



## Parent Handbook

Revised June 2023

The Contractor is Eben-Ezer Children's Day Care Center Inc, also known as Kids 1<sup>st</sup> Learning Centers, and Kids 1<sup>st</sup> Learning Center Preschool Academies, herein referred to as the agency and/or the center.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Pg #</b>	<b>Topic (<i>subsections in italics</i>)</b>
1.	Message from the Founder
2.	Mission Statement Program Vision Program Philosophy
3.	Goals and Objectives Center Information
4.	Days of Closure
5.	Non-discrimination policy; Religious Instruction Policy Photo, Video, and Likeness Release
6.	No Additional Payments or Costs; Exceptions Overview of the Agency Enrollment <i>Programs offered</i>
7.	<i>General Requirements - Eligibility and Need criteria</i>
8.	<i>Enrollment Priorities</i>
9.	<i>Notice of Action Defined</i> <i>Initial Certification</i> <i>Recertification</i> <i>Family's Right to Voluntarily Report Changes</i>
10.	<i>Requirement to Report when Income Exceeds Ongoing Income Eligibility</i> <i>Admissions and Placement</i> Attendance <i>General Rules</i>
11.	<i>Sign-in and Sign-out policy</i> <i>Releasing Child from the Center</i> Absence Policy <i>Excused Absences</i>
12.	Termination of Services <i>Grounds for Termination of Services</i> Parent Appeal Rights
13.	Nutrition
15.	Health and Safety Policies <i>Health Prerequisites for Enrollment</i> <i>Identification and Emergency Information</i> <i>Emergency Medical Treatment</i> <i>Emergency Closures</i>
16.	<i>Illness Policy</i>

- Medication Policy*
- Pedestrian Safety*
- Parking Safety*
- 17. *Car Seat Safety*
  - Reporting
  - Open-door policy
  - Resources
  - Community Resources and Referrals*
- 18. *Parent Conferences*
  - Parent Advisory Committee*
  - Volunteering*
  - Family Fees
- 19. *Family Fee Explained*
- 20. *Credit for Fees Paid to Other Service Providers*
  - Delinquent Fees; Plan for Payment of Delinquent Fees; and Advance Payment*
- 21. *Exceptions for Fee Assessment*
- 22. *Uniform Complaint Procedures*

*Please be advised, this handbook is subject to change immediately according to legislation or regulations passed by the State of California through the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services, or by the agency with proper notice. In the event of such change, all families enrolled in the program will be notified via memo, Notice of Action, or another method of communication.*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER**

Dear families,

Welcome to Kids 1st Learning Center! When the first center was opened, I never imagined the impact the agency would have and the magnitude of the services offered. What started as a humble private-pay program in one classroom, quickly gained momentum and became the agency we are today. Over the last 25 years, we have served thousands of families through our programs.

Studies continue to demonstrate the importance of early education in the development of young children. Even more important is the active involvement of the family in the education of their children. At Kids 1st, we recognize the irreplaceable position families have in our program. It is our goal to empower parents and caregivers with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to provide their children with learning experiences and opportunities for a safe family structure.

Through the Kids 1st Learning Center program, we have seen families completely redirect their paths. We were partners with families as they advanced their careers to gain financial sustainability. We cheered as caregivers pursued their educational ambitions. We witnessed with pride and compassion as families accomplished their goals to provide a better life for their families.

As a lifelong educator, nothing brings me more joy than visiting with prior families who share the immense impact Kids 1st Learning Center had in their lives. We have even had children who started as toddlers in our program return after graduating university!

We are honored and privileged with the responsibility of caring for and teaching every child entrusted to us. When you join Kids 1st Learning Center, you are joining a family. Our family is here to serve, educate, and support you to the best of our ability.

Welcome to Kids 1st Learning Center, where your children always come first.

With great esteem and gratitude,

Raquel Saenz  
Executive Director and Founder

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide comprehensive care and quality early childhood education and development opportunities to children and families from underserved areas in the surrounding communities.

## **PROGRAM VISION**

Kids 1st Learning Center envisions a world in which equal access in education is available to all children and educational gaps are non-existent; where families are able fulfill their goals knowing their children have opportunities for obtaining the desired results leading to their preparation as global citizens.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

At Kids 1st Learning Center, your children are the priority. We follow a curriculum which recognizes the unique and individual needs of your children. Teaching staff will plan and introduce activities which support the holistic needs of each child which include encouraging outdoor exploration and engagement, expanding language and literacy, and promoting creative self-expression through music, movement, and art.

Our philosophy is based on a belief system which supports each child as they pass through the many stages of development. Each child is accepted at their current level and is provided opportunities to enhance development. By participating in a daily routine and engaging with peers and staff, children grow confidence and trust and develop positive social relationships.

Children will engage in age-appropriate activities and experiences with their peers and teachers to foster a love of learning, and promote cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional development in a safe and nurturing environment.

Kids 1st Learning Center staff understands the importance and uniqueness of each family's cultural background and upbringing. We all benefit from the wonderfully diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of our families. Our lesson plans are designed to enrich home culture and to introduce and foster an appreciation of the cultural differences of others. By establishing relationships, children will learn from each other's similarities and differences, ultimately learning more about themselves.

