

# **MOUNTAIN EMPIRE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**



## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

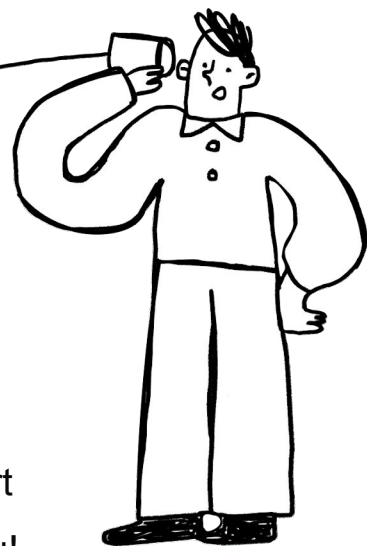
**California State Preschools  
Tribal Head Start Program  
CCTR Toddler Programs**

**Mountain Empire Early Childhood  
Education welcomes your family to our  
Preschool programs.**

Revised May 2025



This **handbook** was designed to assist families with understanding the requirements to participate in a State Preschool Part-Day & Full day Head Start programs. We look forward to serving you!



We are a private, non-profit organization funded by federal, state & local governments.

ECE Office Hours:  
Monday-Friday 7:30-4:00

**619-473-9022 x 815**

3291 Buckman Springs Rd  
Pine Valley, Ca 91962

**Children Served: Ages (2-5 yrs.)**

**Days: Monday – Friday**

**School Hours:**

**Potrero and Campo Preschools: 9:00 am-12:30 pm**

**Pine Valley State Preschool: 8:00 am-4:00 pm**

**Head Start: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**Toddler Programs 8:00 am – 4:00 pm**

# Center Locations & Contact Information:

## Preschools and Head Start Sites:

### **Campo State Preschool**

(619) 478-5583 x 405  
1654 Buckman Springs  
Road  
Campo, CA 91906

### **Campo Kumeyaay Head Start**

(619) 377-8170  
39639 Old Hwy 80  
Boulevard, CA 91905

### **Pine Valley State Preschool**

(619) 473-8693 x 801  
7454 Pine Boulevard  
Pine Valley, CA 91962

### **Potrero State Preschool**

(619) 478-5930 x 927  
24875 Potrero Valley  
Road  
Potrero, CA 91963

## CCTR/Toddler Centers:

### **Pine Valley Toddler (2 yr. old) Program**

(619) 473-9022 x 802  
7454 Pine Boulevard  
Pine Valley, CA 91962

### **Clover Flat Toddler (2 yr. old) Program**

(619) 473-9022 x 522  
39639 Old Hwy 80  
Boulevard, CA 91905

## **Program Design | 6**

- Mission
- Age Group Served
- Days & Hours of Operation
- Locations
- Open Door Policy
- Group Size
- Refrain from Religious Instruction
- Confidentiality
- Equal Access/Non-Discrimination Statement

## **Program Philosophy, Goals & Objectives | 8**

- Philosophy
- Parent Involvement & Education
- Health & Social Services
- Education Program
- Environment
- Nutrition Services
- Staff Qualifications & Development
- Continuous Improvement

## **Family Responsibilities & Center Policies | 13**

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Safe School & Harassment Policy
- Suspected Child Abuse
- Clothing & Items from Home
- Biting
- Child Supervision
- Discipline & Guidance
- Daily Health Screening & Exclusion
- Medication
- Field Trips
- Emergencies

## **Selection & Enrollment Process | 19**

- Waiting List
- Enrollment Priorities
- Steps for Enrollment

## **Participant Qualifications & Conditions | 23**

- Certification of Eligibility
- Family Data File
- Proof of Family Size
- Eligibility Criteria

## **Attendance | 27**

- Importance of Attendance
- Attendance Expectations/Policy
- Sign In & Out Procedures
- Reporting Absences & Late Arrivals
- Absence Policy
- Abandonment of Care

## **Disenrollment | 29**

- Family Request to Disenroll
- Agency Disenrollment Policy

## **Suspension and Enrollment | 30**

- Individual Needs Plans
- Suspension Policy
- Expulsion Policy
- Biting

## **Grievance/Complaint Procedures | 25**

- Complaints Regarding Program Staff
- Uniform Complaint Procedure
- Food & Program Non-Discrimination Statement & Complaint Procedure
- Program Decision Complaints (Appeal Process)

At Mountain Empire Unified School District, our Early Childhood Education team is passionate about creating joyful, engaging, and inclusive learning environments where every child can thrive. We believe that **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**. That means celebrating each child's unique strengths, background, and personality, and making sure they feel safe, supported, and valued every single day. Our programs are built on strong relationships, play-based learning, and a deep commitment to equity and belonging for all.

