



FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome!



LEAP Children's Centers
welcomes your family to our
Full-Day State Preschool Program

*Supporting children and families
across the central coast*

Updated August 2024



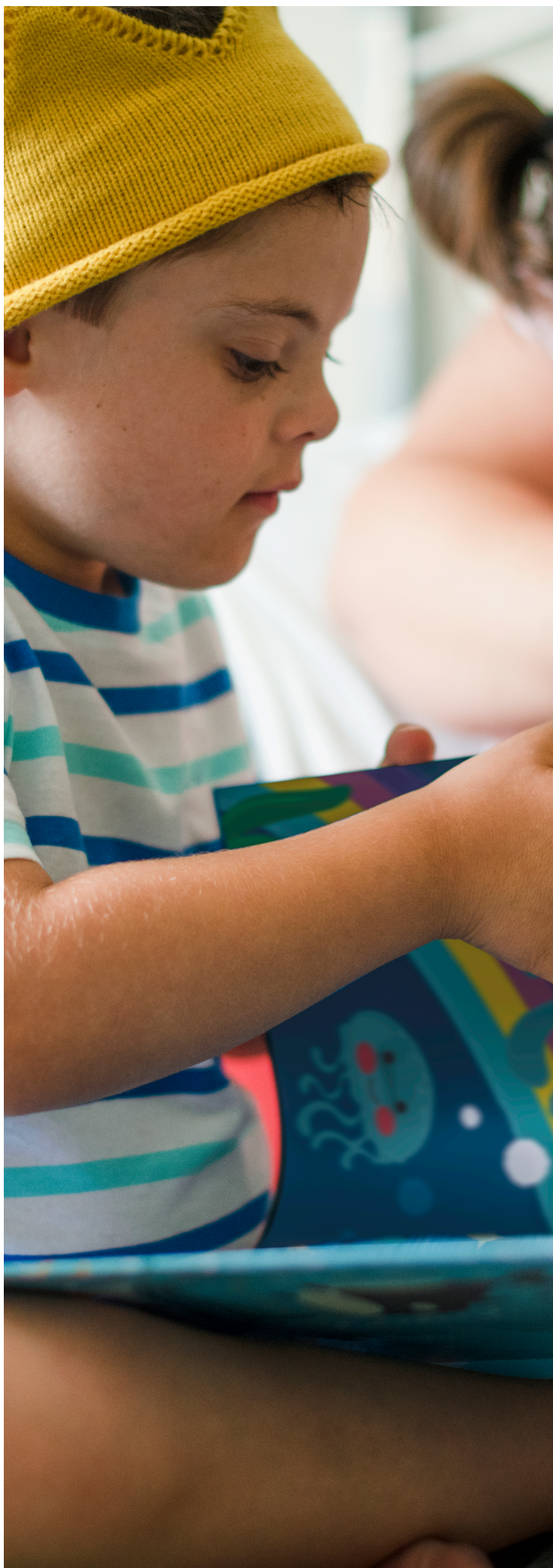
LEAP Children's Centers

Learn • Engage • Advocate • Partner

Welcome to our Full-Day State Preschool program!

This **handbook** was designed to assist families with understanding the requirements to participate in our Full-Day State Preschool program. We look forward to serving you!

We are a private non-profit organization supported by various foundations and corporate partners. Our State Preschool Program is funded through the *California Department of Education*.



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PROGRAM DESIGN

Mission | Vision

LEAP strengthens our community through diverse educational, recreational and social programs for children and families regardless of income.

We envision a community where children are loved, valued and respected, and families are empowered to reach their highest potential.

LEAP Children's Centers

Centers are licensed by the *State Department of Social Services* to serve children (0-5 years old) through 3 sites and 13 classrooms.

Phelps Site

6842 Phelps Road
Goleta, CA 93117

West Campus Site

701-H West Campus Lane
Goleta, CA 93117

Lompoc Site

500 E North Ave.
Lompoc, CA 93436

Operating Hours:

8:00am – 5:00pm (On 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month, the center closes at 2:00pm)

Days of Operation:

Calendar is available at center and leapcentralcoast.org. Closure days include:

Teacher Professional
Development Days
(2 days prior to new school year)
Labor Day
Thanksgiving (Thurs. & Fri.)
Christmas Eve
Christmas Day

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr.
President's Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Juneteenth

Minimal Service Days:

Thanksgiving Week
Last week of December
Week of Spring Break

**reference calendar for exact dates.*

State Preschool Age Definition:

4 year old	3 year old
Child whose 4 th birthday is on or before December 1 of the fiscal year	Child whose 3 rd birthday is on or before December 1 of the fiscal year.
Child whose 5 th birthday occurs after September 1 st of the fiscal year	Child whose 3 rd birthday is on or after December 2 of the fiscal year, may be enrolled on or after their 3 rd birthday

PROGRAM DESIGN



Open Door Policy:

You may visit your child's classroom unannounced to observe your child at any time during operational hours. Our program is based upon a partnership with parents of the children enrolled. Parents are highly encouraged to participate in their child's program.

NOTE: While there is no need for advance notice, we often take students on nature walks. If time is a constraint, you may want to call the center in advance.

Group Sizes:

Adult to child ratios are planned for in advance and followed for each age group based on the Title 5 regulations. For preschool programs, the minimum ratio is 1 adult for every 8 students.

Refrain from Religious Instruction Statement:

Our programs refrain from religious instruction & worship.

Confidentiality:

FAMILY INFORMATION - The use or disclosure of any information pertaining to the child or the child's family shall be restricted to purposes directly related to the administration of the program.

FILE REVIEW - LEAP will permit the review of the child's file by the child's parent(s) who enrolled the child, or the parent's authorized representative, licensing and state auditors upon request and at reasonable times and place.

LEAP INFORMATION - While volunteering or working in the program, you may come into possession of confidential information that belongs to LEAP. Information is strictly confidential; therefore, must not be removed from the site, or disclosed to anyone, including family members, outside the Agency, or to any employee who is not entitled to the information, either during or after your volunteerism/work. Any doubts about the confidentiality of information should be resolved in favor of confidentiality.