Parents and caregivers are an integral part of the Kids 1st Learning Center family.

Kids 1st Learning Center believes the parent/caregiver to be the first and most important instructor to their children. It is the agency's goal to empower parents and caregivers with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to provide children with learning experiences and opportunities for a safe family structure. The education of each child requires the joint efforts of parents, program staff, and the greater community.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The agency will strive to:

1. Provide a program designed to identify the physical, social, emotional, creative, and cognitive needs of each child.
2. Develop a program which supports each child's cultural, linguistic, and individual needs.
3. Promote a positive, healthy, and safe physical environment for children enrolled.
4. Promote parent and community participation, involvement, support, coordination, and collaboration with program staff.
5. Promote a developmentally and culturally appropriate nutrition program.
6. Provide opportunities and plan for staff training which develops and enhances staff's ability to achieve program objectives and goals.
7. Evaluate the agency's process of identifying annual plans of action, achieving goals and objectives of the plans of action, and modifying the plans of action as needed.
8. Uphold current regulations, laws, and agency policies to continuously operate the child development program in a safe and nurturing environment

## **CENTER INFORMATION**

### **Kids 1st Learning Center - Pacoima & Administrative Office**

Address: 13232 Kagel Canyon St., Pacoima, CA 91331

Phone: (818) 897-5427

Email: [parents@kids1st.org](mailto:parents@kids1st.org)

Hours: Monday - Friday 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Ages: 18 months to 5 years

License #197403180

### **Kids 1st Learning Center - San Fernando**

Address: 727 Kewen St., San Fernando, CA 91340

Phone: (818) 837-6833

Email: [sanfernando.parents@kids1st.org](mailto:sanfernando.parents@kids1st.org)

Hours: Monday - Friday 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Ages: 3 to 5 years

License #197410260

### **Kids 1st Learning Center - Downey**

Address: 13200 Columbia Way, Downey, CA 90242

Phone: (562) 803-0400

Email: [downey.parents@kids1st.org](mailto:downey.parents@kids1st.org)

Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Ages: 3 to 5 years  
License #198015711

**Kids 1st Learning Center - Bell Gardens Preschool Academy**

Address: 6430 Colmar Ave., Bell Gardens, CA 90201  
Phone: (323) 562-1800  
Email: bellgardens.parents@kids1st.org  
Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM  
Ages: 3 to 5 years  
License #198009647

**Kids 1st Learning Center - Cudahy Preschool Academy**

Address: 4900 Clara St., Cudahy, CA 90201  
Phone: (323) 771-8700  
Email: cudahy.parents@kids1st.org  
Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM  
Ages: 3 to 5 years  
License #1980109822

**Kids 1st Learning Center - Baldwin Park Preschool Academy**

Address: 3970 Maine Ave., Baldwin Park, CA 91706  
Phone: (626) 960-7100  
Email: baldwinpark.parents@kids1st.org  
Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM  
Ages: 3 to 5 years  
License #198009646

**Kids 1st Learning Center Family Home Network (FHN)**

A list of participating home care providers is available upon request.

**DAYS OF CLOSURE**

All centers will be closed on the following holidays annually. For exact dates, please see your center's calendar.

- New Year's Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Break (specific dates listed on annual fiscal year calendar)

Please note:

- If January 1, July 4, or December 25 falls upon a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday will be the day of closure.
- The Center may close additional days for reasons such as staff training purposes, parent conferences, or additional days of closure. Families will receive a calendar for the upcoming month during the last week of the current month. Please see the monthly calendar for any additional days of closure.
- Days of closure are subject to change.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY; RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION POLICY**

No person in the State of California shall, on the basis of race, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ancestry, color, or mental or physical disability, be unlawfully denied full and equal access to the benefits of, or be unlawfully subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity which is conducted, operated, or funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state. The Agency complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) which prohibits discrimination based on disability, as well as all applicable regulations and guidelines issued pursuant to the ADA. Eben-Ezer Children's Day Care Center refrains from religious instruction and worship.

## **PHOTO, VIDEO, AND LIKENESS RELEASE**

On occasion, Kids 1st Learning Center will use photographs and record videos throughout the family's participation in the program. Photos and videos will be used for purposes including, but not limited to sharing on the agency's social media pages, instructional purposes, lesson planning, professional development for teachers, documenting children's developmental profile, print and digital advertisement, including on the agency's website and social media platforms, and other publications, as needed.

As a condition of voluntary participation, parents/caregivers agree to waive all claims against Kids 1st Learning Center, its officers, agents, and employees harmless from any and all liability or claims, demands, losses, causes of action, suits or judgments of any kind from the use of my child's image.

To request Kids 1st Learning Center refrain from using your child's image, please submit a written notification to the site supervisor.



## **NO ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS OR COSTS; EXCEPTIONS**

Neither the agency nor providers will require or solicit, in cash or in kind, additional payments from the recipients of service. Exception for the following:

- Parents are required to provide diapers if their child is not potty-trained.
- If applicable, the agency may charge for parent/caretaker/guest participation during events which are not reimbursable by the state. Families will never be charged for the participation of enrolled children. Please contact your site supervisor for information if hardship exists.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE AGENCY**

Kids 1st Learning Center is a contractor to the California State Department of Education (CDE), Early Education Division and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Care and Development Division. The agency provides child care and development services to families who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Funding Terms and Conditions and Program Requirements for state-funded CSPP and CCTR contracts.