Thank you for letting us be a part of your child's early learning journey. We're excited to grow, learn, and discover together!

# PROGRAM DESIGN

## Group Sizes:

Adult to child ratios are planned for in advance and followed for each age group based on the Title 5 regulations.



<b>Toddler (18 Months to 36 Months)</b>	<b>Preschool &amp; Head Start (36 Months to Kinder)</b>
<b>1 adult for every 4 toddlers</b>	<b>1 adult for every 8 preschoolers</b>

## Refrain from Religious Instruction:

Our programs refrain from religious instruction & worship.

## Confidentiality:

The use or disclosure of any information maintained in the basic data file concerning children and their families is limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program.

No other use of the information will be made without prior written consent or through a subpoena. Participants shall have access to information in their basic data file within 5 business days after the program receives a written request.

## Equal Access/Non-Discrimination Statement:

No person will be subjected to discrimination, or any other form of illegal bias, including harassment. We give equal access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability.

# PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## Philosophy:

Mountain Empire Early Childhood Education recognizes the importance of play in the learning process for young children. We also recognize that parents are the primary caregivers and educators of their children.

We work to empower children, promote individuality and develop strong partnerships with families while creating an environment that helps young children attain physical, cognitive, social, language and emotional achievements to be prepared for school.



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

## 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.

## Family Philosophy:

Each family brings a history of life experience and cultural heritage that is respected and valued within our Centers. Partnerships between families and the Center are essential to the growth and development of each individual child.

# PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## Parent Involvement & Education:

**Our goal** is to provide a welcoming environment for families and invite them to participate as equal partners in the education of their children.

Opportunities to participate include, but are not limited to:

- Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice per year. Conferences provide an opportunity for parents to collaborate with the teacher to develop goals for their child
- Reading to children during drop-off/pick-up
- Parent Education meetings are provided throughout the year. Meetings provide an opportunity to learn about child development, share topics identified in the parent survey, parenting strategies. A great time to network with Program staff and other parents.
- State Preschool: Bi-monthly Parent Advisory Committee meetings provide an opportunity for parents to provide input on the nature and operation of the program
- Participating or helping at family festivals/events
- Head Start: Monthly Policy Council & Parent Committee Meetings.

**Note:** Parents volunteering in the center must have a recent tuberculosis clearance, immunization & background clearance on file.



## Education Program:

**Our goal** is to ensure all children are making progress in the domains of physical, cognitive, language, and social - emotional development.

**Our goal** is to provide a program approach that addresses equity, diversity and is developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate. A program that is inclusive of children with special needs.

## Health & Social Services:

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

A Family Social Service Need Request & Referral form is completed at the time of enrollment and annually thereafter. This form helps to identify the needs of both the child & family, so that the child may be successful in care and school.

# PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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

- State Preschool and Toddler Programs are assessed within 60 days of enrollment & every 6 months.
- Head Start is assessed within 45 days of enrollment, mid-year and 6 months.
- Parent's input is a necessary component of this assessment
- Assessment outcomes are used to plan and conduct age and developmentally appropriate activities for children

Based on the results, staff provide parents with referrals to other agencies in the community. In addition, staff follow-up with parents to ensure their needs have been met. If a parent/guardian has any concerns throughout the year, please let your Lead Teacher know so that we can guide you to the correct resources.



### **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

### **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

### **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

# 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 development needs of children.

The Thelma Harms Environment Rating Scale is completed on each classroom annually by an assessor. The assessor and teacher collaboratively develop and take action steps for continuous quality improvement.

## Nutrition Services:

**Our goal** is to ensure children have nutritious meals and snacks during their time in the program. Meals and snacks that are culturally and developmentally appropriate and meet the federal Child Care Food Program nutritional requirements.

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.

In addition, our environments are set-up using our adopted curriculum. **Learning Genie** is a research-based early childhood education platform that supports whole-child development through play-based, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning. Aligned with California's UPK and DRDP standards, it helps teachers plan engaging lessons efficiently using AI tools. Learning Genie also promotes strong home-school connections by offering families easy access to classroom updates and learning resources.

