

Orientation Topics Guidance

Purpose

This document outlines the topics that must be covered when families are oriented to the Early Learning Program.

Guidance

PSESD Early Learning Program policies and procedures

- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Community Complaint - from a community member or from a family enrolled in a PSESD Early Learning program
- Criminal Record Check
- Diversity and Classroom Celebration
- Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace
- Safe Arrival and Departure
- Attendance
- Standard of Conduct: Confidentiality
- Standard of Conduct: Child Guidance and Support
- Standard of Conduct: Active Supervision

Center general information

- School year calendar and class schedule, program hours
- Names of staff and center phone numbers
- Methods of regular communication with families
- Safe arrival procedures and information about transportation, if applicable
- Snacks and meals provided by center
- Food and all aspects of the early learning program are offered free of charge
- Outdoor and other large motor activity time occur regularly

Family engagement

- All parents are members of the Center Parent Committee
- Parents are encouraged to be leaders, facilitators or participants at their center
- Family and staff develop partnership through visits/contact and through goal setting process
- Ways for parents to be involved
 - participating in program decisions at Policy Council
 - being a part of the self-assessment process
 - participating on hiring committees at the center or for the ESD
 - visiting in the classroom at any time
 - volunteering at the center or in a classroom
 - offering input on site decisions
 - pursuing parent leadership opportunities

Family Support staff roles

- Encouraging families to be involved and engaged in their child's educational experiences now and throughout school—to be an advocate for their child

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- The program is for both the child and the family to grow and develop
- Support families to be engaged in goal-setting for themselves and their child
- Visiting families in their home provides opportunities for the families to share information about their hopes, concerns and plans for the future and to develop “next steps” for how to accomplish them.
- Partnering with families to assess and attain optimal health and safety of each child
- Learn from the family how they would like to be involved in their early learning program
- Support families in their personal and professional growth
- Encourage parents to participate in Parent Professional Development Opportunities
- Encourage families to help plan and participate in parent activities and trainings
- Support parents as their child’s first and most important teacher and prime educator of their child

Teaching staff roles

- Partnering with families to share information about the child and how to support the child in being successful in school
- Home Visits and Conferences are opportunities to share information about the child, including the Portfolio of Observation and Work Samples, and to develop “next steps” for the child.

Classroom philosophy and approach

- We see every child as capable, intelligent and resourceful learners
- Our goal is the maximize development of the whole child: social, emotional, language, literacy, cognitive, physical and creative.
- The curriculum includes the indoor and outdoor spaces and materials, interactions, daily routines, activities and learning experiences, and roles of adults.
- The daily curriculum is based in part on children’s individual goals, children’s interests, and ideas from families.
- The daily curriculum also includes health, nutrition and safety experiences and personal safety curriculum.

Individualization

- Each child is observed by staff and the family and assessed to help determine the child’s interests, strengths and goals.
- Staff and the family develop individual learning goals for each child.
- Classroom and home materials and activities provide children opportunities to learn and practice new skills and behaviors.
- Each child is screened for possible developmental and behavioral concerns within 45 days* of starting the program.
- Any possible developmental or behavioral concerns are shared with the family. Referrals to developmental centers or school districts for further assessment or services will be in collaboration with the family.
- A Mental Health Coordinator/Consultant is available for consultation/observation/referral.

Health staff roles

Health screenings

- Vision and hearing will be completed in the child’s first 45 days of school
- Height and weight screenings are done twice a year
- Height and weight for children birth to 3 will be collected from the well child exam
- Parents will be notified of screening dates and results
- Review the screening procedures with the parent

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Physical and dental exams

- Regular medical and dental care ensures children are healthy, growing, and able to learn
- Ideally these are completed before the child begins (dental exam must be performed within the last six months and medical exam within the last year)
- Remind parents of the importance of getting these completed (if not already done) within 90 days after the first day the child attends class

Exposure notices and temporary exclusion of children

- Children are sometimes exposed to illnesses/conditions such as head lice, chicken pox, or ringworm at school
- Reassure parents that procedures are in place to greatly limit exposures
- Temporary exclusion from school may be necessary until the contagious phase of an illness/condition is over
- Notices are sent home whenever an exposure occurs
- Being exposed does not always result in having the illness/condition

Disaster supplies

- Each classroom has supplies to care for the children in case of an emergency
- Review with parent any special needs a child may have should they need to remain at school for an extended time
- Emphasize the importance of keeping up-to-date emergency contact information

Food handling and preparation

- Parents are asked to not bring food items from home to school
- Staff will purchase needed ingredients if a parent wants to prepare a special recipe for the class during class time
- These practices ensure that parents are not responsible for incurring any expense for providing food or transmitting any food borne illness from food cooked in the home

Guidelines for sick child

- Children should be well enough to participate in activities
- They should not pose a health risk to others
- Keep the child home if fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other signs of illness are present
- Review procedure for parent/guardian notification if child becomes ill at school

Related Documents

See Program Administration section

Resources

Approach to School Readiness

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach>

Parent, Family, Community Engagement Framework

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/pfcef>