“Child care and development services” means those services designed to meet a wide variety of needs of children and their families, while their parents or guardians are working, in training, seeking employment, incapacitated, or in need of respite. These services may include direct care and supervision, instructional activities, resource and referral programs, and alternative payment arrangements.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Each family requesting subsidized childcare services must first complete an intake application. Intake Applications may be obtained at the center or electronically, if available. Each application is evaluated based on the State’s Income guidelines and assigned a ranking and placed on the Eligibility Waiting List. Enrollment is not on a first-come-first-served basis. Enrollment is based on the highest-ranked need.

### **Programs offered**

The agency offers the following state-funded programs:

- CCTR: General Center Based Child Care (CCTR) is a program serving infants, toddlers and preschoolers. CCTR children are served at centers and with home day care providers.
- CSPP, Full Day and Part Day: California State Preschool (CSSP) Full Day program serves 3-5-year-olds. CSPP programs are available at centers only.

Three-year-old children are eligible for the CCTR program until they are CSPP eligible. 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. Children who turn three on or after December 2 may be enrolled in a CSPP program after their third birthday. Please contact the site supervisor for information on which programs each center offers.

### **General Requirements**

To receive certified services through either the CCTR or CSPP programs, children and families must meet criteria as specified in this section.

**Eligibility criteria (all programs):** Eligibility criteria is established when any of the following is met:

1. Family is a current aid recipient.
2. Family is income eligible. "Income eligible" is defined as families whose adjusted monthly income is:
  - a. At or below 100% of the state median income for children enrolled in CSPP programs,
  - b. At or below 85% of the state median income for children enrolled in CCTR programs,
  - c. Income eligibility is based upon **ALL** sources of countable, gross income adjusted for the family size.
3. The family is experiencing homelessness.
4. The family has a child who is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or receiving child protective services through the county welfare department.

**Need criteria (CCTR and CSPP Full-Day programs):** Need criteria is established when any of the following is met:

1. The child is identified by a legal, medical, or social services agency, a local educational agency liaison for children and youths experiencing homelessness designated pursuant to 42 US 11432(g)(1)(j)(ii), a Head Start program, or an emergency shelter or transitional shelter as:
  - a. A recipient of child protective services.
  - b. Being neglected, abused, exploited, or is at risk of neglect, abuse, exploitation,
  - c. Experiencing homelessness
2. The parents are:
  - a. Employed.
  - b. Seeking employment.
  - c. Engaged in vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofessional, or profession.
  - d. Engaged in an educational program for English language learners or to attain a high school diploma or a general educational development certificate.

- e. Seeking permanent housing for family stability.
- f. Incapacitated

### **Enrollment Priorities**

Enrollment priority will be set as follows, according to each program type:

#### **CCTR:**

1. First Priority is given to children who are recipients of child protective services, or who are identified as being neglected or abused, or at risk of being neglected or abused.
2. Second Priority is given equally to eligible families, regardless of the number of parents in the home, who are income eligible. Within this priority, families with lowest gross monthly income in relation to family size as determined by family income table shall be admitted first. (Family income table is updated annually by the state). When two or more families have the same income ranking, the family which has a child with exceptional needs shall be admitted first. If there is no family of the same income ranking with a child with exceptional needs, the family with the same income ranking which has been on the waiting list the longest shall be admitted first.

#### **CSPP:**

1. First Priority is given to three and four-years-old children who are recipients of child protective services, or who have been determined to be neglected, abused, or exploited or at risk thereof.
2. Second Priority is given to eligible four-year-old children, not enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten, in the following order:
  1. Eligible children who were enrolled in CSPP as a three-year old
  2. Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table as published by the SSPI at the time of enrollment.
  3. When two or more families have the same income ranking, according to the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table, the child with exceptional needs as defined in *EC 8208* shall be admitted first.
  4. If there are no families with children with exceptional needs, the family who has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.
3. Third Priority is given three-year old children, in the following order:
  1. Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table as published by the SSPI at the time of enrollment.
  2. When two or more families have the same income ranking, according to the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table, the child with exceptional needs as defined in EC section 8208 shall be admitted first.

3. If there are no families with children with exceptional needs, the family who has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

When necessary to displace families at any time, families shall be displaced in reverse order of admission priorities.

### **Notice of Action (NOA) Defined**

A Notice of Action (NOA) is issued by the Agency to the parent/ guardian upon approval, denial, termination, or change of services (family fee changes, hour changes, etc.). The NOA provides a summary of the family's application information and an explanation of the action being taken regarding the childcare services.

### **Initial Certification**

When the requirements are met, families will complete the initial certification packet. The initial certification packet will detail the documentation needed to substantiate the eligibility and need for service. Service hours will be determined based on the families' needs and provided documentation.

Upon successful completion of the "Initial Certification Packet" and all required documentation, the agency representative will issue a Notice of Action (NOA), Application for Services which will include the family's certified service hours and family fee to be assessed, if applicable.