**If your child has any food allergies, or can not eat certain foods for religious or personal reasons, please notify the teacher immediately.**

Balanced nutritious lunch is included in our programs. Monthly menus are posted on the bulletin board. Candy, gum and soda are not allowed in the classroom!

# PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

## Staff Qualifications & Development:

**Our goal** is to implement a staff development program that adequately equips each staff member with the information necessary to carry out his or her assigned duties.

Our program makes professional development of individuals working with children and families a priority. All teachers hold the appropriate child development permit and attend ongoing trainings related to child development.

## 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 and board members using the Program Monitoring Instrument, Desired Results Developmental Profile, Environmental Rating Scale tools, and California's Quality and Improvement System

Based on the results goals and action steps are developed and implemented.



# FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES & CENTER POLICIES

At MEUSD Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs, we are committed to creating safe, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate learning environments that nurture every child's social-emotional growth and overall well-being. In alignment with state and federal guidance, our programs emphasize proactive support strategies, partnership with families, and positive behavior guidance to prevent the use of suspension and expulsion.

We believe in addressing challenging behaviors through relationship-based practices, culturally responsive teaching, and individualized support. Suspension and expulsion will only be considered after all interventions have been explored and only when a child's behavior presents a serious safety concern that cannot be reduced through other means.

To uphold this commitment MEUSD ECE programs will:

- Implement developmentally appropriate practices that promote engaging, respectful, and responsive learning.
- Invest in staff training and professional development focused on trauma-informed care, inclusion, and social-emotional learning.
- Foster consistent daily routines, clear expectations, and nurturing teacher-child relationships.
- Partner with families to understand each child's unique needs and collaboratively develop support strategies.
- Provide classroom environments that celebrate diversity and support all learners, including those with disabilities or behavioral challenges.
- Utilize positive behavior guidance strategies such as modeling, redirection, visual supports, and emotional coaching.

# FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES & CENTER POLICIES

## 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
- 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.



## Code of Ethical Conduct:

All families must commit to demonstrate the following core standards/values during all interactions while enrolled in our program:

- Communicate effectively in a calm manner
- Be courteous
- Maintain order
- Show respect of others
- Take responsibility for own actions
- Be punctual
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual present at the center
- Respect diversity
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect



# FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES & CENTER POLICIES

## Suspected Child Abuse:

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 Family Advocate.

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 at all times. Closed toe shoes are best for Preschool.

Please send a change of clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident.

Please discuss your ideas for sharing home materials with your child's teacher ahead of time. Toy guns and knives are not allowed in the center. The center is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.



# FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES & CENTER POLICIES

## 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.

## Field Trips:

Field trips have an educational purpose that are incorporated into the classroom activity plans prior to going on the trip as well as after the field trip occurs. Children are only allowed to participate in field trips with parent's written consent.

## Parents must:

- Ensure gate and door is closed and secured
- **No Cell Phone policy** when dropping off/picking-up your child. This can be distracting. Give your child your undivided attention.
- Ensure your child is signed in and out every day with your full legal signature and exact time.
- Hold your child's hand in the road and parking lot
- Encourage children to follow safety rules
- Report safety and supervision concerns to staff immediately



# FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES & CENTER 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.

## Medication:

In the event that your child needs to take medication, a staff member may only give it to your child if your doctor provides written instructions. If your child is taking prescribed medications that must be given during class, you and your doctor must complete and submit an authorization form first.

Medications must be in the original container with your child's name on the pharmacy label. Always give medications directly to the teacher and do not leave it in your child's bag.

## Emergencies:

Each center's emergency plan is posted in the classroom and emergency drills are conducted monthly. In the event of a major disaster or unusual emergency, the automated phone calling system will be used to notify you of the most up to date information regarding the emergency situation.

## Children will be excluded from the center if:

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

## Child Injuries:

Staff shall immediately notify the child's authorized representative if the child becomes ill or sustains an injury more serious than a minor cut or scratch. Staff shall obtain specific instructions from the authorized representative regarding action to be taken.



# SELECTION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS (CSPP-FULL DAY)

## Waiting List:

The program has limited openings for eligible families. The first step to access center-based program services is to be placed on our waiting list. Children with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

## Enrollment Priorities for State Preschool (CSPP):

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

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

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

**Third:** Eligible 4-year-old not enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten. Prioritize children enrolled in CSPP as a 3-year-old, then within each ranking prioritize dual language learners, then based on earliest wait list date.