Equal Access/Non-Discrimination/ Harassment Statement:

No person will be subjected to discrimination, or any other form of illegal bias, including harassment. We give equal access to services regardless of: sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, language or mental or physical disability.

Any incident of harassment should be reported to the Program Director who is responsible for investigating the matter. This policy includes clients and the public while participating in program services.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Philosophy/Values:

LEAP's values guide and inspire our work with children, families and community partners. We strive to uphold and pursue these values as we work to realize social change both as an organization and as individuals in community:

Collaboration

We believe that no one person, no one agency can address our community's problems, and so we value our work in collaboration with other organizations and community partners.

Integrity

We build trust by engaging in our work responsibly and with accountability. We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and take personal responsibility for our actions.

Respect

We honor our collective and individual identities and assume positive intent in our interactions. By treating our students, families, partners and ourselves with respect, we create the opportunity for authentic relationships and nurture social justice.

Health & Social Services:

Our goal is for families to know where to access community health and social services to meet their unique family needs.

All families need help at times. LEAP is committed to wrapping our arms around the entire family so that children can thrive. We are proud that our Family Resource Center (FRC) is available to support family's comprehensive needs.

The FRC provides parent education, in-depth support, resource and referral, information/outreach, assistance to enroll in Cal-Fresh, WIC, and Medi-Cal, emergency food/product distributions, immigration information, assistance with job search, transportation/ translation services and advocacy.

Creativity

We are flexible and nimble, leveraging resources in order to pursue opportunities as they arise.

Curiosity

We commit to being curious about our impact by challenging assumptions through reflection, experimentation, holistic evaluation and adaptation.

Joy

Everyone deserves to experience joy. We strive to find joy in our work, to inspire joy in our children and families, and to recognize that joy is as necessary as bread to our sustenance and survival.

Our goals and objectives are reflected within each of the quality program components

Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 & ASQ-SE) is a screening and monitoring system used to identify developmental delays and disorders that may or may not require early intervention services.

- ASQ-3 relies on parent/guardian to observe their child and complete the questionnaire about their child's abilities. Parents/guardians complete the questionnaires which enhances the accuracy of screening by tapping into the family's in-depth knowledge about their children.
- ASQ-SE is a first level screening tool that is designed to identify children who may be at risk for social or emotional difficulties.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Nutrition Services:

Our goal is to ensure children have nutritious meals and snacks during their time at the center. Meals and snacks are culturally and developmentally appropriate and meet the federal Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutritional requirements.

LEAP believes healthy, culturally appropriate and abundant food helps children learn and grow.

Mealtime is a learning experience for our children. It's a time for talking about color, taste, texture and the name of foods. It is an opportunity for practicing manners by watching adults and socializing with other children.

Free balanced nutritious meals include breakfast, hot lunch and an afternoon snack. Monthly menus are posted on site and shared via monthly newsletter. Candy, gum and soda are not allowed in the classroom!



If your child has any dietary restrictions such as food allergies, or can not eat certain foods for religious or personal reasons, please notify the school office immediately.

Parent Education & Involvement:

Our goal is to provide a welcoming environment for families and invite them to participate as equal partners in the education of their children. We believe that children do best in school when teachers and families work together.

Because we wish the Center to be an extension of a child's family life, **we offer a variety of ways for parents to become involved in their child's classroom** experience.

Opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Parent Orientation
- Parent Surveys
- Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice per year to discuss your child's development and learn how to best support your family.
- Work with your child at home on achieving goals you and the teacher have set: make games, educational materials, posters, etc.
- Family council meetings provide an opportunity to learn about child development, parenting strategies, network with program staff and other parents, and provide input on the nature and operation of the program.
- Talk with your child's teacher regularly
- Assist with field trips
- Assist with setting up activities
- Assist with cleaning toys or equipment
- Read to children
- Assist in classroom
- Participate in Program Self-Assessment
- Attend parent education workshops
- Meet with the Educators, Site-Supervisor or Program Director
- Donate items for arts and crafts, if possible

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Environment:

Our goal is for each of our classrooms to provide a safe, healthy and welcoming environment that supports the broad developmental needs of children.

To achieve this goal, a Certified Observer uses the following tools to observe classrooms:

- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) measures the quality of teacher-child interactions
- CLASS Environment observation tool describes and measures specific features of learning settings that can support effective interactions and enhance children's development and learning
- Specific portions of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale

Based on the results, the observer and teacher collaboratively develop and take action steps for continuous quality improvement, such as teacher-child interactions that affect the broad developmental needs of young children, including; Cognitive, Social-Emotional, Physical, and Health and Safety.

Although classrooms often appear informal, they are the result of careful planning and structuring to ensure that the needs of each child are met in a supportive and nurturing way. Our preschool classrooms focus on the development of the child's whole self: social emotional, cognitive, language and literacy, English-language development, gross and fine motor development.

Environments offer a rich variety of spaces, materials and activities organized to promote children's active exploration and mastery. As each of these facets develops at different rates, the children seek activities and experiences that meet their individual needs.



Education Program:

Our goal is to ensure all children are making progress in the domains of; Approaches to Learning, Cognition, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, and Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development.

We strive to provide a program that is developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate and supports the whole child.

Our program is **inclusive of all children with exceptional/special needs.**

We use a tool called the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) to assess the development of children.

- Assessed within 60-90 days of enrollment & twice a year
- We encourage parents to share their input as part of the assessment
- Assessment outcomes are used to plan and conduct age and developmentally appropriate activities for children

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES



Desired Results Developmental Profile assesses the development of children in the following domains:

Social/Emotional development is supported by:

- Building trust
- Planning routines and transitions so they can occur in a predictable and unhurried manner
- Help children develop emotional security and facility in social relationships

Physical development is supported by:

- Promoting physical activity
- Providing sufficient time to move within the indoor and outdoor spaces
- Providing equipment, materials and guidelines for active play and movement

Cognitive & Language skills are supported by:

- Various strategies, including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration
- Providing opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement and dialogue
- Promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults
- Supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development

Staff Qualifications & Development:

Our program makes professional development of individuals working with children and families a priority.

Our lead Teachers are required to have a Child Development Permit issued by the California Commission of Teacher Credentialing (CTC). All teaching staff are encouraged to continue their education and obtain a higher permit level.

Continuous Improvement:

Our goal is to implement an effective annual program self-evaluation process to support continuous improvement. The process includes:

- Assessment of the program by parents using the Desired Results Parent Survey
- Assessment of the program by staff, parents and board members using the Program Monitoring Instrument, DRDP data, CLASS & Environmental Rating Scale tools, and California's Quality and Improvement System
- Based on the results, goals and action steps are developed and implemented.

GENERAL POLICIES

Code of Ethical Conduct:

All families, employees, volunteers and consultants must commit to demonstrate the following core standards of conduct during all interactions at our centers:

- Communicate effectively in a calm manner
- Be courteous
- Maintain order
- Maintain confidentiality
- Show respect of others
- Use positive child guidance
- Never leave a child alone or unsupervised
- Take responsibility for own actions
- Never provide false information
- Be punctual
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual present at the center
- Respect diversity
- Respect inclusion of all
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect



Safe School & Harassment Policy:

The following behaviors will **NOT BE TOLERATED** and are **PROHIBITED** at any of our facilities:

- Behavior which threatens the safety, welfare or morals of others
- Under the influence of and/or possession of alcohol, marijuana or drugs
- No smoking within 30 feet from any LEAP center, office or playground
- The possession of any weapon, look alike weapon (toy), or any object which ejects, whether functional or not
- Behavior which would cause, attempt, threaten, or conspire to cause damage to personal or real property or person through arson, burglary, extortion, larceny (stealing), criminal mischief, battery (hitting people), assault (making a person fearful of hitting), harassment (threat to commit an illegal act), sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, hazing (actions intended to endanger or embarrass others)
- Use of obscene and profane language

SAFE SCHOOL NOTICE



ALCOHOL, DRUG AND WEAPON FREE ZONE.

GENERAL POLICIES

Suspected Child Abuse Reporting:

Our staff are mandated reporters. The safety and well being of your child always comes first. State law requires that staff report known or suspected instances of a child abuse to Child Protective Services or to local police officials. This abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

If you or someone in your family wants to learn different ways to guide and discipline your child or to handle anger without hurting your child, please talk to your child's Teacher or Program Director. There are resources available to help you, at no charge.

Clothing & Items from Home:

Your child will be very active during classroom activities and should dress in comfortable and washable clothes. Shoes must be worn. Tennis shoes are great. (Open toed sandals or shoes with slick soles can be dangerous and are discouraged to be worn at school.)

Please send two full sets of weather-appropriate changes of clothes for your child in case of spills or accidents. All clothing items (including sheets/blankets) must be labeled with your child's name.

All toys are not allowed in school. If your child brings a toy, we will ask the family to hold it for the child until the end of the day. Please do not bring toys to store in their cubby.

Also, please keep jewelry items at home. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

Sunscreen:

During the months of March to October, we encourage parents to apply sunscreen lotion (SPF-15 or higher) on their child upon arrival to the center. With your signed permission, and as needed, staff will reapply the lotion (between the time 10:00am-4:00pm) that you have provided to your child according to parents' request, and in accordance with instructions on the bottle.



Label & Bring from Home

- Small blanket
- 2 changes of clothes
- Family picture

Biting:

Biting is very common among groups of young children, for various reasons. Understanding why the young child bites is the first step in preventing biting as well as teaching the child alternatives to biting. Parents of both students will be notified in order to work on a plan to prevent future incidents and offer support to students.

Discipline & Guidance:

Rules and limits are set to keep children safe and help them get along with others. Positive methods of guidance and re-direction are used with a BIG focus on social-emotional development to help gain social skills that allow a child to relate and communicate with others in a healthy way.

There will be no use of physical punishment, emotional abuse or humiliation. We DO NOT spank, punish, isolate, deny basic needs, such as food or threaten our students.

Staff work to build a positive relationship with every child. **Every effort will be made to handle discipline problems through:**

- **Setting Expectations** - For children to build trusting relationships and feel confident to explore, they must clearly know what is expected of them. Classroom and playground rules are few, basic, clear and concise.
- **Consistency** - So children know what to expect and are enabled to anticipate, predict and change their own behavior accordingly, limits and expectations are consistent. Conflict is handled the same way by all teachers.
- **Tone** – “You are safe, the situation is under control and we can work it out.” This is the message a child must receive from any intervening adult. A firm, kind, serious tone with a relaxed demeanor reinforces this message.
- **Modeling** – We must set an example of caring individuals who are able to express their own needs and feelings clearly and calmly, and, willingly respond to the needs of others. “I feel angry when you hit me: Let’s sit down so you can tell me with your words what’s bothering you.”
- **Physical Intervention** - Children will be physically stopped if hurting each other. The focus will then turn to resolving the conflict.
- **Passive Intervention** - Children are given the opportunity to work through their own problems. Teachers trust children to ‘figure it out’ but are available to help if needed.
- **Redirection** - Request to stop negative behavior is followed by suggestion for appropriate behavior. “You may not throw the sand; if you want to throw something here is a ball and a bucket to throw it into.”
- **Identifying/Interpreting** – A simple statement can clarify the problem, diffuse tension and help problem-solving begin. “You both want the truck.” Children also need help in considering the emotions or needs of others. “See his tears, it really hurt him when you kicked him.”
- **Validating Feelings** - Identify and acknowledge big emotions before ‘learning’ can occur. “I will not allow you to hit him, but, tell us why you are so angry.” All children involved in a conflict must honestly be listened to. Children are not told to say “I’m sorry,” but rather, to actively comfort or offer help to the child they hurt or upset.
- **Generating Options/Solutions** - From a list of specific choices to a general question, children are given tools to settle conflicts (negotiate, make restitution, collaborate, etc.). “Well, what should we do about it?” “Can you think of a way to use the truck together? Is there a road for it to drive on?” “John is crying from that push you gave him; ask him if he would like you to brush him off.” “Everyone wants a turn; how can we make it fair?”
- **Natural consequences** – Point out natural consequences and reinforce as they occur. Children see the results of their own behavior and begin to modify it accordingly. “You dumped your milk on the floor; please get the sponge to clean it up.” “You threw sand after we asked you not to. Now you need to leave the sandbox and find a different area to play.”



Trauma Informed Support:

LEAP is dedicated to mitigating the effects of poverty, racism, and trauma. We can do that best when our teachers, our students and our families can receive additional therapeutic support.

LEAP partners with CALM to provide support to our students, our families and our teaching staff. CALM provides one or two mental health consultants who are available to support parents, children and teachers, especially when times are tough.



We are committed to working with families to meet the following goals:

- Children will display healthy social and emotional development, including ability to manage their emotions and articulate their feelings.
- Parents will be active, involved participants and advocates in their child's social, emotional and academic development over time and across settings, including the fostering of a positive learning environment in the home.
- Through hands-on training from CALM, teachers and staff will continue to improve as educators, with increased knowledge of how children are affected by trauma, and a better understanding of how to respond to challenging behaviors in the classroom.

Suspension or Expulsion:

Our program prohibits or severely limits the use of suspension and expulsion because of a child's behaviors. In addition, the program can not persuade or encourage a child's parents or legal guardians to voluntarily unenroll from the program due to a child's behavior.

The program will take many steps to address a child's challenging behaviors, with the goal being to aid the child's safe participation in the program.

In the event a child is suspended or expelled due to persistent and serious behaviors, the program will issue a Notice of Action that is effective 24 hours after the notice is issued.

Persistent and serious challenging behaviors are either repeated patterns of behavior that significantly interfere with the learning of other children, or interactions with peers and adults that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance.

NOTE: If a child is suspended or expelled, the parent has the right to file an appeal directly to the State Department no later than 14 calendar days after receipt of the Notice of Action. (For more information, see Grievance/ Complaint Procedures/Program Decision Complaints)

GENERAL POLICIES

Emergencies:

Each center’s emergency plan is posted in the classroom and emergency drills are conducted monthly. LEAP’s staff is prepared to respond to a variety of emergency situations and our first priority will be to keep children safe until they can be re-united with their parents.

Evacuation Locations:

Refer to the LIC-610 posted in the main office and classroom’s parent board.

For major emergency, tune into:

Santa Barbara/ Goleta	Santa Ynez/ Lompoc
KTMS - 990 AM KIST - 1490 AM KIST - 107.7 FM (Spanish) KSPE - 94.5 FM (Spanish) KTYD - 99.9 FM KSBL – 101.7 FM KCSB – 91.9 FM	KRAZ – 105.9 FM
	Santa Maria
	KUHL – 1440 AM

Medication:

LEAP Children’s Centers staff may administer medications when a family submits a *Parent Consent for Administration of Medications and Medication Chart* form (LIC9221), along with a doctor’s note accompanying the medication with specific instructions. All medications must be in original packaging and labeled with student’s name.

Medications are kept locked in a medical box, accessible only to staff. Every medication that is administered is logged and kept on file.

Always give medications directly to the school’s front office to ensure all required forms are on file. Do not leave it in the child’s bag.

Child Supervision:

Staff actively ensure that our environments are safe and no child will be left alone or unsupervised at any time.

Supervision is everyone’s responsibility, so in addition to our staff, parents must also use active supervision techniques to ensure our environments are safe.

Parents must:

- Park only in designated areas.
- Ensure gate/door is closed and secured.
- No Cell Phone policy when dropping off/picking-up your child. Give your child your undivided attention.
- Ensure your child is signed in/out every day. In case of missing sign-in/out, families will be contacted to return to school and complete the missing sign-in/out as it’s a licensing requirement.
- Hold child’s hand in road and parking lot.
- Encourage children to follow safety rules.
- Report safety and supervision concerns to staff immediately.



GENERAL POLICIES

Daily Health Screening & Exclusion:

In order to help prevent the spread of children's diseases, licensing requires that each child receive a daily health check upon arrival at the center.

No child shall be accepted without contact between center staff and the person bringing the child to the center. The person bringing the child to the center must remain until the health check has been completed and the child is accepted.

DO NOT bring your child to the center if they have any of the following symptoms:

- **Temperature** fever over 100 degrees F within the last 24 hours
- **Gastro-intestinal** nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain within the last 24 hours
- **Throat and neck** redness, spots, sore throat, infected tonsils, swollen glands
- **Eyes** discharge and/or redness
- **Skin** rashes, spots, eruptions, etc.
- **Hair lice/nits**, infected areas on scalp
- **Nose and ears** discharge with symptoms such as fever, coughing or other symptoms

Sick Children Stay Home!

Napping:

Children under the age of 5 each have the opportunity to nap or rest without distraction or disturbance from other activities by providing an individual napping space and a cot or mat. If a child chooses not to sleep they will have the opportunity to do a quiet activity on their cot or mat.

Tooth Brushing & Fluoride Varnish:

Children participate in supervised tooth brushing after a meal as part of dental disease prevention and learning healthy habits.

Parents will be informed about the purpose and benefits of fluoride varnish during orientation and provide written consent for their child to participate.

A fluoride varnish application will be offered at least 2 times per year. No more than 5 varnish applications per year should be made.

Teachers and staff will verify with parents and providers that child is not receiving a fluoride supplement (*for example, a chewable pill or vitamin prescribed by a doctor or dentist*). If the child is receiving a fluoride supplement at home, staff will advise parents to talk with their doctor or dentist prior to signing consent to learn if it is okay for their child to receive fluoride varnish treatment.



GENERAL POLICIES

Field Trips/Special Events:

We offer special activities throughout the year. Our main emphasis; however, is bringing the experience to our school. We will offer a variety of special visitors, and will communicate these events through CareConnect.

If we take trips through the community, please make sure that you mark on the Emergency Card that your child has permission to participate. In addition, a permission slip will be handed out as specialized trips come up.

Holiday/Birthday Celebrations:

Our birthday policy is based on honoring our families who come from many backgrounds, cultures and belief systems. In addition, as Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) participants, our children may only eat nutritious foods.