Once certified, the family is considered to meet eligibility and/or need requirements for not less than twenty-four (24) months from the initial certification date.

### **Recertification**

Families are required to complete the recertification process no later than 50 calendar days after the initial 24-month certification period ends. Families will be contacted in the final 30 days of the 24-month certification period of the need to recertify. An agency representative will schedule a recertification appointment after a 24-month period and provide a list of necessary documentation and information to bring to the appointment. Upon successful recertification, the agency representative will issue a Notice of Action detailing the service, schedule, and if applicable family fee to be assessed, if applicable.

### **Family's Right to Voluntarily Report Changes**

At any time during the certification period, a family may voluntarily report changes to increase the family's services, to reduce the family fee, or to extend the period of eligibility. The agency will collect documentation to support the requested changes and issue a Notice of Action in a timely manner. The agency will only use the information provided to make beneficial changes to the family's services.

### **Requirement to Report when Income Exceeds Ongoing Income Eligibility**

When a family is initially certified or recertified based on **income eligibility**, the family will receive the State Median Income (SMI) chart. If during the certification period the family's income adjusted for family size exceeds one-hundred percent (100%) of SMI for CSPP programs, OR eighty-five percent (85%) of SMI for CCTR programs, the family must notify the agency within thirty (30) calendar days. Allowable gross income as defined.

Upon notification, the agency will obtain income documentation to recalculate the family's adjusted monthly income. If the income is calculated to exceed the 85% threshold, the agency will determine if the family is eligible for services based upon other criteria. If other eligibility criteria are satisfied, the agency will issue a NOA reflecting the change of eligibility.

If the family does not meet another basis for eligibility, the agency will issue a NOA to dis-enroll the family.

### **Admissions and Placement:**

Families will be selected by need priority and ranking of need. When a family has been deemed "eligible and qualified" for one or more of the programs, families will be enrolled for not less than 24 months. Families will be enrolled at a site providing the type of care for which the family has qualified.

Please be advised the Agency reserves the right to redistribute/reassign enrolled children in existing or new classrooms at the center when reassignment is necessary for the continued operation of the program. The parent may elect to be placed on a waiting list to transfer to another location within the same program when an opening is available.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **General Rules/Attendance**

1. When children are in attendance Adults are required to personally deliver their child to the classroom or designated outside area and sign the sign-in/sign-out sheets each day. Signatures ensure your child has been delivered and has exited the program to our care and verify your child's hours of attendance.
2. Please call the center if your child will be absent. California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services requires the agency to verify the reasons for all absences in the program. Please cooperate with the staff when asked about the reason for your child's absence.
  - a. If you do not communicate with the Agency for seven (7) consecutive calendar days, the Agency will try to contact the family through a variety of communication methods. The Agency will issue a Notice of Action to disenroll

the family based on abandonment of care when there has been no communication from the parent for a total of thirty (30) consecutive days

- b. Please contact the Agency if you are unable to drop off your child(ren) before 9:30 am. Families are encouraged to bring their children on time each day; routine attendance is in each child's best interest.
3. If your child had an illness with a fever, the child must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication to return to school.

### **Sign-in and Sign-out Policy**

Each child must be signed in upon arrival to the center and signed out upon departure from the center daily. The signature must be of an authorized adult with an exact time of entry and exit. Full signature is required. Initials are not accepted. When a child does not attend, please sign on the date of absence and indicate the reason for absence using the codes on the sign-in/sign-out sheet.

### **Releasing Children from the Center**

1. Children will only be released to individuals who are listed on Form LIC 700 "Identification and Emergency Information" which will be completed by parent/guardian at enrollment. Please ensure this form is always up to date. Please notify the site supervisor of any changes to be made to the form.
2. All adults should have current identification available. Those not known to the staff will be asked to show proper identification, before children are released.
3. Center staff must release a child to his/her legal guardian unless there is a current restraining order restricting a parent's contact. The center must have a copy of the order on file.
4. Children should not be picked up by anyone under the age of eighteen (18) years of age. Other arrangements must be made in writing and approved by the Center Supervisor.
5. Children will not be released when it is apparent the parent/guardian does not have a car seat, nor when parent/guardian appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any legal or illegal substance which may be deemed harmful for children. Parent/guardian is responsible for any late fees associated with remaining in the center after operating hours.

### **ABSENCE POLICY**

The Agency encourages regular attendance for all children. The agency also recognizes there are valid reasons why children will be absent from their childcare programs. The Agency's absence policy establishes guidelines for excused and unexcused absences as follows:

**Excused Absences** - An excused absence for the purpose of childcare and development services is defined as follow:

1. Illness/Quarantine of Child, including health appointments

2. Illness/Quarantine of Parent, including health appointments
3. Family Emergency which prevents children from attending, including but not limited to illness of other family members, accidents, death in the family, natural disasters, lack of transportation, health appointments for other family members, and defined as needed events beyond the control of parent/caregiver.
4. Court ordered visitation
5. A reason which is clearly in the best interest (B.I.) of the child, to be limited to 10 days per fiscal year (the agency's fiscal year is July 1 - June 30). Examples of best interest include, but are not limited to parent vacation, time spent with other family members, outside school activities, etc. Whenever possible, please submit in advance writing the dates to be used for best interest. Agency staff will ensure best interest days is limited to the days available for the time requested in the fiscal year.