**Fourth:** Eligible 3-year-old. Within each ranking prioritize dual language learners, then based on earliest wait list date.

**Fifth:** Family income is not more than 15% above income threshold. Prioritize exceptional needs children, then 4-year-olds, then 3-year-olds. (limited to 10% of funded enrollment)

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

**Seventh:** Children enrolling in CSPP to provide expanded learning & care to Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten pupils (must meet an eligibility criteria)

**Maximum Income** for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 7<sup>th</sup> Priorities:

Family Size	Total Countable Monthly Income
1-2	7,759
3	8,790
4	10,249
5	11,889
6	13,529
7	13,837
8	14,144

**Maximum Income** for 5<sup>th</sup> Priority:

Family Size	Total Countable Monthly Income
1-2	8,923
3	10,109
4	11,787
5	13,673
6	15,559
7	15,912
8	16,266

**NOTE:** 7.5% of CSPP funded enrollment is reserved for Children with Exceptional Needs. Only the child in the family who has exceptional needs may be enrolled under this eligibility criteria

# SELECTION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS (CSPP-FULL DAY)

## Income Eligibility

Biological Parent, Guardian or Foster Parent(s):

Documentation of Monthly Income

- Regular & Steady Income: Total countable income from either month of the 2-month window immediately preceding certification
- Fluctuating or Inconsistent Income: Total countable income for the preceding 2 to 12 months from certification

**Maximum Income for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, & 7<sup>th</sup> Priorities:**

Family Size	Total Countable Monthly Income
1-2	7,759
3	8,790
4	10,249
5	11,889
6	13,529
7	13,837
8	14,144

## Enrollment Priorities for State Preschool (CSPP):

The child is one of the following:

- A child with a disability
- A child that is a recipient of child protective services, or who has been identified as being abused, neglected, or exploited, or at risk of being abused, neglected, or exploited

The child's family is one of the following:

- A current aid recipient
- Income eligible (100% of the SMI)
- Experiencing homelessness
- One who has a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from a means-tested government program
  - Includes: Medi-cal, CalFresh, California Food Assistance Program, WIC, federal food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Head Start, Early Head
- Start, and CalWORKs
- Other categories:
  - Family with income no more than 15 percent above the income eligibility threshold

**Maximum Income for 5<sup>th</sup> Priority:**

Family Size	Total Countable Monthly Income
1-2	8,923
3	10,109
4	11,787
5	13,673
6	15,559
7	15,912
8	16,266

## Need Categories

The child's parents are one of the following:

- Engaged in vocational training
- Engaged in an educational program
- Employed
- Seeking employment
- Seeking permanent housing
- Incapacitated

# SELECTION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS HEAD START

## Waiting List:

The program has limited openings for eligible families. The first step to access center-based program services is to be placed on our waiting list. Children with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

## Enrollment Priorities for Campo Kumeyaay Head Start (Federally Funded): (2025/2026)

### Statement on Recruitment

Head Start is mandated to serve low-income and disabled children from 3-5 years of age. At least 10% of enrollment slots must be reserved for children with disabilities.

<b>Criteria</b>	
<i>Campo Tribe Member</i>	<b>5</b>
<i>Other Native</i>	<b>3</b>
<b>Income Criteria</b>	
<i>Low Income below poverty guideline.</i>	<b>5</b>
<b>Age Criteria</b>	
<i>Head Start 4 yr old</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Head Start 3yr old</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>Disability Criteria</b>	
<i>Identified</i>	<b>10</b>
<b>Parental Status</b>	
<i>Foster Care</i>	<b>8</b>
<i>Single Parent</i>	<b>8</b>
<b>Other Factors Criteria</b>	
<i>Homelessness</i>	<b>8</b>
<i>On Waiting list prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> of current year</i>	<b>5</b>

<b>Number in Family</b>	<b>Poverty *</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>15,650.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>21,150.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>26,650.00</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>32,150.00</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>37,650.00</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>43,150.00</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>48,650.00</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>54,150.00</b>

Income Between 100 – 130 % of federal poverty guidelines (no more than 35% of enrolled children may fall into this category)

<b>Number in Family</b>	<b>Poverty *</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>20,345.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>27,495.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>34,645.00</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>41,795.00</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>48,945.00</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>56,095.00</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>63,245.00</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>70,395.00</b>

Families and children will be accepted according to the point priority allocation. The following guidance defines and gives examples of the headings listed on the Selection Criteria. These headings are what guide the Tribal Head Start Staff to assign points and to determine selection priority. These definitions are strict examples to be used as guidance to determine point assignment. They do not in any way set boundaries or limit the possibility of situations that may relate to any or all these topics.

