical documents. This also includes performing age-appropriate vision and hearing exams along with heights and weights. The Family Services and Health staff assist families with intervention as needed through referrals to medical/dental specialists.

## Requirements

The following health documentation is required to be submitted by parents within the described timelines, and in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care, to ensure children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn:

- **Medication & Medication paperwork (if needed)** – required prior to the child's start date.  
*Children with medical conditions/medication must have completed forms and medication placed by health staff prior to the child's start date.*  
*If a need for medication arises during the middle of the school year, the child will be temporarily excluded until medication documentation is received and medication is placed at the site by the health staff.*
- **Up-to-Date Immunizations**- required at enrollment by the child's start date. **Children who are not up to date on immunizations before school begins will not be able to start. Children that become out-of-date throughout the school year will be given 10-days to submit immunizations. After the 10-day grace period, children will be temporarily excluded from center-based sites until the requirements are up to date.**
- **Physical Exam and Tuberculosis (TB) Test/Risk Assessment**- required at enrollment or within 30 day of the start date.  
*Children without either or both may be temporarily excluded after 30 days until the documentation is received.*

- **Lab work (Hemoglobin and Lead) results**- required within 90 days of the start date.
- **Dental Exam**- required within 90 days of the start date.

Health education opportunities for all families will be available through handouts, site workshops/trainings, and/or special events held by Plaza. Pregnant women in the program will receive additional prenatal and postpartum information, education, and services.

### Illness Policy

Preventing illness and limiting exposure to communicable disease is essential to the health of the children in our program. Please keep your child home when he/she is ill. Teachers are required to conduct a Daily Health Check every day upon arrival to ensure children are healthy enough to participate in school. **Please allow yourself extra time during drop-off hours to complete the Daily Health Check with your child's teacher.** Children with the following symptoms/conditions will be sent home:

- Fever (temperature over 100.4) within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting two or more episodes in 24 hours
- Diarrhea two or more episodes in 24 hours
- Earache
- Lice
- Red eyes with yellow or green discharge
- Sores that are draining, open, or appear infected
- Not feeling well enough to participate in daily activities
- Positive COVID diagnosis of participant within the last 5 days

Children with the following symptoms/conditions should check with their child's teacher to determine if the child will be able to participate in school:

- Rash
- Recent hospitalization (must provide "return to school"/medical clearance note)
- Coughing
- Runny nose

For the home-based program option, please inform the Home Visitor if you or your child are sick or are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above. The home visit will be re-scheduled in case of illness.

### **If your child has been sent home because of illness, he/she will be accepted back into class when:**

- A doctor's note/clearance states that your child is free of a contagious illness and can return to school, if a doctor's visit is necessary.
- They have been free of diarrhea and/or fever for at least 24 hours and **without need for medication.**
- They are able to engage in daily activities.

**NOTE: If needed, teachers will confer with health staff to determine if your child is to be sent home for illness.**

### **Injuries/Hospitalizations**

If a child is injured and/or hospitalized, the parent must inform the teacher as soon as possible. Prior to the child's return to school, a doctor's clearance note with any instructions for the classroom must be provided. Teaching staff will contact health staff for follow-up with the parent. If any accommodation is required in the classroom, health staff will schedule a meeting with the parent and teachers to establish an Individualized Health Plan in order for the child to return to school.

### **Medication**

Families with children with medical conditions and/or possible medication (prescribed or over the counter) needs during school hours will be given the appropriate forms to be filled out by a Physician. Medication during school hours must have completed forms and medication must be placed by health staff prior to the child's start date. Medication will **ONLY** be administered as directed by the physician's request and as permitted by licensing regulations and Plaza's

policies and procedures. **Medication cannot be administered by staff without a Physician's Authorization.** Routine medications should be scheduled around school hours when possible. If no medication is needed at school, a physician must state so in writing and clear the child for school participation prior to the child's start date. It is the parents' responsibility to request a prescription that can be kept at school. **If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition or if new medication is needed during the school year, the child will be temporarily excluded until medication documentation stated above is received and medication is placed at the site by a health staff.**

### **Child Injury Report**

Although precautions are taken to ensure a safe environment, occasional incidents do occur. If an incident or minor injury occurs at the site, first aid is administered to the child by the staff. Staff will then complete an Injury Report and notify the parent/legal guardian. This report will describe the nature of the incident and will be followed up by the Agency's health staff, if necessary. In the event of a major accident, teachers will take necessary and immediate action, such as calling **911** or arranging for the child to be taken to the nearest hospital. Staff will verify your permission for medical treatment on the Emergency Medical Treatment.