Exception: Children who are recipients of protective services or at risk of abuse or neglect may exceed 10 days of best interest absences. A court order must be provided and retained in the family file.

## **TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

### **Grounds for Termination**

The Agency shall disenroll a family from the program for the following reasons:

- Abandonment of the program, as explained in "Attendance - General Rules" section of this handbook
- When families move out of State (the Agency shall do its best to provide a referral for childcare, when possible)
- Families who are found to have committed fraud affecting certification/recertification, leading but not limited to establishing incorrect family fees.
- Striking, intimidating, harassing, or threatening any children, adults, or agency staff members. Violence and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. No exceptions
- Violating any policies which jeopardizes the health and safety of children, agency staff, and all other individuals
- When the agency has exercised reasonable accommodations and can no longer provide services without risking the health and safety of others
- When the supervision required is beyond the agency's adult-to-child ratio and cannot be reasonably accommodated for an extended period of time and on an ongoing basis (the Agency shall do its best to provide a referral for alternate childcare, when possible)

## **PARENT APPEAL RIGHTS**

A Notice of Action (NOA) is issued by the Agency to the parent/caregiver upon approval, denial, termination, or change of services (family fee changes, hour changes, etc.). The NOA

provides a summary of the family's application information and an explanation of the action being taken regarding the family's services.

When a parent/caregiver receives a Notice of Action (NOA) for an adverse action (i.e. a reduction in services, termination of services, etc.), the parent/guardian has the right to appeal the action if they feel it is not warranted. The parent/guardian must complete the appeal request on the back of the NOA and submit it to the Agency on or before the appeal date indicated on the NOA. The following steps will then be taken:

- The parent/guardian will be contacted to set up an appointment for a hearing.
- If the Agency is unable to reach the parent/guardian within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal request, the appeal staff will make contact to schedule a hearing appointment..
- If the parent/guardian fails to appear at the hearing, the parent/guardian's appeal will be deemed abandoned.
- The appeal will be heard by a hearing panel to include one member of the Agency's management team, who will act as the hearing officer.
- The parent/guardian may request an interpreter, (if needed), or may bring their own.
- Indicate the reason for the appealing action, and the parent/guardian's request for the appeal will be reviewed with the parent/guardian during the hearing with a designee of the Agency who was not involved with the adverse decision to issue the NOA.
- The parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to present the reason why they are appealing the case and present any information and documentation specific to the action.
- Within ten (10) calendar days following the hearing, the hearing officer will send a written response regarding the decision of the hearing panel.
- If the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the decision of the hearing panel, a written appeal may then be filed within 14 calendar days to the California Department of Education or the California Department of Social Services, as indicated on the back of the NOA.

**NOTE:** (Childcare services will continue during the appeal process)

## **NUTRITION**

All programs have a nutritional component for enrolled children at no additional cost to the family. Meals available provided are aligned with Title 22, section 101227. Mealtimes are routinely scheduled but may vary slightly from center to center.

Kids 1st Learning Center does not use food as either a positive incentive or a negative punishment. If a child is not hungry and does not want to partake in meals, teaching staff will make at least 3 subsequent attempts to offer meals. However, the child will not be required to eat the food item served. If the child refuses to sit with classmates at the table after 3 attempts of



encouragement by staff, the child will be redirected. Parents are encouraged to discuss with children meal time participation. The event will be documented.

Should your child arrive after the designated meal times, please ensure your child has been fed the appropriate meal/snack. Please contact your site supervisor or lead teacher if this is not possible and arrangements may be made.

Menus are posted on the classroom's bulletin board and parent board. Copies of the menu are available upon request. All food shall be of the quality and in the quantity necessary to meet the needs of the children. Each meal shall include, at a minimum, the number of food components as specified by Title 22, section 101227.

All medical food allergies notices are made available to classroom and food preparation staff. Families with children who have medically identified food allergies must bring food substitutes for dietary intake pursuant to Title 22, section 101227.

With prior approval of the site supervisor, parents are welcome to provide special treats or snacks for everyone in their child's classroom on children's special days. Please notify the site supervisor at least one week in advance so arrangements can be made for children with food allergies or special dietary restrictions and the proper food components.

In the event of emergencies beyond the control of the agency, meals may vary from what is listed on the monthly menu and may be purchased from vendors. Meals provided by vendors will always follow the Title 22, section 101227 nutritional guidelines in the quality and quantity appropriate for each age group.

**Part-Day Programs: Downey, Cudahy, Bell Gardens, Baldwin Park**

Children enrolled in a part-day program will be served a snack.

A.M. Snack    Served between 9:30 AM/10:30 AM or as posted at the individual site

P.M. Snack    Served between 2:30 PM/3:00 PM or as posted at the individual site

**Full-Day Programs: Pacoima, San Fernando, Family Home Care Providers**

Children enrolled in a full-day program will be served breakfast, lunch, and a snack.

Breakfast    Served at 8:30- 8:45 AM

Lunch        Served between 11:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Snack        Served at 2:30 PM

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

### **Health Prerequisites for Enrollment:**

In accordance with Community Care Licensing, health and safety regulations, if age eligible, any child enrolled in a licensed childcare center, must have documentation on file of current immunizations and tuberculosis screening. Physicals and T.B. screenings are required annually. Please be advised health prerequisites are mandatory.