# SELECTION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS (CCTR-FULL DAY)

## Income Eligibility

Biological Parent, Guardian or Foster Parent(s):

Documentation of Monthly Income

- Regular & Steady Income: Total countable income from either month of the 2-month window immediately preceding certification
- Fluctuating or Inconsistent Income: Total countable income for the preceding 2 to 12 months from certification

Family Size	85% of the State Median Income
1-2	6,595
3	7,472
4	8,712
5	10,106
6	11,500
7	11,761
8	12,023
9	12,284
10	12,545
11	12,807
12	13,068

## Enrollment Priorities for Toddler Program:

The child is one of the following:

- A child with a disability
- A child that is a recipient of child protective services, or who has been identified as being abused, neglected, or exploited, or at risk of being abused, neglected, or exploited

The child's family is one of the following:

- A current aid recipient
- Income eligible (100% of the SMI)
- Experiencing homelessness
- One who has a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from a means-tested government program
  - Includes: Medi-cal, CalFresh, California Food Assistance Program, WIC, federal food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Head Start, Early Head
- Start, and CalWORKs
- Other categories:
  - Family with income no more than 15 percent above the income eligibility threshold

## Need Categories

The child's parents are one of the following:

- Engaged in vocational training
- Engaged in an educational program
- Employed
- Seeking employment
- Seeking permanent housing
- Incapacitated

# SELECTION & ENROLLMENT PROCESS

**Families screened & selected** for potential enrollment from the waiting list will be asked to complete the orientation process and submit documentation to verify eligibility for services. The steps are as follows:



## Step 1: Learn How to Apply



Visit our website:  
[ECE.MEUSD.ORG](https://ECE.MEUSD.ORG)

## Step 2: Complete Documentation & Orientation

Complete registration at  
<https://meusd.mycopa.com/familyPortal/childCare.epl>

Schedule an appointment with the Registrar; Lari Haney by calling (619) 377-8170 once your documentation is complete.

## Step 3: Verify Eligibility

**Attend in-person** appointment at your community preschool/Head Start center.

Please note that you will be turned away if your packet/information is not complete at the time of your appointment.

# PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS

## Certification of Eligibility:

Enrollment into the preschool program is determined by specific 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 the remainder of the program year and for the following program year, as long as the child is age-eligible.

## 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, including the 4-digit zip code extension

**If enrolled as residing in an approved neighborhood school boundary, 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 CSPP 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, the file must contain the following documentation in order for us to best serve your child:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP)

# PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS



## Health & Emergency Information

Participants must provide child health & current emergency information, along with current immunization records for enrolled children

## Court Order

If there is a court order that impacts childcare services, include in the family data file

## 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. Participants must provide the names of the adults & the names, gender & birthdates of the children 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 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

### Child has Exceptional Needs

**\*7.5% of CSPP enrollment is reserved for Children with Special Needs**

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

### Receiving Benefits from Governmental Program

CalWorks, 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 (Income eligible & 15% above income threshold)