### **Mental Health**

Mental Health is a child's (birth to 5 years) growing ability to experience, regulate, and express emotions. The Mental Health Coordinator works collaboratively with parents and staff to provide support in the social emotional development of all children enrolled in our program, as well as any family member requesting assistance with achieving mental wellness. Mental health services are obtained by requesting a referral through any of our staff: LVNS, HBVs, teaching staff, or our FSAs. Our Head Start and Early Head Start programs partner with mental health consultants and local agencies to ensure children, families, and staff have access to prevention and intervention services. Some of the services provided are:

- Mental Health Consultations/Multidisciplinary Meetings (MDTs)
- Short-term counseling services for children and families
- Referrals to community agencies
- Staff and Parenting classes/workshops, including:
  - domestic violence
  - substance abuse
  - child abuse and neglect
  - emotional wellness
- Parent Training using the Positive Solutions for Family/*Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning* (CSEFEL) curriculum.
- Evaluations and assessments using a variety of assessment screening tools.
- Assist pregnant women and their spouses by accessing comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care.

### **Nutrition**

Children enrolled in center-based classes are provided with at least two nutritious meals daily, with a maximum of three (3) meals, whereas children enrolled in home-based program are offered any (1) one of the three meals during socialization meetings. All meals served meet the criteria set forth by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) through the Department of Social Services.

**Children with Allergies, Intolerance and Special Meal Accommodations are, given the appropriate forms needed for the child to be provided with the suitable substitutions for their needs, to be able to start school. Parents must share with the Teacher or FSA any new allergies or special dietary restrictions your child may have as soon as one is discovered. The child will then be temporarily excluded until the appropriate documentation is received and cleared by the Registered Dietician.**

- Part Day Classes - Breakfast and Lunch
- Full Day Classes - Breakfast and Lunch
- Socialization - One of the two

All foods are prepared daily and come from PDLR central kitchen. During mealtimes, family style is practiced where teachers model positive and interpersonal social skills by encouraging and facilitating language development through ongoing conversations. During meals, the practice of good table manners is reinforced, and children participate in activities related to meal services such as setting the table, serving their food, and cleaning up after themselves. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to try new food. **Under no circumstances is food used as punishment or reward** to participate in learning opportunities. Our classrooms provide an environment that supports the use of mealtimes as an opportunity for learning.

Children are provided with materials to use in school nutrition activities or food experience, which helps teach children about food, nutrition and healthy eating habits. Nutrition education and workshops are made available for parents to participate in during parent meetings.

**Outside foods or beverages may not be served to children at school centers or home-based facilities to ensure that food safety and sanitation is followed at all times.**

The menu will be posted on the parent board and kitchen areas. A copy of the menu will be provided via email or hard copy upon request. Nutrition staff are available as a resource for your child's nutrition and eating patterns.

While parents must participate in socialization activities, meals or snacks are specifically provided for children.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **First Days of School in a Center-Based Environment**

The first days of school can be challenging for children and parents. We make every effort to ease the transition by working together with you and your child to help ensure a smooth adjustment. You can help by speaking to your child before bringing him/her to school. It is important for you to say "good-bye" to your child each time you leave the site to prevent feelings of mistrust. Prolonged "good-byes" may result in a more difficult situation for you and your child. Reassure your child that you will pick him/her up. Separation anxiety is normal and expected. Providing a consistent routine will help your child to adapt.

### **Dress for school**

Your child will be working with art materials such as paint, glue, crayons, and outside play that may include playing with sand, water and mud. We encourage you to dress your children in easy fitting clothes, (such as pants with elastic waist instead of ones with belts or suspenders, shoes with Velcro rather than shoelaces) so that you do not mind them getting soiled, stained and/or dirty. Children will also be involved in many physical activities such as running, jumping, and riding tricycles; therefore, for the safety of all children they are **not permitted to wear open-toe shoes/sandals**.

We ask you to provide a change of clothing for your children in case of a spill or toileting accident. Should children get wet or soil their clothes, the child will be cleaned and changed into dry clothing with the assistance of a teaching staff and as independently as possible. The wet or soiled clothes will be placed in a bag to be taken home. Please provide a clean change of clothes the following school day. Make sure that all items are labeled with your child's name (jackets, sweaters, extra changes of clothing).

### **Personal Belongings from Home**

Children are discouraged from bringing toys, backpacks or personal items from home as this may create a distraction. Plaza does not assume responsibility for any lost or stolen items brought from home.