### **Identification and Emergency Information:**

At the time of enrollment, a mandatory form must be completed. The "Identification and Emergency Information", must be complete. It is crucial all information related to (a) family name/last name; (b) home address, (c) phone/message/cell phone number; (d) person(s) authorized to drop off and pick the child up from the center; (e) physician information in event of an emergency; (f) consent for emergency medical attention and (g) health insurance information of the family be eligible and valid on this form. Parents please advise your emergency contacts of the responsibility to correctly sign-in and sign-out, emergency pick up procedures, parking lot rules, and decorum while representing you at our sites.

Please be advised this record is maintained in the central office and with each child's assigned classroom. It is imperative the "Identification and Emergency Information" is accurate and up-to-date at all times. Please contact your site supervisor to update forms as needed.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

Please be advised in the event of a medical or dental emergency, certified staff will only administer basic first aid and CPR when the condition warrants. Paramedics will be called when parents or authorized adults cannot be reached when an emergency occurs, when a child demonstrates a need for medical attention, or measures a fever exceeding 100.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Parents/Caregivers are responsible for all costs associated with medical emergencies.

Each center has identified staff with current CPR and first aid training. Staff will follow recommended CPR and first aid protocols as needed to the best of their ability.

### **Emergency Closures**

Parents/guardians will be contacted should an emergency arise. In the case of an emergency, families should make every possible arrangement to have children picked up within 30 minutes of being notified. Center personnel will take every measure for the safety of children, staff, and the facility.

Emergency and extreme circumstances may include but are not limited to health outbreaks, flood, earthquake, fire, other natural disasters, power outage, phone failure, HVAC system failure

in extreme weather, other utility failure, strikes, poor air quality, and any other health risk as defined by federal, state, and local health and safety departments.

### **Illness Policy:**

The agency does not provide medical advice nor will it make diagnoses. Please keep your child home whenever they are ill or showing signs of illness including, but not limited to, coughing, fever, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Should your child show symptoms of illness during the course of the day, the child will be removed from the classroom and taken to an isolated area while they await pickup. Parents will be contacted immediately and instructed to pick up their child as soon as possible within the hour. If your child registered a fever, the child must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication before returning to the center.

### **Medication Policy:**

The center does not provide nor administer medication. If your child should need medication, please ensure they receive the medication prior to starting their day at the program.

Children who exhibit adverse effects due to medication which inhibit their ability to participate in daily activities should remain home until they are able to fully participate.

### **Pedestrian Safety:**

Please be aware of you and your child's safety when dropping off and picking up your child by following these rules:

- Hold your child's hand when walking from your vehicle to your child's classroom
- Teach your child the parking areas are not places to play and they should be careful to stay with an adult at all times
- Never allow your child to cross the street alone

### **Parking Safety:**

Appropriate parking spaces must be used when coming to the childcare centers.

- Double parking or parking where there is not a legal parking space creates an unsafe environment for children and adults. Parents who continue to illegally park will be notified and law enforcement officials will be contacted to enforce appropriate parking. Agency must maintain city laws to continue with compliance on conditional use permits.
- Never leave your vehicle on while going inside to drop off or pick up your child. You **MUST** always shut off your vehicle when entering the childcare facility.
- Handicap parking at all sites is for vehicles displaying handicap placards. Law enforcement will be notified of violators.
- Never leave a child unattended in a car. Effective January 1, 2002, "The Unattended Child in a Motor Vehicle Safety Act," also known as "Kaitlyn's Law" made it a criminal offense to leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

- Kids 1st Learning Center staff members are mandated reporters and are required to report such situations.
- Never exceed 5 MPH speed limit when driving in the parking lot

### **Car Seat Safety:**

Effective January 1, 2012, children must be secured in an appropriate restraint. Children must be secured in a safety seat or booster until they are at least 8 years old or at least 4 ft. 9 in. in height.

## **REPORTING**

As a licensed child care provider, we are required to submit reports to Community Care Licensing. The agency will submit an unusual incident report in certain instances, including but not limited to, the following:

- Outbreaks of communicable diseases, such as mumps or measles
- Suspected child abuse
- Incidents which put children in danger
- Injuries to children which require medical intervention

When applicable, the agency is required to report some events to other agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Public Health, as well as local law enforcement.

**NOTE:** All Kids 1st Learning Center staff members are mandated reporters. Any incidents which may put the health and safety of children at risk, including but not limited to, suspected child abuse, must be reported to licensing and appropriate authorities immediately by phone and followed by a written report.

## **OPEN-DOOR POLICY**

The agency encourages parents to be invested in all areas of the program. The agency provides multiple opportunities for family participation including, parent surveys, parent-teacher conferences, fundraising, parent advocacy committee, classroom volunteering, and program planning. The agency relies on the family's willingness to communicate openly, provide feedback, and participate in the smooth operation of the program. Families are always welcome to visit the site, ask questions, request resource referrals, offer feedback, and collaborate with staff on any matters regarding the program. You are encouraged to actively participate in our open-door policy during normal operating hours.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Community Resources and Referrals**

The agency is committed to connecting families to resources or services within the community when needs are identified. The Agency strives to provide outside referral when available. The referrals provided will be free or low cost. The services rendered will in most cases be at no or low cost. Parents may exercise the open-door policy to obtain a social service form and request

referrals as needed. Please inform the site supervisor or family day care home provider for information.