#### 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)

# PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS & CONDITIONS

<p><b>Countable Income</b> is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be included when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.</p>	<p><b>Non-Countable Income</b> is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be excluded when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gross wage or salary, commissions, overtime, tips, bonuses, gambling or lottery winnings</li> <li>2. Wages for migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work</li> <li>3. CalWORKs cash aid</li> <li>4. Gross income from self-employment less business expenses with the exception of wage draws</li> <li>5. Disability or unemployment compensation</li> <li>6. Worker's compensation</li> <li>7. Spousal support, child support from the former spouse or absent parent, or financial assistance for housing costs or car payments paid as part of or in addition to spousal or child support</li> <li>8. Survivor (i.e., SSA) and retirement benefits</li> <li>9. Dividends, interest on bonds, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties</li> <li>10. Rent for room within the family's residence</li> <li>11. Financial assistance received for the care of a child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parent</li> <li>12. Veteran's pension</li> <li>13. Pension or annuities</li> <li>14. Inheritance</li> <li>15. Allowances for housing or automobiles provided as part of compensation</li> <li>16. Insurance or court settlements for lost wages or punitive damages</li> <li>17. Net proceeds from the sale of real property, stocks or inherited property</li> <li>18. Other enterprise for gain</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Earnings of child under eighteen (18) years</li> <li>2. Loans</li> <li>3. Grants or scholarships to students for educational purposes</li> <li>4. Federal Supplemental Assistance Program (CalFRESH/SNAP) or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits or other food assistance</li> <li>5. Earned Income Tax Credit or tax refund</li> <li>6. Foster care grants, payment or clothing allowances for children placed through child welfare services</li> <li>7. Relative Caregiver Funding Program</li> <li>8. California Guaranteed Income Pilot Program</li> <li>9. GI Bill entitlements, hardship or hazardous duty, hostile fire or immediate danger pay</li> <li>10. Adoption assistance payments</li> <li>11. Non-cash assistance or gifts</li> <li>12. All income of any individual counted in the family size who is collecting federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or State Supplemental Program (SSP) benefits</li> <li>13. Insurance or court settlements including pain and suffering and excluding lost wages and punitive damages</li> <li>14. Reimbursements for work-required expenses that include uniforms, mileage, or per diem expenses for food and lodging</li> <li>15. Business expenses for self-employed family members</li> <li>16. When there is no cash value to the employee, the portion of medical and/or dental insurance documented as paid by the employer and included in gross pay</li> <li>17. Disaster relief grants or payments, except any portion for rental assistance or unemployment</li> <li>18. AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stipends, room and board, and grants</li> </ol>

**Note:** Verified child support payments paid by the parent whose child is receiving child development service may be subtracted from family's countable income

## 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 CSPP, CCTR or Head Start based on their certified schedule** determined at certification.

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

Regular and consistent 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.

**By making your child's attendance a priority, you will be taking an important step in supporting your child's school success, and setting a good example.**

# ATTENDANCE

## Sign In & Out Procedures:

Parents or authorized adults must sign their child in and out every day, using their full legal signature. Arrival and departure times are also required daily.

Staff will only release children to adults listed on the Emergency Card unless the parent has notified the Site Supervisor or teaching staff in advance and **in writing** that another adult is authorized to pick the child up. 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. Otherwise, all parents who can provide proper identification will be allowed to pick their child up from the center.

## Absence Policy:

### Excused Absence:

- Illness of child or parent/guardian, ailment, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization or quarantine
- 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, illness of sibling or due to sheltering in-place
- Doctors, dentist, hearing or vision appointment of enrolled child.

**Best Interest Days (State CSPP and CCTR (Toddler Program only))** (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
- Vacation time with family
- Child attending a party
- Family moving
- No transportation
- Religious observance, holiday or ceremony
- Personal or family business

## Reporting Absences & Late Arrivals:

When a child is absent from regularly scheduled care at any time during the month the participant or staff member must record on the attendance record the date(s) of absence, description of absence, and sign sheet with full legal signature. Must be done in writing and include child's name, date of request, date(s) of absence and reason for absence

**Planned:** In the event that a child has a planned absence or late arrival advance notice is required to be given to the Teacher.

**Unplanned:** In the event that a child is absent or will be late on a contracted day, parent/family is responsible to contact the center by 9:00am.

## Abandonment of Care

The program does not allow families to be enrolled in a program if they are not using services. Your child(ren) will be disenrolled when there has been no communication with the center for 30 consecutive calendar days.

## Sporadic Attendance (Head Start)

An action plan developed by HS staff and parent(s) is created to ensure the child attends class on a regular basis. When a family chooses not to adhere to the attendance action plan, the parent is notified that child may be dropped from the program. If the child has five or more UNEXCUSED absences the parent is notified in writing and if the parent does not respond within 10 working days, the family is dropped from the program.

# DIENROLLMENT

## 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

## Agency Disenrollment Policy:

Families will be issued a notice of Action 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
- Misrepresentation of income and/or eligibility
- Non-compliance of agency policies
- Abandoned childcare for 30 consecutive calendar days without notice
- Failure to complete or falsification of sign-in/out sheets accurately and on a daily basis
- Failure to keep appointments
- 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.

# SUSPENSION & EXPULSION POLICY

When a child demonstrates behaviors that require additional support:

- Staff will complete observations and use screening tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to identify needs.
- With parent/guardian consent, referrals may be made to mental health or behavioral support services
- An Individual Needs Plan (INP) will be developed in collaboration with families, teaching staff, and site supervisors. This plan will include clear goals, support strategies, timelines, and follow-up actions.