Always check with office staff in advance of your child's birthday regarding the birthday policy. If you would like to contribute any item(s) to share with your child's class, they may be shared during pick-up for students to take home.

Each classroom has a unique way to recognize birthdays by including it in their daily schedule in ways that all children can participate. Please honor our request for NO birthday party "goodies" in classrooms. **Sweets such as candy, cake or ice cream, party favors, hats or balloons are NOT allowed in school.**

If you are having a celebration for your child outside of school, please do not deliver invitations to school unless all of the children in your child's classroom are being invited. Additionally, we discourage staff invitations in order to maintain professional relationships between families and staff.

Lead Poisoning Prevention:

Currently, there is no known safe level of lead in the body. It is important for parents to become aware and knowledgeable about lead poisoning and preventative measures. Lead poisoning can potentially become a serious illness that can cause various health concerns in children such as:

- Anemia
- Decreases in intelligence quotient (IQ)
- Behavioral problems
- Decreased auditory function
- Slowed growth

Children under the age of 6 years old are more vulnerable to being exposed to lead.

It is important for parents to understand preventative measures by:

Knowing the sources of lead exposure such as:

- Interior/exterior paint
- Soil
- Drinking water (e.g. private well)
- Folk remedies
- Parental occupations (e.g., construction, plumbing, battery manufacturing)

Knowing proper nutrition such as:

- Calcium rich foods (e.g., milk, yogurt, cheese, leafy green vegetables)
- Vitamin C foods (e.g., fruits and vegetables)
- Iron rich foods (e.g., red meats, beans, iron fortified)

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment, states that children should undergo clinical diagnosis and assessments that would account for a blood lead level count during 12 and 24 months of age in order to measure lead toxicity. Assessments should be given to children at 6 and 9 months of age and thereon after up to the age of 6 years old.

Child Admission Priorities

When an opening is available, we access the eligibility list and contact families based on the following program admission priorities:

5% of Full-Day State Preschool funded enrollment is reserved for Children with Exceptional Needs AND a family meets a Need criteria.

All other preschool children are prioritized for enrollment as follows:

First: Child is recipient of Child Protective Services or At-Risk of being neglected, abused or exploited.

Second: Once the needs set-aside is filled, child with exceptional needs from income eligible family AND family meets a need criteria. Prioritize based on income ranking order.

Third: Eligible children not enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten. Prioritize children with the lowest income ranking first. (If 2 or more children are within the same ranking prioritize dual language learners, then the child who has been on the waiting list for the longest time).

Fourth: Family income is not more than 15% above income threshold AND family meets a need criteria. Prioritize exceptional needs children, then 4 year olds, then 3 year olds. (limited to 10% of funded enrollment)

Fifth: Family meets eligibility criteria, but does not meet a need criteria. Prioritize based on income ranking order.

Sixth: Family resides in approved neighborhood school boundary. Prioritize based on income ranking order.



The Enrollment Process

Enrollment Process Contact Information:

Children's Center (Phelps Office)
Website: leapcentralcoast.org
Telephone: (805) 968-0488
6842 Phelps Road
Goleta, CA 93117

Step 1: Eligibility List

The program has limited openings. The first step to access preschool program services is to **complete the eligibility list application** through our portal called CareWait located on leapcentralcoast.org. Children with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

If you have any questions or need assistance with completing the waiting list application please contact our office.

Families screened & selected for potential enrollment from the eligibility list will be asked to move forward with completing forms and gathering enrollment documents.

Step 3: Certification

Attend in-person Certification Interview appointment with a Children's Center Office staff.

Application for Services is completed by office staff in consultation with Parent/Guardian, and verified by Program Administrators.

Notice of Action will be issued approving or denying services.

Note: Your application will not be accepted if documentation is not complete at the time of your appointment.

Step 2: Documentation

Complete forms and gather documents that will be used to verify eligibility and need for services. Note that documentation for the purpose of enrollment will be submitted through our portal called CareConnect.

Schedule a Certification Interview appointment with a Children's Center Enrollment Specialist by calling (805) 968-0488 once your documentation is complete.

Note: If you do not contact us within 1 week of being asked to complete the enrollment process, you may not be eligible to apply for this enrollment period.

Step 4: Orientation

Meet & greet our team

Tour the center

Learn about

- Exciting opportunities your child will have in our program
- Parent involvement
- Program philosophy, goals, objectives and procedures
- Complete child care licensing forms
- Sign in/out process with the CareConnect App

Certification of Eligibility:

Enrollment into the State Preschool program is determined by specific child or family eligibility criteria. In addition, a child's parent must live in California. Families complete a certification process at initial enrollment and remain eligible to receive services for not less than 24 months.

NOTES: If the eligibility period ends before the end of a program year, services will be extended until the start of kindergarten, as long as the child is age-eligible.

In the event that a toddler is ageing out of a classroom and there is no available opening in the preschool classroom, the family **may request a gap in services** up to their recertification date. If an opening becomes available during their certification period, the family will be contacted.



Family Data File:

A family data file is maintained for each family receiving services. When a child's residence alternates between the homes of separated or divorced parents eligibility must be determined separately for each household in which the child is residing during the time services are needed.

Proof of Residency

Determination of eligibility shall be **without regard** to the immigration status of the child or the child's parent(s), unless under a final order of deportation from the United States Department of Homeland Security.

- Must live in California
- Families experiencing homelessness shall submit declaration that they reside in California
- Any evidence of a street address or post office address in California

If enrolled as residing in an approved neighborhood school boundary, additional Proof of Residency is required:

- Verified residency within approved neighborhood school boundary
- Utility bill
- Property tax bill
- Voter registration
- Government agency letter
- Rental or lease agreement with Landlord's info
- Employment pay stub
- Documentation that a contractor reasonably relies upon to prove a family's residency

Family Language Survey

Identification of your child as a dual language learner in State Preschool means that your child will benefit from additional support from the program in order to develop their home language and English language skills. This identification will serve them only in preschool and is different from any identification process or program supports a child might receive as an English learner in Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten.



Exceptional Needs Child

If your child has exceptional needs, in order for us to best serve your child the file must contain either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Support Program (IFSP)

Health & Emergency Information

Families must provide child health records & current emergency information, along with current immunization records for enrolled children. Records must be updated upon receiving new immunizations.

Note that the Health Evaluation form must be completed by physician, clinic, CHDP, etc., for each enrolled child. This form must be submitted no later than 30 days after enrollment.

Court Order

Any and all court orders pertaining to students, parents, family members must be provided to be included in the family's file. Written documentation, along with copy of such court order must be provided. Verbal communication is appreciated but will not allow the school to uphold such court order, unless properly documented.

Proof of Family Size:

Biological/Adoptive Parent: "Family" shall be considered the parents & the children for whom the parents are responsible, who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living.

Guardian/Foster Parent: "Family" shall be considered the child & related siblings.

Families must provide the names of the adults & the names, gender, birthdates, and birth certificates of the children (under 18 years of age) identified in the family.

At least one document for **ALL** children counted in the family size must be on file & indicate the relationship of the child to the parent.

- Birth Certificate or other live birth records
- Child Custody Court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster Care placement records
- School or Medical records
- County welfare department records
- Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent

PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS

Eligibility Criteria:

Participants must provide documentation of eligibility in **1** or more of these eligibility categories:

Child is Recipient of Child Protective/Welfare Services or Child Identified as At-Risk

- Documentation of Monthly Income **AND**
- Referral Letter

Family Experiencing Homelessness

- Documentation of Monthly Income **AND**
- Referral Letter **OR**
- Parental Declaration of Homelessness

Current Aid Recipient

- Documentation of CalWORKs Cash-Aid (Example: Notice of Action | Receipt of Cash-Aid | Verification of Benefits)

Receiving Benefits from Governmental Program

Medi-Cal, CalFresh, California Food Assistance, California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation, Head Start or Early Head Start.

- Enrollment Documentation, such as Notice of Action | Receipt of Aid | Verification of Benefits **AND**
- Copy of Governmental Program Application **OR**
- If not available, Self-Declaration of Income as declared on the program application

Income Eligibility

Guardian or Foster Parent(s):

- Documentation of Monthly Income (For child and their related siblings)

Biological or Adopted Parent(s):

- Authorization to Release Employment Information (if applicable) **AND**
- Parent Notification: Requirement to Report Income Over Threshold
- Documentation of Monthly Income (ALL sources for ALL parents in family)

Regular & Steady Income: Total countable income from either month of the 2-month window immediately preceding certification

Fluctuating or Inconsistent Income: Total countable income from 12 months immediately preceding certification.

Approved Neighborhood School Boundary

- Self-Certification of Income **AND**
- Verification of Home Address (Example: Utility bill | Property tax bill | Voter registration | Rental/lease agreement | Government agency letter | Pay stub)

Child has Exceptional Needs

- Documentation of Monthly Income **AND**
- Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) **OR** Individualized Education Program (IEP)



Participants enrolled as income eligible, must notify our office **within 30 days** if income, at any time exceeds the maximum income threshold

PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS

Need for Services:

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, for full-day programs, most Parents must meet at least 1 need criteria. Based on the following need criteria, **see the applicable Need Form for further guidance** on what documentation is required:

- Child Protective/Welfare Services Referral Letter
- At-Risk Referral Letter
- Employment Verification
- Declaration of Self-Employment
- Request & Plan to Seek Employment (Max 5 days | Less than 30 hours per week)
- Training Verification (Training leading to a vocational goal & must make adequate progress. Services are limited up to 6 years from the date classes start **or** until 24 units after the attainment of a bachelor's degree)
- Educational Program Verification (English Language Learner, High School Diploma or High School Equivalency Certificate)
- Request & Plan to Seek Permanent Housing (Max 5 days | Less than 30 hours per week)
- Homelessness Referral Letter (Max 5 days | Less than 30 hours per week)
- Statement of Parental Incapacity (Max of 50 hours per week)
- No Established Need: Parent Request form (If enrolled within 5th or 6th admission priority)

Determining a Child's Schedule:

Services are available when:

- Parent meets a need criteria that precludes the provision of care & supervision of their child for any part of the day
- No parent in family available & capable of providing care during time care is requested
- 2 parent family – Care is approved when neither parent is available to care for the child
- Supervision of the child is not otherwise being provided during scheduled time at:
 - School-age public educational program
 - Private school
 - Early learning & care services



Services will be approved based on verified need documentation and/or the program limitations, whichever is less.

Consistent Schedule: Based on the verified number of days & hours, or total number of hours parent consistently or expects to work each week

Variable Schedule: Based on the highest number of hours worked in any given week within the two-month window preceding certification, OR if there is no work history, the highest number of total hours per week the employer expects the parent to work

PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS

Travel time only applies to parents who are working or in school. Our agency requires a written request for any travel time beyond 60 minutes before and after. To determine the maximum authorized drive time, divide the work or school hours day by 2. Travel time can not be more than 4 hours/day (2 hours each way). And, not more than the time from the child's care site to work or school and back.

Sleep time is available for parents who work between the hours of 10 PM and 6 AM. The allowed sleep time can be equal to the authorized work and travel time between 10 PM and 6 AM. Please note that sleep time is not automatic and must be requested in writing.

Right to Voluntarily Report Changes:

Once eligibility & need have been established a participant may keep their current service level, no matter if there are changes in their family. The only exception is if a participant's eligibility is based on income eligibility & the family's income exceeds the maximum income threshold for ongoing eligibility.

If a participant needs to change their service level during their certification period the following must be submitted:

- Request to Change Services Form **and**
- Documentation to support the request

NOTE: After receipt of the form & documentation to support the requested change, our office will issue a Notice of Action within 10 business days indicating the outcome of your request.

Child Care Licensing:

California's Child Care Licensing Program provides oversight and enforcement for licensed Child Care Centers. Periodically, a representative from Community Care Licensing will conduct a health and safety inspection at our center. The inspection might include interviewing children or staff, reviewing child care records, and/or observe the physical conditions of the child(ren), including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement.

As part of the enrollment process, Parents will be provided with the following licensing information/forms:

- Notification of Parents' Rights form (LIC 995)
- Personal Rights Form (LIC 613A)
- Identification and Emergency Information (LIC 700)
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment form (LIC 627)
- Child's Preadmission Health History-Parent's Report (LIC 702)
- Physician's Report (LIC 701)
- Proof of Tuberculosis Clearance
- Immunization Records
- Caregiver Background Check Process (LIC 995E)



FAMILY FEES

Family Fees:

Some families enrolled in the program may have a family fee based on their total countable income, family size and certified hours of care. Fees are determined using the family fee schedule approved by the California Department of Finance.

Family fees are assessed according to the child who uses the most monthly hours of care, regardless of the number of children enrolled on the program.

Assessment:

Family fees are only assessed at:

- Initial Certification
- Recertification
- Voluntarily request to have fees re-assessed
 - **Decrease:** Effective on the first day of the month that follows the NOA issue date
 - **Increase:** No increase during certification

Full-time monthly fee when services are approved for 130 hours or more per month

Part-time monthly fee when services are approved for less than 130 hours per month

Fees CANNOT, under any circumstances, be recalculated based on a child's actual attendance

Exemptions:

The following are exemptions:

- A family whose income level is less than the first entry on the family fee schedule
- Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid
- Families with children identified as being at-risk or who are receiving Child Protective/Welfare Services may be exempt from fees for up to 12 months if the referral determines the fee waiver to be necessary

Advance Payment:

Payments are **due by the 1st of the month** in advance of services.

The preferred method for paying family fees is by Credit Card or Bank Transfer (ACH) on the CareConnect mobile app or web portal.

Delinquent Fees:

Family fees are considered **delinquent after 7 calendar days** from the due date.

NOTE: We can accept a reasonable repayment plan for payment of delinquent fees. We will continue to provide services to the child, provided the participant pays current fees when due and complies with the provisions of the repayment plan.

Credit for Fees Paid to Other Service Provider:

When our program cannot meet all of a family's need for care, a family may receive a credit for payment made to another provider. To receive credit, submit a receipt of payment within 30 days of making the payment.

NOTE: Fee credit is applied to next fee billing period. In the event that payment to the other service provider is more than the fee amount, the remaining amount will NOT carry to the next billing period.

Importance of Attendance:

Attend today, achieve tomorrow
Your child's regular attendance matters...

				
Infant/Toddler Time to develop stable, nurturing relationships. A healthy attachment base is the cornerstone for life long learning.	Preschooler Time for building the social, emotional, cognitive & language skills necessary for school readiness.	Elementary Time to develop reading skills needed to transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn"	Middle or High Schooler Time to develop strategies to become independent, build future dreams & habits for college and/or the workforce.	Adult Time to land a great job. Good attendance, dependability & work ethic are valued above all other soft skills.

**Absent 2 days per month = Absent 24 days per year
= Your child's learning is 1 month behind their peers!**

Don't let your child miss-out on the skills needed to be successful in school & life



Attendance Expectations/Policy:

Children are **expected to attend child care based on their certified schedule** determined at certification, recertification & when a participant voluntarily requests to change their service level.

A family may be disenrolled from the program for abandonment of care.

Participants may voluntarily request to change their child's service level.

Regular and consistence attendance is important. It allows the family to maximize the benefits of the child's early learning and care experience.

Unnecessary disruptions in services can stunt or delay social-emotional & cognitive development while safe, stable environments allow young children the opportunity to develop the relationships & trust necessary to comfortably explore & learn from their surroundings.

ATTENDANCE

Sign In & Out Procedures:

Parents or authorized adults must sign their child in and out every day, using the CareConnect App. When scanned the QR Code will identify your child's attendance and dismissal. Note that QR codes are made individually and personally only for parents and authorized adults.

Staff will only release children to adults listed on the Emergency Card. If a parent or legal guardian requests that one of the child's parents not be allowed to remove their child from the center, **a court order will be required.**

Be sure that the teacher acknowledges your child's presence before you leave. Plan to be at school a little earlier than the official closing time to pick up your child. Children get anxious when their friends have gone home and nobody has come for them.

Reporting Absences & Late Arrivals:

When a child is absent from regularly scheduled care at any time the parent or staff member must record the child's name, date of request, date(s) of absence and reason for absence.

Planned: If child has a planned absence or late arrival advance notice is required to be given to the school's office. (email, phone or voicemail)

Unplanned: If child is absent on a scheduled day, parent is responsible to report the absence on CareConnect, if child will be late parent is responsible to contact the center by 8:00am

Absence Policy:

Excused Absence

- Illness of child, parent/guardian, ailment, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization or quarantine
- Appointment due to illness of child or parent/guardian, which includes doctor, dentist, mental health, counseling or therapy
- Court ordered visitation for time spent with a parent or relative as required by law (Court order must be on file)
- Family emergency for unplanned situations of a temporary nature including court appearance, death, accident, hospitalization of a family member, fleeing domestic violence, no transportation, illness of sibling or due to sheltering in-place

Best Interest Days (maximum of 10 days per program year between July 1-June 30; except for children enrolled due to protective services or at risk)

Parent determines that another activity is better for the child to attend, such as:

- Visiting relative or close friend
- A day spent home with parent
- Vacation time with family
- Child enrichment opportunity
- Family moving
- Cultural or religious observance, holiday or ceremony
- Personal or family business

Abandonment of Care:

A family is not allowed to be enrolled if they are not using services. Your child will be disenrolled when there has been no communication with the center for 30 consecutive calendar days.

DISENROLLMENT

Family Request to Disenroll:

When a family chooses to disenroll from the program, they are required to notify the program in writing at least 2 weeks in advance of the last day of attendance

LEAP Disenrollment Policy:

Families will be issued a Notice of Action (NOA) at least 19-days if mailed or 14-days if hand delivered prior to disenrollment from the program. **The program may deny services or disenroll** a family for any of the following reasons, which include, but are not limited to:

- Falsification or providing misleading information or inaccurate documentation
- Knowingly misrepresenting eligibility, using incorrect or inaccurate information to obtain a benefit that the parent would otherwise not be entitled to receive
- Failure to provide current and correct information at the time of certification or recertification
- Failure to complete the recertification process within the designated 50 day recertification period
- Parent changes residency outside of California as reported by the parent
- Family income exceeds the maximum income threshold
- Non-compliance of agency policies
- Abandoned child care for 30 consecutive calendar days without notice
- Failure to complete or falsification of sign-in/out sheets accurately and on a daily basis
- Threatening, yelling, cussing or acting unethically towards any staff member.
- Violation of the Safe School & Harassment policy. Our office and centers are alcohol, drug and weapon free zones
- Unavailability of program funds. If it is necessary to displace families due to funding, families will be displaced in reverse order of Enrollment priority.



GRIEVANCE / COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Complaints Regarding Program Staff:

Program staff work to ensure that you and your family have a positive experience in the program. If you have concerns that are not complaints of unlawful discrimination or alleged violations of laws/regulations and would like to make a complaint, please follow the escalation process, so that concerns can be addressed and resolved in the correct manner.

Level 1:	Complaint is brought to the attention of the teaching staff
Level 2:	If complaint is not resolved by the teaching staff, it is brought to the attention of the Site Supervisor
Level 3:	If complaint is not resolved by Site Supervisor, it is brought to the attention of the Program Assistant Director or Director

Uniform Complaint Procedure:

Complaints of unlawful discrimination and alleged violations of federal or state laws, or regulations governing educational programs may be addressed by filing a complaint using the Uniform Complaint Procedures. Procedures are available anytime by contacting our office. Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the Board President of LEAP.

Food & Nutrition Program Non-Discrimination Statement & Complaint Procedure:

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, audiotope, 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 usda.gov/oascr, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to 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 | 3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Program Decision Complaints (Appeal Process):

Parents enrolled in state subsidized programs have the right to a fair and unbiased hearing if they disagree with a proposed action. Upon receipt of an on-time request for an appeal hearing, the intended action will be suspended and child care services will continue until the appeal process has been completed, with the exception of children who have been suspended or expelled. In the event a child is suspended or expelled due to persistent and serious behaviors that impact the safety of children, the child may NOT attend the program during the appeal process. The review process is complete when the appeal process has been exhausted or when the parent abandons the appeal process. The Appeal Hearing process is as follows:

Step 1: Request for Appeal Hearing

Request for an appeal hearing must be filed within 14 calendar days after the participant receives the Notice of Action (NOA). A request must include the effective date of the NOA, parent name, phone number, full address, explanation why parent disagrees with the agency's action and date the request is signed.

Request for hearing may be submitted by mail, in person, phone or e-mail to:

LEAP

Attention: Hearing Officer
PO Box 1332
Goleta, CA 93116
Telephone (805) 968-0488
E-mail: admin@leapcentralcoast.org

In the event that the action taken is due to **child suspension or expulsion**, a request for an appeal hearing is sent directly to the California Department of Education (Skip to Step 5)

Step 2: Schedule Hearing

Within 10 days of receiving a parent's hearing request, the parent will be notified of the time and place of the hearing. To the extent possible, the hearing date and time will be convenient for the parent(s). The hearing shall not be scheduled more than 14 calendar days from the date the hearing officer contacts the parent to schedule the hearing. In the event that a parent or parent's Authorized Representative cannot keep the scheduled hearing date/time, the parent must notify the Hearing Officer in advance of the hearing date/time. A parent may request to re-schedule the hearing date 1 time.

Step 3: Conduct Hearing

The hearing will be conducted by an administrative staff person who shall be referred to as "the hearing officer." In the event that a parent is unable to attend the hearing at the designated location accommodations will be arranged and agreed upon between the parent and hearing officer. For any hearing not conducted in person, verification of parent identity will be required, along with prior submission of documentation. The hearing will be recorded. During the hearing, the parent or Authorized Representative will have an opportunity to provide support documentation and explain the reasons that they disagree with the proposed action indicated by the referenced NOA should not be carried out.



GRIEVANCE / COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

This will be a formal hearing, and the parent must comply with the directions of the hearing officer during the course of the hearing. Failure to comply with directions will result in the hearing being ended and the contested action being taken. A parent designating an Authorized Representative to be present must inform the agency in writing prior to the hearing. Please do not bring people to the hearing unless they are a designated Authorized Representative. No children are allowed to be present during the hearing. For failure to appear, it will be deemed that parent has abandoned the appeal and care ends immediately.

Step 4: Agency Hearing Decision

Hearing officer will send notification in writing, of decision within 10 calendar days after hearing.

Step 5: Request for Appeal Hearing with CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

If parent disagrees with the agency's hearing decision OR if the action taken is due to child suspension or expulsion, the parent has 14 days from date of the written decision/action to file an appeal with the appropriate Department. The appeal(s) must include a written statement specifying the reasons parent disagrees with the agency's action, a copy of the decision letter and a copy of both sides of the NOA.

Request for State hearing must be submitted to:

California State Preschool Programs (CSPP):

California Department of Education (CDE)

Early Education Division

Attn: Appeals Coordinator

Mail: 1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento | CA | 95814

Email: ELCDAppeals@cde.ca.gov

Telephone: 916-322-1273

Fax: 916-323-6853

NOTE: If the parent has children enrolled in both a State Preschool and General Child Care program, LEAP will issue two NOAs: one for the child(ren) enrolled in State Preschool and a separate NOA for the child(ren) enrolled in General Child Care.

Step 6: CDE Hearing Decision

Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of the appeal, CDE will issue a written decision to the parent and the agency. Once CDE has rendered a decision, the decision is final.





Family Handbook
Acknowledgement of Receipt of Written Policies

My signature below acknowledges that I have received a copy of, or I have chosen to access the Parent Handbook online. I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to abide by these guidelines. I understand that state funds provide my subsidized childcare and that, giving false information or misuse of childcare, is a crime. I understand that I may be dis-enrolled from the program if I do not follow the program policies.

Child(ren) Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Legal Signature: _____ Date: _____

We look forward to providing quality care and education to your child!