### **Classroom: Arrival and Dismissal**

It is important for you to bring your child to class on time. Arriving on time will ensure that your child will take part in the daily planning. The following applies to anyone dropping or picking up a child at the site:

On arrival, each family will be greeted by a teacher. Teachers will perform a health check of the child to ensure they are well enough to participate in the activities of the day. Your child should remain with you until it is your turn to sign in. For EHS programs, the daily health check will include the parent/guardian changing the child's diaper to ensure there are not any abnormalities noted in the child's diaper area. Teachers will assist, as needed. After the health check is concluded you may sign your child into the classroom by signing him/her in and documenting the exact time.

At dismissal, arrive on time to pick up your child. If you are unable to arrive on time, we ask that you make arrangements to have a person on the Emergency Contact form pick him/her up on time. Make sure the person comes prepared to show a valid form of ID. After the teacher confirms the person's identity, he/she may proceed to sign them out, noting the exact pick-up time. All late pick-ups are documented.

**Note: Children will not be released to an individual under the age of 18.**

Please assist us with keeping children safe by following these guidelines:

- Close all gates/doors leading to and from the classroom.
- Follow pedestrian safety rules.
- Follow the California Seatbelt law (posted on parent bulletin board).
- Discuss classroom and outside rules with your children.
- Refrain from playing on the playground before or after school.

### **Attendance in the Center-Based and FCC Homes**

We ask that you make a commitment to your child's daily attendance and ensure that your child:

- Have a good night's rest.
- Attends school every day.
- Arrives on time.
- Notifying site staff in advance of absences (when possible).
- Notifying site staff of an absence/late arrival within the first hour of their designated start time.

### **Absences**

Absences as a result of illness, injury, quarantine, doctor or dentist appointment, family emergency or a court mandated family day the absence will be documented as an excused absence. Excessive absences due to illness will require follow-up with health staff and may require a doctor's note. Absences as a result of other factors (i.e., staff cannot contact family, waking up late, child was crying, the parent forgot, etc.) that affect a child's regular attendance, will be documented as an unexcused absence.

In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child in either the same or a different program option, the child's slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy.

### **Attendance in the Home-Based Program Option**

Families enrolled in the home-based program option are scheduled to receive 46 (Early Head Start) home visits per year. Weekly home visits are typically scheduled at a time that accommodates a parents' schedule between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Once a time and day is established, the home visit is held during the same day and time for the remainder of the year, in order to establish a routine for children. It is important that parents and children participate in all of their scheduled home visits. However, we understand that emergencies or other life events may occur. If a cancellation is necessary, please inform the Home Visitor as soon as possible. In all cases, the Home Visitor will attempt to reschedule missed home visits within the month.

Attendance at socialization activities is required, as it is an important aspect of the home-based program option. Socialization activities are scheduled twice a month, 22 socializations for Early Head Start participants. Parents with infants younger than six months are not required to participate in socialization activities, though it is highly encouraged.

### **Food during Home Visits**

Due to various health conditions and allergies, teachers and home visitors are not allowed to accept food or drinks during home visits. We recognize that sharing food can be an important aspect of building relationships, however, we ask that food or drinks not be offered during a home visit and ask for your understanding of this policy. Please help us protect the health and nutritional condition of our staff.

### **Gifts and/or Gratuities**

It is the policy of our agency that staff may not accept personal gifts or other gratuities from parents or children in the program. We understand that you may want to express your gratitude to teachers, home visitors and other staff for your child and family's growth, and we welcome a Thank You and your participation in the program.

### **Celebration of Holidays**

As a program that serves families from various ethnic groups and who may practice various religions, it is our policy not to practice any secular holidays, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, or Halloween. Teachers and home visitors may discuss these holidays in their classrooms based on the children's interests; however, special events, activities, or celebrations will not be planned. Please help us honor everyone's religious beliefs and practices.

### **Graduations/End of the Year Activities**

Children's learning will be celebrated with their families, through developmentally appropriate activities with a hands-on approach. End-of-the-Year Activities are intended to be a culmination of activities children learned throughout the year. Staged performances of children and balloons are not allowed. Pictures and videotaping of children in the program are not allowed. Certificates of Completion and Certificates of Volunteerism for the Program Year will be distributed to children and families at the end of the year.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Mandated Reporting**

All Agency staff are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse. Those who fail to report according to State regulations can be held accountable under the law. No one, including Agency management and/or a child's parents/guardians, can interfere with this reporting mandate. If you have any questions regarding this policy, information is posted on the Parent Bulletin Board or you may speak to any personnel, including your Home Visitor.

### **Identification and Emergency Information Form**

The children's Identification and Emergency Information form (i.e., Emergency Card) must be kept up-to-date at all times. If the information needs to be updated, it must be done in person by the enrolling parent. Please note that in order to prevent a "non-custodial" parent from picking up their child from the site, the custodial parent needs to provide the Teachers or FSA with court orders stating a restriction.

**Under no circumstances will your child be permitted to leave with anyone other than the authorized persons stated on the Emergency Card. Please instruct authorized persons to bring a valid picture identification card, otherwise, your child will not be released.**

### **Confidentiality**

Information about your family will be kept confidential and only disclosed for purposes directly related to the administration of your child's development program. Plaza's staff will store children's files in a secured file cabinet and access to those cabinets will be limited to designated staff only. Plaza keeps records in the central files for up to (5) years. In the event that an outside agency that collaborates with Plaza requires access to the files, they will receive instruction on Plaza's confidentiality policy and will be held to the same standard.

### **Communication**

The success of our program is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and staff/FCC Providers. Open communication will help your child have a positive early learning experience. We hope you will feel free to talk with

your child's Teacher(s), Home Visitors, FSA, Lead Teacher and Site Supervisor (at large centers only) when you drop-off or pick-up your child. Please feel free to schedule conferences for longer discussions.

We utilize many other tools to keep you informed as to what is occurring at the site. Lesson plans describe weekly educational activities and are posted in the classroom for parent review and are shared with parents during weekly home visits in the home-based program. Parent calendars and monthly parent meetings describe the site activities, upcoming events and special class hours. Parent bulletin boards contain information about the site and community resources. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year to discuss your child's growth.

### **Emergency Disaster Plan**

We are prepared to handle emergencies by ensuring we have emergency food, water, flashlights, and first aid materials. *An Emergency Disaster Plan* is posted on the licensing board, and the *Emergency Evacuation Plan* is posted in each classroom/FCC home. Children participate in emergency drills (fire, stop-drop and roll, earthquake, drop) throughout the school year to be sure that they are prepared in the event of an emergency and/or natural disaster.

In the home-based program, we help families establish an emergency disaster plan for the family and practice emergency drills during socialization activities. Home Visitors also work with families to perform a Home Safety Checklist during the first few months of enrollment in the home-based program. If unsafe conditions are found, the Home Visitor will work with the parent to identify ways of correcting the situation.

### **We reserve the right to terminate services when:**

- The child's parent/guardian fails to cooperate and abide by all agency's policies and regulations.
- Any false statement made by a parent/guardian on any document filled out for a child's admission or retention at the center.
- The parent/guardian disrupts or fails to cooperate with Plaza's personnel where such failure disrupts the smooth and efficient operation of the program.
- Any verbal or physical threats of any nature by the parent/guardian or family member toward staff, children, and other families.
- The child has excessive unexcused absences.
- A family fails to pay in full the CCTR monthly fee or establish a reasonable payment plan.
- If a family fails to provide documentation needed to recertify the family for the CCTR program
- If a family fails to report any family changes and/or circumstances (i.e., income, hours of need, family size) for the CCTR program:
  - The family will be notified via CD 7617 (Notice of Action) of the termination of services due to any of the above reasons for the CCTR program prior to the intended termination date.
  - The family will have the opportunity to appeal all decisions made by following the appeal information located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of the CD 7617 (Notice of Action).

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

The complaint procedure is an important part of our communication system. In general, any concerns should be raised directly with the individual. If you have concerns regarding school administration, policy, curriculum or management of the classroom, you should contact the Education Coordinator or Site Supervisor (for larger sites). If this proves unsatisfactory, you may send your concerns in writing to Plaza's Executive Director within ten (10) days after the occurrence at:

Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc.  
13300 Crossroads Pkwy. North, Suite 440  
City of Industry, CA 91746  
Attn: Executive Director

Or visit our website at [www.plazadelarazacds.org](http://www.plazadelarazacds.org) and "click" on the **Share Your Feedback!** tab.

### **State Uniform Complaint Procedures**

It is the intent of Plaza to fully comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding Plaza'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:

State Department of Education  
Child Development Division  
Complaint Coordinator  
1430 N Street, Suite 3410  
Sacramento, CA 95814

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event. A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.

### **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Program Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to the USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES



### EDUCATION

#### **Administration for Children & Families**

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/>

#### **National Association for the Education of Young Children**

<http://www.naeyc.org/>

#### **California Head Start Association**

<http://www.caheadstart.org/>

#### **Zero to Three**

<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

#### **Los Angeles County Office of Education Head Start-State Preschool**

<http://www.prekkid.org/>

### FAMILY SERVICES

#### **Shelter: The Whole Child**

The Whole Child provides services throughout the Southeast LA County to help families who are homeless, or on the brink of homelessness, chart a path out of their current situation into permanent housing.

10155 Colima Road  
Whittier, CA 90603  
562-692-0383

#### **Shelter: Bell Shelter**

Bell Shelter aims to address the problems and barriers that keep homeless men and women from achieving self-sufficiency.

5600 Rickenbacker Rd  
Bell, CA 90201  
**(323) 263-1206**

#### **Shelter: American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross exists to provide compassionate care to those in need.

Visit <http://www.redcross.org/find-help> to find an open shelter near you.

#### **Food: Los Angeles Food Bank**

The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank has a singular mission—mobilize resources to fight hunger in our community.

Visit <http://www.lafoodbank.org/> to find a local food bank near you.

#### **Utility Assistance: United Way**

United Way of Greater Los Angeles is committed to creating pathways out of poverty, so that everyone who lives in our communities can have a better quality of life. If you need more information about the program, please call 213-808-6257 or

<http://www.unitedwayla.org/get-help/utility-assistance/> Get Help ([unitedwayla.org](http://www.unitedwayla.org)) to find an agency near you.

**Immigration: Ferias Legales**

Ferias Legales holds free regularly scheduled events (1) Legal Fairs offering One-on-One Attorney Consultations in different legal areas; (2) Citizenship Fairs; (3) DACA Workshops; (4) Know-Your-Rights Workshops; (4) Informational Workshops; (5) Q & A Panels; and (6) Resource Fairs.

<http://www.feriaslegales.org>

**HEALTH****CDC Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old**

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf> (English)

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs-sp.pdf> (Spanish)

**Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center**

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

**Covered CA**

<http://www.coveredca.com/>

**Get Enrollment Moving**

[http://www.cvhp.org/Events\\_Calendar/Other\\_Classes\\_Events/Get\\_Enrollment\\_Moving.aspx](http://www.cvhp.org/Events_Calendar/Other_Classes_Events/Get_Enrollment_Moving.aspx)

**Child Health & Disability Prevention (CHDP) Publications**

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/publications/Pages/CHDPPubs.aspx>

**Bright Futures- Resources for Families**

<https://brightfutures.aap.org/families/Pages/Resources-for-Families.aspx>

**Los Angeles County Resources**

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm>

**NUTRITION****My Plate**

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> (English)

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/en-espanol> (Spanish)

**DISABILITIES SERVICES****Special Education Guidance for COVID-19**

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp>

**Disabilities Rights Education & Defense Fund**

DREDF is a Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) funded by the US Department of Education. PTIs serve families of children and young adults from birth to age 22 with all disabilities.

<http://dredf.org/programs/PTI.shtml>

**South Central Los Angeles Family Resource Center**

The FRC supports families of children at risk for or diagnosed with a developmental disability. The Family Resource Center is funded in collaboration with SCLARC and Federal (Part C) funds. <https://sclarc.org>

**Eastern Los Angeles Family Resource Center**

Specializes in providing support, information, education, resources, and training for Individuals with disabilities and their families in the eastern region of Los Angeles

<http://www.elarc.org/resources-publications/family-resource-center>

**Harbor Regional Center**

Supports clients, families, friends, service providers, students, HRC staff, other professionals, and interested parties in the South Bay, Lakewood, Bellflower, Norwalk, Long Beach, and the Beach Cities areas. They provide support, information, and choice through multi-media information and resources, education/training materials and opportunities, and parent-to-parent support groups and activities.

<http://www.harborrc.org>

**Autism Speaks**

Autism Speaks has grown into the world's leading autism science and advocacy organization, dedicated to funding research into the causes, prevention, treatments, and a cure for autism; increasing awareness of autism spectrum disorders; and advocating for the needs of individuals with autism and their families.

[Autism Education & Resources | Autism Speaks](#)

**MENTAL HEALTH****First 5 Los Angeles**

First 5 LA believes in a future where every child in Los Angeles County from prenatal to age 5 grows up healthy, protected, and ready to succeed in school. For resources and community calendar:

<http://www.first5la.org/>

**Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)**

CSEFEL is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. CSEFEL is a national resource center funded by the Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country.

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

<http://www.nami.org/>

**National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health**

The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health is a national family-run nonprofit linking more than 120 chapters and state organizations focused on the issues of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs and their families. It was conceived by a group of eighteen people determined to make a difference in the way the system works.

<http://www.ffcmh.org/>

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/children>



## Parent Handbook Acknowledgement of Receipt

**2023-2024**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Name

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Site/ Class #

I have received a copy of the Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc. Parent Handbook and agree to comply with all the policies and regulations. This document will be placed in my child's file at the site.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received

Office Use Only:

Name of staff distributing handbook: \_\_\_\_\_ Site/Class#: \_\_\_\_\_