### **Parent Conferences**

Formal parent conferences occur twice a year. Conferences will be indicated on the school calendar and scheduled with the family. Conferences consist of parents and teaching staff. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Review the program annual plan and activities at the site
- Make recommendations concerning the child and family participation.
- Discuss, recommend, follow-up, recommend, identify the child's developmental needs.
- Plan collaboration activities during the year.
- Provide opportunities for continued enrichment of the family and center.

### **Parent Advisory Committee**

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) members consist of parents/caregivers of children enrolled in the program. Parents elect their committee members every year. A parent may serve two (2) consecutive years. The responsibilities of this committee include but are not limited to:

- Meeting with the site supervisor bi-annually or as needed to discuss information.
- Planning family participation in programs and activities which benefit the families enrolled in the program
- Plan and facilitate opportunities for parents and families to volunteer to support and enhance the program
- Serve as a liaison between the community and the center to promote understanding of the program and build relations and help to collaborate with the surrounding community.
- Serve as volunteers to develop a self-evaluation plan which promotes high-quality standards for the program
- Enhance the program through

### **Volunteering**

Families are welcome to volunteer at the center. All volunteers will need to receive prior approval and training to serve at childcare centers. A health screening and supplemental documentation may be required for all volunteers. All volunteers must sign a release of liability waiver. Persons, volunteers, or student interns who participate no more than 16 hours per week at the facility are exempt from criminal record clearance. Volunteers are not included in the staffing plan. Volunteers, including student teachers, must be supervised by a staff member at all times. At no time will volunteers be left alone to supervise or provide care to enrolled children.

### **FAMILY FEES**

\*Family fees do not apply to all families. Families that are required to pay a fee will be informed during the family fee assessment conducted at enrollment and recertification.

\*\*Pursuant to the State of California regulations, family fees are **waived** for all families effective July 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. Family fees will still be assessed at enrollment and recertification. Collection of the assessed family fee will begin on October 1, 2023.

### **Family Fee Explained**

A Family Fee is a monthly fee which represents the family's share of the cost of subsidized services and may be assessed for the following programs: CCTR and full-day CSPP. Part-day CSPP families are not assessed a family fee.

Not all families will be assessed a family fee. At time of initial enrollment and/or recertification, the agency will use the current state-provided Family Fee Schedule to assess a family fee. The family fee schedule considers adjusted monthly family income, family size, and the certified service hours of the child who has been enrolled in the program for the longest period (most hours).

Family fees are the financial responsibility of the parent/caregiver. The family fee is subject to change based on the state-published Family Fee Schedule, usually updated and effective as of July 1 of each year. Families will be notified in writing should the family fee change due to the revised Family Fee Schedule.

The family fee is a **flat monthly fee per family**; it is not modified by the number of children enrolled, nor by the child(ren)'s actual daily attendance. Depending on the monthly services hours of the child with the most hours, the family fee assessed will be either full-time or part-time. For this purpose, full-time is defined as 130 or more service hours per month.

**Family fees are due by the first week of each month.** Family fees are considered delinquent if not paid in full by the 8th of each month. Family fees may be paid in cash, by money order payable to "Kids 1st Learning Center," or online via PayPal. Personal checks will NOT be accepted. If you would like to opt-in for online payment and billing, please inform your case worker or email fees@kids1st.org. Please include your name, your child's name, which center/home provider your child attends, and the email address where you would like to receive billing.

If paying in cash, please bring the exact amount due; the agency does not maintain cash on site and may not be able to make change. The agency will not accept more than the monthly amount due; partial payments will be considered delinquent if not paid in full by the 8th of the month. No exceptions will be made for late payments due to not having exact change.

Family fees are to be paid in person at the Pacoima center by appointment only (unless payment is made online via PayPal). If you are unable to make payment in person by the due date, please call the Pacoima center office or email fees@kids1st.org to make arrangements. Kids 1st

Learning Center will work with families to remain in compliance with state and federal regulations.

After each payment, the family will receive an original copy of a pre-numbered receipt detailing the amount paid, date of payment, rate of payment, and period of service paid. Families which pay online will receive a digital receipt via PayPal upon successful payment and will receive the pre-numbered receipt via mail directly from the agency each month.

### **Credit for Fees Paid to Other Service Providers**

This section shall apply to early learning and care services provided by someone other than the contractor. When a contractor cannot meet all of a family's needs for child care for which eligibility and need have been established, the contractor shall grant a fee credit equal to the amount paid to the other provider(s) of these early learning and care services.

The family will receive a credit to the subsequent billing period equal to the amount paid to the other child care provider.

The maximum credit for other childcare services paid is the monthly amount of the family fee due. Should the amount of the credit be greater than the fee due, no carry over will be allowed beyond the subsequent billing period. Credit for other childcare services has no cash value.

To receive credit, the family must provide copies of receipts or canceled checks for services paid to other providers **each month**. Please ensure the receipt or canceled check includes: name of child(ren) receiving service, parent's name, amount paid, date of receipt, signature of provider, and dates/hours care was provided.

### **Delinquent Fees; Plan for Payment of Delinquent Fees; and Advance Payment of Fees**

#### **Delinquent fees:**

Family fees will be considered delinquent if not paid in full by the 8th of each month. When family fees are considered delinquent, the agency will issue a NOA, Recipient of Services to inform the family of the following:

- Total amount of unpaid fees
- Fee rate
- Period of delinquency
- Why services will be terminated two weeks from the date of the Notice of Action unless all delinquent fees are paid before the end of the two-week period, unless arrangements have been made with the administrative team for a payment plan.

Upon termination of services for nonpayment of delinquent fees, the family will be ineligible for early learning and care services until all delinquent fees are paid.

### Plan for Payment of Delinquent Fees:

If the family is unable to pay the family fee in full, the family must notify the agency as soon as possible. Please contact the Pacoima office or email fees@kids1st.org, including your name, your child(ren)'s name, and where your child(ren) receives service. The agency will work with the family and accept a reasonable plan from the family for repayment of delinquent fees. If the family complies with the provisions of the repayment plan and pays current fees when due, the family will continue to receive services.

Please remember, it is the goal of Kids 1st Learning Center to help the family. Open and frequent communication is key. Should the family's experience decrease in gross income, please inform your case worker. The case worker will work with the family to determine whether the family qualifies for a decrease in the family fee. Please see the section of this handbook titled "**Family's Right to Voluntarily Report Changes**" for more information.

### Advanced Payment of Fees:

If the family is unable to make a payment in person during the first seven days of the month and is able to make a payment in advance between Tuesday through Thursday of the last week of the preceding month. Please contact the Pacoima office or email fees@kids1st.org to make an appointment. Please include your name, your child(ren)'s name, and where your child(ren) receives service.

### **Exceptions for Fee Assessment**

No family fees will be collected from the following types of families:

1. Families with an income level that, in relation to family size, is less than the first entry in the fee schedule;
2. Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid;
3. Families whose children are enrolled in part-day CSPP;
4. Families whose children are eligible for services pursuant to *EC 8263(b)(1)(B)* may be exempt from family fees for up to three months if the case plan/referral so specifies;
  - *EC 8262(b)(1)(B) states: "A family who is receiving child care on the basis of being a child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 8208, is eligible to receive services...for up to three months, unless the family becomes eligible pursuant to subparagraph (C)"*
5. Families whose children are eligible for services pursuant to *EC 8263(b)(1)(C)* may be exempt from family fees for up to twelve months if the case plan/referral so specifies.
  - *EC 8262(b)(1)(C) states: "A family may receive child care services for up to 12 months on the basis of a certification by the county child welfare agency that child care services continue to be necessary or, if the child is receiving child protective services during that period of time, and the family requires child care*



*and remains otherwise eligible. This time limit does not apply if the family's child care referral is recertified by the county child welfare agency."*

## **UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Kids 1st Learning Center welcomes constructive participation in their early childhood programs. The administrative team has established the following procedure for persons who wish to file a grievance:

### **Steps to Resolving:**

- Step 1.** Request a meeting between the person making the complaint and the person named in the complaint. The site supervisor will also be a participant.
- Step 2.** If the situation is not resolved, the person issuing the complaint will fill out a Complaint Form. A Complaint Form can be obtained from the office or the classroom teacher. A meeting between the person making the complaint and Senior Management will be present.
- Step 3.** If the situation is not resolved, a complaint form is submitted to the administrative team; a meeting will be held with the person filing the complaint, the person named in the complaint, the site supervisor, and the Director of Facilities.
- Step 4.** If the matter cannot be resolved, the parent will be put in contact with the California State Department of Education, Early Education Support Division assigned Consultant or the California Department of Social Services assigned Consultant.

**The grievance-complaint procedure process is to respond to complaints at Kids 1st Learning Center level within 60 days of the receipt of the complaint and will adhere to all available civil law remedies.**

### **Public Notices - Complaint Procedures:**

Any person or organization wishing to file a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, including racial harassment or sexual harassment, or failure to comply with state or federal law in any of Kids 1st Learning Center's programs, should contact the Human Resources Director at 13232 Kagel Canyon St. Pacoima CA 91331.

### **Public Notices - Uniform Complaint Procedures**

It is the intent of Kids 1st Learning Center 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 Kids 1st Learning Center Child Development Programs' 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 with the State Department of Education:

California Department of Education  
Early Learning and Care Division  
1430 N Street, Suite 3410  
Sacramento, CA 95814

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written 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.

**NOTE:** In accordance with Kids 1st Learning Center procedures, any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint if it is felt there has been a violation of federal or state law or regulation by one of the covered programs. Discrimination complaints must be filed within six months of the alleged discrimination.

The first step in all complaints will be to try to resolve the concern among the parties involved. If that is not possible, then the formal steps of the official procedure are available. Generally, the procedure must be completed within 60 days from receipt of the complaint. Complaints are confidential, and discrimination or retaliation against a complainant is prohibited.