If the child has an IFSP or IEP, MEUSD staff will coordinate with relevant agencies to ensure alignment with support strategies.

**Suspension** may only occur when there is a serious, immediate safety concern that cannot be otherwise addressed. Suspension is never used as a first response to behavior and will not be used to encourage early pick-up or unenrollment. All suspensions must include documentation, parent communication, and a written plan to safely reintegrate the child as quickly as possible.

**Expulsion**, defined as permanent dismissal from the program due to behavior, is strongly discouraged and will only be considered after all other options have been exhausted. MEUSD will work with families and community partners to identify an appropriate placement and ensure a smooth transition, should expulsion be deemed necessary for the safety of all.

Families will be informed of this policy upon enrollment and will receive written notification, with the right to appeal, should any suspension or expulsion be proposed.

MEUSD is committed to ensuring every child receives the support they need to thrive. We aim to eliminate exclusionary discipline by promoting equity, compassion, and collaboration in every early learning classroom.

Parent has the right to follow the program decision complaints process listed on page 29.

# SUSPENSION & EXPULSION POLICY

## Discipline & Guidance:

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

Staff work to build a positive relationship with every child. Every effort will be made to handle discipline problems through redirection, problem solving, re-arrangement of the environment, and staff - parent collaboration. Open-communication with each other is key. All our programs participate in Conscience Discipline, a research based Social Emotional Learning curriculum.

There will be no use of corporal punishment or violation of personal rights. We do not spank, punish or threaten our students.

## 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.

## 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.

**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)

# 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.

<b>Level 1:</b>	Complaint is brought to the attention of the Teacher
<b>Level 2:</b>	If complaint is not resolved by the Teacher, it is brought to the attention of the Site Supervisor
<b>Level 3:</b>	If complaint is not resolved by Site Supervisor, it is brought to the attention of the Program 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 provided annually to parents or are available anytime by contacting our office.

## 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](http://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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# GRIEVANCE / COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## **Program Decision Complaints (Appeal Process State CSPP Only):**

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

### **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 reschedule 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.

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.

## **Mountain Empire Unified School District**

Attention: Verlet Montano

3291 Buckman Springs Rd.

Pine Valley, Ca 91962

Telephone (619) 473-9022 x 815

[verlet.montano@meusd.org](mailto:verlet.montano@meusd.org)

# GRIEVANCE / COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## Step 4: Agency Hearing Decision

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

## Step 5: If Parent Disagrees with Hearing Decision

If parent disagrees with the written decision, they have 14 days from date of the written decision to file an appeal with the appropriate agency. The appeal(s) must include a written statement specifying the reasons parent believes the agency decision was incorrect, a copy of the decision letter and a copy of both sides of the NOA.

**For Childcare and Development Programs (CCDP) submit appeal to:**

**Mail:**

California Department of Social Services (CDSS)  
Childcare and Development Division  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
744 P Street, MS 9-8-351  
Sacramento, Ca 95814

**Email:** [CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov)

**Telephone:** 833-559-2420

**Fax:** 916-654-1048

**For California State Preschool Programs (CSPP) submit appeal to:**

**Mail:**

California Department of Education (CDE)  
Early Education Division  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
1430 N Street, Suite 3410  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Email:** [ELCDAppeals@cde.ca.gov](mailto: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 Childcare & Development programs, our agency will issue two NOAs: one for the child(ren) enrolled in State Preschool and a separate NOA for the child(ren) enrolled in the other program(s)

## Step 6: EED/CCDD Hearing Decision

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



# RESOURCES

## **Childcare Resource & Referral Program**

Links parents to licensed childcare providers  
Call 1-800-KIDS-793 (1-800-543-7793) or go  
online at  
[https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ragencylist.  
asp](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ragencylist.asp)

## **United Way**

2-1-1 provides referrals to hundreds  
of resources  
Call 2-1-1 or go online at 211.org

Visit our website: [ece.meusd.org](http://ece.meusd.org)  
for a list of local resources.

**Thank you for letting us be a part of your child's early learning journey.  
We're excited to grow, learn, and discover together!**

MOUNTAIN EMPIRE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



**Program Handbook**  
**Acknowledgement of Receipt of Written Policies**

My signature below acknowledges that I have received a copy of or have chosen to access online the program handbook. I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to abide by these guidelines. I understand that I may be disenrolled from the program if I do not follow the program policies.

Child(ren) Name:

Parent/Guardian Printed Name:

Legal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: