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# Parent Handbook

*Helping Each Child Reach Their Individual Potential*

## Table of Contents

Children’s Choice Academy .....	4
Philosophy .....	4
Program Goals And Objectives.....	4
Desired Results Developmental Profile (Drdp) .....	5
Program Design .....	6
Open Door Policy (Title 5 18275.4; Parents Rights Lic 995) .....	6
Ratios And Group Size (Title 5 18290).....	6
Abstain From Religious Instruction .....	7
Ada Statement.....	7
Admission Regulations And Enrollment Procedures .....	7
Income Thresholds* .....	8
Eligibility .....	8
Need For Service .....	9
Enrollment Priorities.....	9
Admission Of Siblings.....	9
Displacement Of Families.....	10
Enrollment Process (Title 5 18131).....	10
Recertification For All Families (Title 5 18103) .....	10
Family Data File.....	10
Proof Of Residency .....	11
Children With Exceptional Needs.....	11
Health & Emergency Information .....	11
Family Size .....	11
Eligibility For Services .....	12
Need For Services.....	12
Need Criteria .....	13
Family Income .....	14
Determining A Child’s Schedule.....	15
Right To Voluntarily Report Changes .....	15
Family Fees .....	15
Fee Assessment.....	16
Delinquent Fees.....	16
Fee Exemptions .....	17
Attendance Policies And Procedures.....	17
Child Absence Policy .....	17
Attendance Expectation/ Policy .....	18
Abandonment Of Care.....	18
Excused Absences.....	18
Family Emergency.....	19
Best Interest Days .....	19
Withdrawing Children from The Program .....	19

Fraud.....19

Notice Of Action ..... 20

Program Decision Complaints (Appeal Process)..... 20

Enrollment..... 21

Forms..... 22

Immunizations Requirement Per Lic 701:..... 22

CCTR Required Forms ..... 23

Infant Needs & Services..... 23

Tuition Policies..... 23

Social Media ..... 24

Video Surveillance Policy ..... 24

Ending Childcare Services ..... 24

“Suspension & Expulsion Policy” ..... 25

Absences And Vacations..... 25

Sick Policy ..... 25

Petting Zoo Policy ..... 26

Medication ..... 26

Toilet Learning..... 28

Admission And Departure ..... 28

Late Pick-Ups..... 29

Child Abuse Reporting..... 29

Rights Of The Licensing Agency: Section 101200 (B) & (C) ..... 29

Parent Conferences ..... 30

Parent Advisory Committee ..... 30

Discipline Policies ..... 30

Parental Involvement..... 31

Days And Hours Of Operation ..... 32

Mealtimes And Snacks..... 32

Children’s Clothing ..... 33

Diaper Policy..... 33

Quiet Time..... 33

Injuries And Illnesses While At The Center..... 34

Disaster Preparedness ..... 34

Transportation And Field Trips ..... 34

Acknowledgement Of Receipt Of Parent Handbook ..... 36

## **Children’s Choice Academy**

Children’s Choice Academy (Children's Choice) is a privately-owned organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California. Operating within the State's regulations, CHILDREN’S CHOICE provides educational services to children aged six weeks to twelve years old, and 6 weeks to 16 years for our El Cajon, Lakeside, Chula Vista, and Escondido schools. Our dedicated team includes the President, VP of Operations, Regional Director, Area Director, Center Directors, Assistant Directors, Lead Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and Support Staff.

We highly value the active involvement of both parents and the community in nurturing children academically, socially, and emotionally. Our commitment extends to advocating for children, their families, and the significant milestones that shape their lives. We actively participate in various community events dedicated to promoting the overall well-being and growth of children. We take pride in our role as community contributors and strive to set a positive example for quality childcare.

## **Philosophy**

At our center, we foster the personal growth of children within a secure environment. We establish strong relationships and employ engaging activities to facilitate comprehensive development. Children explore self-awareness, social interactions, and worldly perspectives. Our focus is on cultivating self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and positive connections with diverse individuals.

Our teachers craft customized curricula based on each child's preferences, encouraging autonomous learning. Through observation and inquiry, we guide their educational journey, believing in the importance of self-paced exploration. This approach enhances concentration and task completion.

We prioritize cognitive advancement and language skills, recognizing each child's uniqueness. Our diverse experiences cater to various learning styles, ensuring holistic growth. We empower children to undertake tasks independently, fostering a sense of accomplishment.

Experienced teachers promote positive behavior, ensuring secure and enjoyable classrooms equipped with essential resources. We address challenges constructively, redirecting children's focus when needed. Encouraging positive conduct, offering privacy during distress, and promoting verbal expression are our priorities. Physical discipline is strictly avoided, as we nurture emotional expression using words.

## **Program Goals and Objectives**

Building trust, planning routines and transitions that are timely, predictable, and unhurried in manner, and helping children develop emotional security in social settings.

- Provide for the development of each child’s cognitive and language skills by:  
Using various strategies, ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression, promoting interaction and language, and supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development.

- Promote each child’s physical development by providing sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials, and guidelines for active play and movement.
- Promote and maintain practices that are healthy and safe.

### **Education Program**

In accordance with 5 CCR 18273, Children’s Choice meets the standards for the child development and education program through the following:

- Program approach that is developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.
- Inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Encouragement of respect for the feelings and rights of others.
- Support of children’s social and emotional development by:

### **Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)**

Children’s Choice utilizes the Desired Results Developmental Profile to plan and conduct age developmentally appropriate activities. An observation-based profile is completed within sixty days of enrollment and every six months moving forward for each child enrolled at least ten hours per week. Families and teachers meet twice a year at a parent teacher conference where development goals are discussed. Families are a key partner in collaborating with teachers to promote further development and are welcome to meet with teachers when desired.

### **ASQ-3 & ASQ-SE-2**

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (**ASQ®-3**) is a developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 ½ years. Its success lies in its parent-centric approach and inherent ease-of-use—a combination that has made it the most widely used developmental screener across the globe.

Early identification of social-emotional challenges can make all the difference to a young child. The proof is undeniable: the earlier a behavioral concern is identified, the greater the chance a child has of reaching his or her full potential in life. This is the driving force behind Ages & Stages Questionnaires

Social-Emotional, Second Edition (**ASQ®:SE-2**)—a parent-completed, exceptionally reliable system focused solely on social-emotional development in young children. Accurately identifying behavior through ASQ:SE-2 paves the way for next steps—further assessment, specialized intervention, or ongoing monitoring, for example—to help children reach their fullest potential during their most formative early years.

### **Environmental Rating Scales**

The scales (ITERS-3, ECERS-3, and SACERS-U) view child development from a comprehensive, or global, point of view, examining a wide variety of areas that all contribute to positive children development. To provide care and education that will permit children to experience a high quality of life while helping them develop their abilities, a quality program must provide for the three basic needs of all children:

- Protection of their health and safety

- Supporting and guiding social/emotional development
- Opportunities for intellectual and language stimulation and appropriate learning activities

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

Eligibility Specialist: Candis Cammon

Eligibility Specialist Phone Number: (619)335-8412

Eligibility Specialist Email: candisc@childrenschoicepreschool.com

### **Social and Initiative Enhancement:**

- We cultivate a nurturing environment fostering self-esteem and trust.
- Joyful experiences promote a positive outlook on life.
- Fundamental moral values and ethical judgment are introduced.
- Creativity and initiative are nurtured through engaging activities.
- Cooperative and pro-social behaviors are encouraged, leading to harmonious peer interactions.

### **Cognitive Advancement:**

- Hands-on experience nurtures essential learning and critical thinking skills.
- Challenges stimulate logical thinking and critical reasoning.
- Concepts are acquired for a comprehensive understanding of the world.
- Imaginative thinking is developed through make-believe play.
- Interactive discussions and language-rich activities enhance verbal communication.
- Foundations for reading, math, and writing are established for academic success.

### **Physical Progression:**

- Gross motor skills are promoted through playful physical exercises.
- Fine motor skills are refined via engaging arts and crafts.
- Multisensory exploration enhances learning through sensory experiences.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY (Title 5 18275.4; Parents Rights LIC 995)**

Enrolling Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program unannounced, any time during regular program hours. Our program is based upon a partnership with the parents of the children enrolled.

Parents are highly encouraged to participate in their child's program. For the safety and protection of the children, there are secured entry keypads.

## **RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE (Title 5 18290)**

Adult to child ratios is planned for in advance and followed for each age group based on the Title 5 and Title 22 regulations. We pride ourselves on maintaining low teacher/child ratios, which allows more opportunities to provide individual attention to each child.

The ratio for Children's Choice is as follows:

- 1 Adult – 3 Infants (0-23 months of age)
- 1 Adult – 4 Toddlers (24-35 months)
- 1 Adult – 8 Preschool children (36 months+)
- 1 Adult – 14 School Age children (5yrs-16yrs)

### **ABSTAIN FROM RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION**

Children’s Choice refrains from any religious instruction or worship.

### **ADA STATEMENT**

CHILDREN’S CHOICE is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities upon request of the individual. Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in CHILDREN’S CHOICE’s programs should contact the Program Director at 619.312.1044, or VP of Operations at 619.249.4328

### **ADMISSION REGULATIONS AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

CHILDREN’S CHOICE is required by the California Department of Education (CDE) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to adhere to its current fiscal year Funding Terms and Conditions in addition to all other applicable laws and regulations. Families are responsible for submitting all requested information to determine eligibility and need prior to the child’s first day of enrollment. The CHILDREN’S CHOICE reserves the right to request additional documentation to establish need and eligibility.

### **WAIT LIST**

The program has limited openings for eligible families. The first step to accessing center-based program services is to be placed on our waiting list. Children with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Families interested in enrolling must complete an Intake Application. Applicants are placed on the Waitlist. The Waitlist is not first come first served but is ranked according to the California Department of Education and Department of Social Services established Income Rankings. The “ranking” of families establishes the order in which children receive available spaces. Eligibility ranking is based on income and family size information.

### **DURATION OF SERVICES**

The eligibility timeline starts on the date the agency representative signs the application for services certifying that eligibility and if applicable need criteria have been met.

### **CDSS Programs (CCTR)**

Once a family establishes eligibility & needs, they will remain eligible & receive services for not less than 24 months. (WIC 10271)

**INCOME THRESHOLDS\***

**\*Subject to change annually based on CA legislation.**

State Fiscal Year 2024-25 Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent of SMI)

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Family Monthly Income</b>	<b>Family Annual Income</b>
1-2	\$6,595	\$79,143
3	\$7,472	\$89,660
4	\$8,712	\$104,544
5	\$10,106	\$121,271
6	\$11,500	\$137,998
7	\$11,761	\$141,134
8	\$12,023	\$144,270
9	\$12,284	\$147,407
10	\$12,545	\$150,543
11	\$12,807	\$153,679
12	\$13,068	\$156,816

**ELIGIBILITY**

**CDSS Programs**

**Child Eligibility**

Child Protective Services  
At-Risk of abuse, neglect, or  
exploitation

**Family Eligibility**

Homelessness  
CalWORKs  
Cash Aid Recipient  
Income Eligible (85% SMI)

**Note:** CMAP or CMIG family must also be a migrant agricultural worker family



**NEED FOR SERVICE**

**CDSS Programs**

**Exempt from Need Criteria**

Child Protective Services  
At-Risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

**Need Criteria**

Employment Seeking  
Employment Vocational  
Training Engaged in  
Educational Program  
Seeking Permanent  
Housing Homelessness  
Incapacitation  
Welfare to Work Activities  
(CalWORKs programs)

**ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES**

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

<b>CDSS (CTR)</b>
<b>First:</b> Child is a recipient of Child Protective Services or At-Risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited.
<b>Second:</b> Eligible family that meets need criteria. Within each income ranking prioritize as follows:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Exceptional needs child</li> <li>2) Earliest application date</li> <li>3) First language is NOT English</li> </ul>

**ADMISSION OF SIBLINGS**

If a family has a CHILDREN’S CHOICE enrolled child and has an age-eligible sibling you wish to enroll, please call your eligibility specialist to make this change to your services.

## **DISPLACEMENT OF FAMILIES**

If CHILDREN'S CHOICE had the need to dis-enroll families due to insufficient funding or the inability to operate because of reasons beyond the control of the program, including earthquakes, floods, or fire; the families shall be displaced in the reverse order of enrollment priority.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS (Title 5 18131)**

Applicants who are offered a space will be contacted by email or by telephone. If the applicant does not respond within the specified time identified in the correspondence, the space will be offered to the next eligible applicant.

Applicants who accept a space will be notified of CHILDREN'S CHOICE's mandatory parent enrollment appointment and orientation, documents needed, and other pertinent information deemed necessary by Eligibility staff. Parents/guardians are responsible for completing and returning all paperwork, information and documents as requested, including proof the child lives in the state of California. The required paperwork is reviewed, certified, and signed by parents and/or Eligibility staff. Failure to complete all required documentation as directed will result in disenrollment from the program.

Parents/guardians are offered a space based on the number of openings in the designated age group for which spaces and staffing are available. A child's assigned classroom is based on the child's age, developmental appropriateness, and space availability.

## **RECERTIFICATION FOR ALL FAMILIES (Title 5 18103)**

Enrollment into a program is determined by specific family eligibility and need criteria. In addition, a child's parent must live in California. Families complete a certification process at initial enrollment and must recertify their child's eligibility for CCTR, every 12 months, and for CSPP children every 24 months, except for:

- Families who are certified as income eligible become over income.
- Families who do not follow agency policy.

The eligibility period starts on the date the program representative signs/approves the application for services. Families will be notified 30 days in advance of what is required to recertify and will be required to bring in documentation after the eligibility period has expired. Program staff will make every effort to make the recertification process convenient for families. A family will be disenrolled if the recertification process is not completed within the designated 50-day recertification period.

## **FAMILY DATA FILE**

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

## **PROOF OF RESIDENCY**

Determination of eligibility for services shall be without regard to the immigration status of the child or the child's parent.

- Must live in California.
- Families experiencing homelessness may submit a declaration of intent to live in California.
- Any evidence of a street address or post office address in California, including the 4-digit zip code extension

## **CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS**

If your child has exceptional needs, you must provide us with a copy of the CURRENT Individual Education Plan OR CURRENT Infant & Family Service Plan for us to best serve your child and family needs.

## **HEALTH & EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

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

## **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

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES**

### **Admission Priorities**

Children’s Choice uses the California Department of Education and Department of Social Services’ established Income Rankings to determine admission priorities and contact families for enrollment.

1. CPS and At Risk
2. Families admitted based on family income, lowest income ranking families admitted first.
3. Children with exceptional needs
4. Families whose primary home language is other than English, after families that have a child with exceptional needs, when two or more families have the same priority.

Eligibility is based on either child or family eligibility. Participants must provide documentation of eligibility in one or more of these categories:

### **Child Eligibility**

- Child protective services (Referral letter from CPS unit)
- At-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation (Referral letter from legal, medical, social service agency or emergency shelter)
- Exceptional Needs with a valid IEP or IFSP (CSPP Only)

### **Family Eligibility**

- Homelessness (Referral Letter or Parental Declaration/ Services may be provided for the first 30 days while family obtains the required documentation)
- CalWORKs cash aid recipient (Proof of current aid)
- Income eligible (Documentation of all countable income)

**Regular & Steady Income:** Total countable income from either month of the 2-month window immediately preceding certification (Note: For income eligibility, we will determine which 4-week window within the preceding 2 months benefits the family the most.)

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

**Guardian/Foster:** Full month of current income received for the child & related siblings.

## **NEED FOR SERVICES**

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, for Full-Day programs most families must meet at least one need criteria, except for a few scenarios. Families with “CPS or At Risk” as their eligibility criteria are not required to

have an established need for services.

### **NEED CRITERIA**

Need for service is based on documentation and verification of the following:

- Employment Verification OR Declaration of Self-Employment
- Request & Plan to Seek Employment (Max 5 days per week, for less than 30 hours per week)
- Training Verification (Training leading to a vocational goal & must make adequate progress. In addition, services are limited for up to 6 years from the date participant starts classes or until participant reaches 24 units after the attainment of a bachelor's degree)
- Educational Program Verification (English Language Learner, High School Diploma or High School Equivalency Certificate. In addition, services are limited for up to 6 years from the date participant starts classes)
- Request & Plan to Seek Permanent Housing (Max 5 days per week, for less than 30 hours per week)
- Homelessness Referral Letter (Max 5 days per week, for less than 30 hours per week)
- Statement of Parental Incapacity (Max of 50 hours per week)
- Welfare to Work Plan Activity Assignment (CalWORKs programs)

The documentation and verification for need is used to determine the number of childcare hours needed. The eligibility specialist verifies work schedules to determine hours of care. The parent/guardian will be required to sign a release of information, and the designated Eligibility Specialist will contact the employer to verify employment information, as applicable.

## **FAMILY INCOME**

Family income is the “total countable income” of all individuals in the family size. Here are some examples:

### **COUNTABLE/NON-COUNTABLE INCOME REFERENCE SHEET**

<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 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>11. 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 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

## **DETERMINING A CHILD'S SCHEDULE**

### **Services are available when:**

- Parent/Guardian meets a need criterion that precludes the provision of care & supervision of their child for any part of the day.
- No parent/guardian in the family can provide care during the time care is requested.
- Two parent/guardian family – Care is approved when neither adult is available to care for the child.

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

- Consistent Schedule: Certified schedule will be based on the verified number of days & hours, or the total number of hours the parent consistently or expectedly is to work each week.
- Variable Schedule: Certified schedule will be 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.

Travel time only applies to parents who are working or in school. Our agency requires a written request for any travel time beyond 30 minutes before and after. To determine the maximum authorized drive time, divide the work or school hours day by two. Travel time cannot 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, regardless of changes in their family. The only exception is if a participant's eligibility is based on income & the family's income exceeds the maximum income threshold for ongoing eligibility (See Eligibility section for maximum).

If a participant needs to change their service level during their certification period, the following must be submitted: 1) Request to Change Services Form and 2) Documentation to support the request.

After receiving receipt of this form & documentation to support the requested change, our office will issue a Notice of Action within ten business days indicating the outcome of your request. No other changes will be made to your service agreement, other than the requested change(s).

## **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. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, family fees are waived for all childcare and development programs from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. You will be notified by your Enrollment Specialist when you are responsible for paying a family fee.

## **FEE ASSESSMENT**

Family fees are only assessed at: Initial Certification, Recertification, or if a family voluntarily requests to have fees reassessed. If upon reassessment, the fee decreases, the fee decrease is effective on the first day of the month that follows the NOA issue date. If the fee increases, there is no increase during the current certification period.

Family fees will always be assessed according to the child who uses the most monthly hours of care, regardless of the number of children enrolled on the program. Family fees are determined using the family fee schedule approved by the California Department of Finance.

- Family fees are charged at a monthly rate and are based on the number of hours a child is certified to attend. Full-time fee is for 130 hours or more in a month and Part-Time is for less than 130 hours a month.
- Fees are due in advance. Fees are due/payable by the 5th of each month and become delinquent after 10 calendar days. Parents can call the Center Director for information or questions regarding fees.
- Fees may be paid to CHILDREN'S CHOICE via ACH, credit card, or debit card via Tuition Express ONLY

***Parents may request a reassessment of the family fee if the family has a change in hours of service, income is lower, or the family size changes***

## **DELINQUENT FEES**

Fees shall be considered delinquent if not submitted on the first day of the school month. If an amount becomes delinquent, you will receive a Delinquent Fee Letter, with instructions to resolve the matter. On the 15th calendar day, if the fees were not paid in full or a payment plan not made, a Notice of Action will be issued, which includes the fees due, the period of delinquency, and notice that services will be terminated two weeks from the date of the notice. Upon termination of services for non-payment of delinquent fees, the family shall be ineligible for childcare services until all delinquent fees are paid.

Fees are due in advance, so if a fee-paying family leaves the program by their own choice, fees will be charged through the Friday of the week we are notified to determine whether a full time (130+ hours) or part time rate (less than 130 hours) will apply. If the account shows credit on the child's last day, CHILDREN'S CHOICE will refund the parent for the overpayment within ten working days. Fees are due regardless of absences: excused, unexcused or Best Interest Day (BID).

All delinquent fees will be aggressively pursued for collection. The Accounting Department will consider a reasonable plan from the parent(s) for payment of delinquent fees and continuation of services for the child, provided the parent pays current fees when due and complies with the provisions of the repayment



plan.

Families whose fee payments are delinquent two times in a fiscal year will be terminated. All personal checks returned due to non-sufficient funds (NSF) will be charged at the going rate for applicable bank fees. Upon receipt of a second non-sufficient funds check within one fiscal year, all childcare payments will be required to be made in the form of a money order or cashier's check.

## **FEE EXEMPTIONS**

The following are exemptions:

- Families with children receiving part-day California state preschool program services or severely disabled CHAN programs.
- Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid
- Families with children identified as being at-risk or who are receiving Child Protective Services may be exempt from paying fees for up to 12 months if the referral determines the fee waiver to be necessary.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE (LIC 101229.1)**

Parents/Guardians or authorized adults must sign their child in and out every day, using their legible full legal signature digitally in or parent app, ProCare. Arrival and departure times are also required daily. If our digital Parent app (ProCare) is down for any reason, parents must sign in and out with arrival and departure times, as well as their legible full legal signature on the paper sign in and out sheet provided by the center.

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.

All people dropping off or picking up children must be over 18 years of age and have valid photo identification. Parents/guardians must have current emergency contact information and give the campus notice if any of the emergency contact information changes.

***Parents must be in an area that is accessible by telephone  
or must have a person named on the emergency card who is available.***

## **CHILD ABSENCE POLICY**

When a child is absent from regularly scheduled care at any time during the month, the participant or staff member must record on the Confidential Absence Form the date(s) of absence, description of absence, and the parent/guardian, Center Director, or Site Supervisor, will sign the sign in sheet with their full legal signature.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for reporting all absences to the campus daily. Each campus has telephone voice mail available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call the campus by 8:00a.m., to report all absences or tardiness. If a parent does not inform the agency about their child’s absence, staff will call families to inquire about their child.






**Enrollment is based on a 24-month eligibility (CCTR) as per DSS guidelines (Title 5 18084.1).**

**ATTENDANCE EXPECTATION/ POLICY**

It is expectation that your child will participate in our program based upon their certified schedule. We understand that life situations occur (illness, family emergencies, etc.) and request that you notify us within 24-48 hours if such a situation occurs. However, if your child is absent for more than seven consecutive days without contacting us, we will reach out to you via the contact information we have on file. Please make sure we have the most current information on file.

Regular and consistent attendance is important. It allows the family to maximize the child’s early learning and care experience benefits. 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.

**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**

**ABANDONMENT OF CARE**

The program does not allow families to be enrolled in a program if they are not using services. If we are unsuccessful and after a total of thirty consecutive calendar days, without attendance or contact with us, a Notice of Action will be issued to disenroll your child from the program based upon “Abandonment of Care.”

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**

- Illness of child or parent/guardian, ailment, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization, or quarantine

- Appointment 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, no transportation, illness of sibling or due to sheltering in-place.

### **FAMILY EMERGENCY**

In the event of a family emergency, children's absences are excused absences. Family Emergencies shall include:

- \*Death/severe illness of a family member
- \*Illness or quarantine of a sibling
- \*Incarceration of a Parent
- \*Child removed from home by legal authorities
- \*Interruption in, or lack of transportation (Limited to 3 days)
- \*Civil Unrest
- \*Sudden, unexpected occurrence, crisis or tragedy affecting day-to-day living including natural and unnatural disasters
- \*Special circumstances on a case-by-case basis with approval from the Executive Director/CEO.

### **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). The parent/guardian 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
- Religious observance, holiday, or ceremony

### **WITHDRAWING CHILDREN FROM THE PROGRAM**

A written two-week notice is required when withdrawing your child from the center. Two-week notice to your eligibility specialist is also required when childcare services are no longer required. Fees will continue until the last day of attendance. Refer to the Fee Policy for information regarding unpaid fees.

### **FRAUD**

Fraud is defined as knowingly or intentionally withholding pertinent materials or information, making any false statements, or presenting any false materials or information, as a means of obtaining state-funded childcare services. Any fraudulent information provided to CHILDREN'S CHOICE that is used to determine initial or on-going eligibility for subsidized childcare services may be grounds for termination of childcare services. You will be billed for all the past childcare services provided. If you do not reimburse the agency for money owed, you may be

taken to Small Claims Court and/or referred to the District Attorney

## **NOTICE OF ACTION**

A Notice of Action (NOA) is the document which would inform you of any changes to the status of your services. NOAs are VERY IMPORTANT. This written notice is emailed to inform the family of a change in their service agreement. Please pay attention to them when you receive them.

NOA becomes effective on the first day of services. CCTR Specialist will clearly state the start date in an email, along with the number of days and hours with the NOA attached.

## **Notification of Changes**

Families must notify Children's Choice of any of the following:

- When Income Exceeds 85% of State Median Income (SMI)
- Changes to your contact information or address

## **PROGRAM DECISION COMPLAINTS (APPEAL PROCESS)**

### **STEP 1: REQUEST APPEAL HEARING**

If the parent disagrees with an action or change, the parent must complete the appeal information on the back of the Notice of Action (NOA). You may file a request for a hearing with the VP of Operations at 619.249.4328. Appeal requests must be received on or before the specific effective date on the Notice of Action. Upon the filing of a request for hearing, the intended NOA action shall be suspended until the review process has been completed.

To file an appeal, contact: Vice President of Operations

Children's Choice Learning Connection, Inc.

13465 Camino Canada, Suite 110-C

El Cajon, CA 92021

Tel: (619) 249-4328

### **STEP 2: SCHEDULING A HEARING**

Within ten (10) calendar days following the receipt of the request for a hearing, CHILDREN'S CHOICE will notify the parent(s) of the time and place of the hearing. The time and place of the hearing shall, to the best extent possible, be convenient for the parents. The hearing shall not be scheduled more than fourteen calendar days from the date the hearing officer contacts the parent to schedule the hearing. If a parent or parent's Authorized Representative (AR) 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 one time. The parent/guardian has the right to have an authorized representative (AR) attend the hearing on behalf of or with the parent/guardian. When a parent has an AR who attends the hearing, the parent is not required to attend his or her hearing. A parent designating an AR 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.

### **STEP 3: APPEAL HEARING**

The hearing will be conducted by an administrative staff person who shall be referred to as "the hearing officer." If 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 AR will have an opportunity to provide support documentation and explain the reasons that they disagree with the proposed action indicated by the referenced NOA.

This will be a formal hearing, and the parents must comply with the directions of the hearing officer during the hearing. Failure to comply with directions will result in the hearing being ended and the contested action being taken. For failure to appear, it will be deemed that parents have abandoned the appeal and care ends immediately.

**STEP 4: AGENCY HEARING DECISION**

The hearing officer will send notification in writing of a decision within ten calendar days after hearing.

**STEP 5: If Parent Disagrees with Hearing Decision**

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

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

California Department of Social Services (CDSS)  
 Childcare and Development Division  
 Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
 744 P Street, MS 9-7-354  
 Sacramento, Ca 95814  
 Email: [CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov)  
 Telephone: 833-559-2420  
 Fax: 916-654-1048

**Step 6: CCDD Hearing Decision**

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

**Enrollment**

Children’s Choice, Inc. operates on a nondiscriminatory basis, ensuring equal access and treatment without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. Our program refrains from religious worship or instruction. Upon touring the center, parents and the director collaboratively determine the best placement option for the child. If a child requires a change in class due to development or behavior, consultations with teachers and

parents are held to ensure the child's well-being.

Children will be admitted under the following conditions:

- Readiness for group experiences offered by the Center.
- Ability to benefit from the program provided.

Childcare services will accommodate children with physical or emotional disabilities according to staffing ratios. Various forms must be completed for enrollment, along with a paid nonrefundable \$200 registration fee (not applicable to direct CCTR families). Specific items must be brought in, such as immunization records, fitted crib sheet and blanket, extra clothes, diapers, wipes, and more.

For children to be enrolled, the following forms must be completed, and children must be current with their Physician's Report, Immunization Requirements, as well as a negative TB test.

### **Forms**

- LIC Form 700, Identification and Emergency Form
- Emergency Card
- LIC 627 Form Consent for Medical Treatment
- Parent/Center Contract
- LIC Form 702; Child's Preadmission Health History Form (not needed for School Age)
- Sick Policies
- LIC Form 995, Parent's Rights Form
- LIC Form 613A; Child's Rights Form
- Consent & Release
- Sunscreen Authorization Form
- Allergy Waiver Form
- Permission To Apply Diaper Cream
- Biting Policy
- Infant Needs & Assessment Form (Age two & under)
- LIC Form 9227 Infant Sleep Plan (Age two and under)
- Infant Formula Decline Form (Age two & under)
- Rights of the Licensing Agency
- Meal Benefit Form
- Tuition Express Form/Notice to All Families on Subsidy
- Parent Handbook/Acknowledgement Form
- LIC Form 701; Physician's Report Form (not needed for School Age)
- Immunization Record
- Blue Immunization Card

### **Immunizations Requirement per LIC 701:**

Immunization records must meet the specified requirements for various ages & vaccines. The Immunization Record card will detail the necessary doses for each vaccine.

Vaccine:

POLIO (OPV or IPV) 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th  
 DTP/DTaP/DT/Td 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th  
 MMR  
 HIB 1st / 2nd Doses  
 Meningitis 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th Doses  
 Hepatitis B 1st / 2nd / 3rd Doses  
 Varicella 1st / 2nd Doses

**CCTR REQUIRED FORMS**

- CCTR Application
- Proof of residency (lease, utility, cell phone)
- Parent Handbook Signature Sheet
- Child(ren) Birth Record
- Income Eligibility (pay stubs)
- Family Needs Assessment
- Employment Verification
- Income Guidelines

**Infant Needs & Services**

Our experienced educators specialize in infant and toddler growth, offering comprehensive educational services to ensure your child's well-being. Our curriculum encompasses sensory, motor, social, and cognitive activities, establishing a strong educational foundation. From developmental milestones to meticulously tailored curricula, we facilitate growth and social development in a nurturing environment. Personalized care and attention are provided, fostering comfort for both children and families. Our Services for infants and Toddlers encompass:

- Nutritious Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks
- Teacher-Infant Ratio: 1:4
- Teacher-Toddler Ratio: 1:6
- Teacher-School Age Ratio: 1:14
- Engaging Developmental Activities
- Cultivation of Social and Cognitive Skills
- Stimulation through Sensory-Motor Tasks
- Holistic Educational Progression
- Creative Arts and Craft Endeavors
- Warm and Supportive Surroundings
- Pristine and Well-Organized Atmosphere
- Tailored Care and Individualized Attention

**Tuition Policies**

Payment for tuition is required in advance using our online platform called "Tuition Express." Enrolling in autopay

is mandatory, and you can either connect to your bank account or use a credit card for payment. Fees are expected to be settled on Monday for the upcoming week. A late fee will be incurred for payments received after 6:00 p.m. on Monday. If an account becomes overdue, Children’s Choice reserves the right to suspend childcare services until the account is brought up to date, or to terminate services altogether. In case of a waiting list for classrooms, failure to keep tuition current may result in the loss of your child's spot. Any alternative payment arrangements must be approved by the Center Director before the initial payment is due. Delinquent accounts may be handed over to a collection agency.

In the event of a temporary closure of the classroom or center due to a natural disaster, such as a COVID-19 outbreak, earthquake, flood, or wildfire, full tuition is still applicable, like any other absence or holiday. Vacation credits can be utilized during the closure; a maximum of two (2) weeks per year at half the regular price.

Please note the additional fees below (families on tuition assistant are NOT excluded from paying these fees where applicable):

- Nonrefundable \$200 Registration Fee
- Late-payment fee: \$25.00
- Returned payment fee: \$30.00
- No Call fee: \$10.00 (failing to inform school that child does not have to be picked up from school)
- Late pick-up fee: \$30.00 after closing & \$10.00 for every 5 mins thereafter per child
- No Sign-In fee: \$10.00 (failing to sign your child in or out)

\*CCTR families are excluded from these fees, only late pick-up fees are applicable.

***Because our program and licensing regulations require us to engage staff based on the number of children enrolled, we cannot refund tuition for days your child is absent due to illness or vacation.***

- Summer Activity Fee (Due by June 1<sup>st</sup>): \$155.00 for school-age children  
\$65.00 for preschool children

## **Social Media**

To maintain a strong connection with our CHILDREN’S CHOICE families, our teachers and staff may capture photos and/or videos of children participating in preschool activities or during field trips. These visual materials could potentially be shared on social media platforms and/or the official company website.

## **Video Surveillance Policy**

To promote the safety of employees, children, and parents, as well as the security of their facilities, Children’s Choice may conduct video surveillance (audio and video) of any portion of their premises at any time, the only exception being private areas of restrooms, showers, and dressing rooms. Video cameras may be positioned in appropriate places within and around CCA’s buildings.

## **Ending Childcare Services**



Before withdrawing your child(ren) from the program, a paid written notice of two weeks is mandatory. Failing to provide this notice will result in full liability for two weeks' worth of tuition.

CHILDREN'S CHOICE has a Zero Tolerance policy covering certain behaviors such as aggression, threats, profanity, shouting, bullying, or invading personal space directed to staff, students, vendors, or other parents. Such actions will result in immediate expulsion from the program. CHILDREN'S CHOICE is dedicated to creating a secure environment for its stakeholders and preventing any form of abusive behavior. Every member of our organization holds the responsibility of safeguarding the well-being and safety of those we serve. The Zero Tolerance Policy extends to CHILDREN'S CHOICE's employees, families, volunteers, vendors, and participants. All parties are expected to adhere to this policy. Any form of abuse, whether proven or suspected, will not be tolerated.

CHILDREN'S CHOICE also maintains the right to discontinue childcare services when, according to the Center Director's assessment, a child's aggressive behavior reaches a point where it could potentially harm others or excessively diverts attention from providing the requisite level of care and attention to all children. In such instances, CHILDREN'S CHOICE retains the prerogative to promptly terminate services. We will make every endeavor to collaborate with the parents and can provide suitable referrals upon request.

### **"Suspension & Expulsion Policy"**

**Other factors that could lead to the cessation of a specific care arrangement include:**

1. Failure to make childcare payments or non-compliance with our tuition policies.
2. Unwillingness of parents to cooperate with the program's attempts to address disagreements or meet the child's needs through parent-staff meetings or conferences.
3. Instances of abusive behavior or verbal threats by parents directed towards staff or other parents.
4. Disciplining children (other than their own) by parents while at the center.
5. A child displaying distinct needs or requirements related to a serious illness that we are not equipped or qualified to address. In this scenario, the program staff will strive to engage the parents and other relevant individuals to jointly determine the most suitable course of action prior to considering termination.

### **Absences and Vacations**

Each family is allowed up to two weeks of vacation per year (starting at the date of enrollment) at one-half-rate tuition. If a child is gone for more than two weeks, the full rate will apply to guarantee your child's space.

### **Sick Policy**

Please notify the center prior to 9:30 am if your child is ill and will not be attending that day. In case of sickness at school, the parent will be notified and requested to take the child home within an hour. If this occurs, your child may not return the following day. For your child to return to school after a sickness, they must be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours with no medication. Please, do not send your child to school if he or she has a fever or has a communicable disease. Some examples of an ill child are (but not limited to): excessive coughing, a

runny nose with green or yellow discharge, fever, sore throat, red eyes, or a rash. Children with such symptoms will be unable to participate in care. The Director may request a doctor's slip stating that the child's illness has ended, and that the child may return to the Center.

### **Petting Zoo Policy**

All classrooms within the Children's Choice Centers have pets. To find out the specific types of animals kept at your school, kindly consult your Center Director. The assortment of pets includes reptiles, birds, bunnies, dogs, chickens, guinea pigs, hamsters, and more.

Children will have the opportunity to gain experience in animal care, encompassing tasks such as feeding, cleaning cages, and engaging with the animals in appropriate ways.

Periodically, we will arrange for a mobile petting zoo to visit our various locations. The animals that might be part of these visits range from dogs, goats, donkeys, miniature cows, miniature ponies, alpacas, and mini pigs. Strict supervision will be maintained during these interactions to ensure the safety of the children.

Children will also receive guidance on how to interact with these animals, along with adherence to safety and hygiene protocols.

If you have any concerns about the above information, please feel free to discuss it with your center director.

### **Medication**

Administration of any medication should be conducted at home. If a child needs medication during school hours and the parent cannot oversee it, they must initially complete form (LIC 9221). The medication should be in its original packaging, featuring the child's complete name and prescribed dosage details.

Upon arrival at the school, all medication must be directly handed over to the Director.

Unused medication will solely be returned to the parent. School staff will address only minor injuries.

### **Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication**

All medications, whether prescription or non-prescription, must be logged by the Director upon check-in. Parents must complete and sign a medication authorization form, which includes the child's name, medication name, date(s), time(s), dosage, parent signature, and date signed.

Medications must be provided in their original packaging with the prescription label attached. They will be securely stored in a locked medical box. Staff administering medication are CPR and First Aid certified, and the Director will ensure they are properly trained.

Parents will receive a notification each time medication is administered.

**Oral Medication:** A parent must fill out the appropriate forms, and the medication will be stored in a secure lock box. Every instance of administering the medication will be recorded on an LIC 622.

**Inhalers:** Students needing inhalers or nebulizers can bring them to school following the same procedures, with proper documentation and the LIC 9166.

### **Administering Inhaled Medication**

Inhaled medication will be administered as needed, following proper protocols. Parents or guardians must complete and sign a medication authorization form, which includes the child's name, medication name, date(s), time(s), dosage, parent signature, and date signed. The form must also indicate the last time the medication was administered.

All medication must be provided in its original packaging with the prescription label attached. Medication will be securely stored in a locked medical box. Staff administering medication are First Aid and CPR certified, and the Director will review procedures with each designated staff member.

Parents will receive a notification each time medication is given.

**Epi-Pens:** Students requiring an epi-pen may bring them to school under the same protocols and with correct documentation.

### **EpiPen Jr. and EpiPen Administration**

EpiPens will be administered in emergency situations for severe allergic reactions. They are stored in a locked medical box, and parents must complete a medication authorization form before use. The form includes the child's name, medication name, date(s), time(s), dosage, parent signature, and date signed.

All staff are CPR and First Aid certified and trained in EpiPen administration. The Director will provide hands-on training using a practice EpiPen as needed for staff working with children requiring this treatment. Training sessions will be documented in employee files.

EpiPens are inspected monthly for discoloration. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is stored with medication for easy access. Staff members listed on the LIC 610 form are authorized to administer the EpiPen, and 911 will be called immediately after use. Parents will be notified when an EpiPen is administered.

### **First Aid Supplies**

First aid kits are available in each classroom, the craft room, and every CCA vehicle. All staff members are trained in first aid and hold valid CPR certification.

When first aid is administered, parents will receive an "Ouch Report" detailing the incident.

**Allergies:** Children with allergies must possess documentation specifying their allergies (LIC 701 and LIC 702). Epi-pens and Benadryl may be present on-site for emergency use and will only be administered in severe circumstances. Clear instructions must be provided on the original packaging.

### **Serious Injuries or Incidents**

In the event of a severe injury or medical incident, a report will be submitted to Community Care Licensing (CCL). This includes an immediate phone call and filing of form LIC 624.

### **Transporting Medical Supplies for Activities & Field Trips**

The Director, Assistant Director, or a designated school-age teacher will be responsible for transporting medications, equipment, and supplies to ensure uninterrupted medical care during off-site activities and field trips.

Please note: Anything like (lotion, ChapStick, eczema creams, etc.), need signed permission from the parent to apply. These items may not be kept in your child's cubby for them to use freely.

### **Toilet Learning:**

#### **Parent and Staff Agreement:**

- At CHILDREN'S CHOICE, we initiate toilet training for children at 24 months. Parents agree to maintain consistency with this timing.
- Both parents and staff will encourage toddlers to participate in activities such as pulling down their pants and fastening buttons and zippers.
- Parents will determine the approach for training boys to urinate (standing up or sitting down).
- Parents acknowledge that toddlers might not immediately manage to clean themselves after a bowel movement. Staff will help until the child acquires this skill.
- Staff will not compel a child to sit on a toilet. There will be no scolding. Toilet visits will be kept brief and enjoyable. Staff will provide guidance and support for proper handwashing after using the toilet.

### **Admission and Departure**

For the safety of your child, it is essential that you or another responsible individual accompany your child into the Center and complete the sign-in process using your full signature (please avoid using initials, initials will not be accepted). The steps to signing your child in and out are as follows: Scan ProCare QR code with your phone (QR Codes are located at the entrance of each location), type in your personal 4 digit pin (given to you upon enrollment), click on your child/ren who you wish to sign in, and sign electronically with full signature. Please stay with your child until they have been admitted for the day and have undergone a health screening to identify any physical marks (such as scrapes, scratches, etc.) or early signs of illness.

Children's Choice maintains a designated drop-off time cut-off at 9:30 am. If your child is not signed in at the center by 9:30 am, they will not be able to attend school that day but may return the following day. Please be aware that full tuition is still applicable, regardless of whether your child is physically present or not. Tuition secures your child's spot rather than the hours of care received.

Children may only be picked up from the facility by individuals specified on the "Identification and Emergency Information" form. Refer to No. 6 in the "Parent/Center Contract."

If you anticipate being away from your workplace for the day, kindly provide a reachable phone number in case you are required for a medical emergency.

Children will only be released to authorized adults (eighteen years or older) listed on the Enrollment Emergency Form by the enrolling parent and must provide a valid photo ID when picking up. A child will not be released to any other adult without prior written consent.

If applicable, it is recommended that a copy of any court custody order be kept at the Center. In the absence of a court order, a child must be legally released to either parent, whether or not you grant permission. If you foresee any issues with unauthorized pick-ups, please discuss the situation with the Center's Director.

### **Late Pick-ups**

The Center concludes its daily operations at 6:00 pm for our Woodside, Los Coches, El Cajon school age, and Chula Vista locations, and 5:30 pm for our Escondido and Vista locations. Charges for late pick-ups are \$30.00 after the official closing time and an additional \$10.00 for every 5-minute interval thereafter, per child. Payment is due before the child can return to care.

In the event of an emergency causing a delay in picking up your child, and you foresee being late, please make sure to contact the Center before its closing time. It is advisable to always keep the Center's phone number with you.

If your child remains at the Center beyond the closing time and we have not received communication from you, we will take the following steps in sequence:

1. Attempt to reach you at your home, workplace, or school.
2. Contact the individuals listed on the Emergency Form as designated contacts, for instance when it is beyond closing time, and we have not been notified by you.
3. Inform the authorities if necessary.

Frequent instances of late pickups could lead to the potential termination of childcare services.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

In accordance with the California Penal Code, it is required that any staff member within a licensed school promptly reports any suspicions of child abuse. If such suspicions arise, Child Protective Services will be informed, and appropriate investigative procedures will be initiated. If your child has experienced any atypical accidents while not at the Center, please remember to inform the Center's staff.

### **Rights of the Licensing Agency: Section 101200 (b) & (c)**

The Department of Licensing Agency shall have the authority to interview children, or staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent. The licensee shall make provisions for private interviews with any children or staff members. The Department has the authority to inspect, audit, and copy child or childcare center records upon demand during normal business hours. Records may be removed for copying if necessary.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences will be available on request, and twice a year for CCTR families.

## **Parent Advisory Committee**

Children's Choice programs include an orientation for parents to provide an overview and welcome introduction to our programs. We also maintain a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). The committee meets a minimum of four times a year and meetings are open to all enrolled families. Meeting notes of the PAC meetings are published for distribution to staff and enrolled families.

We share your concerns for your child's well-being just as you do. We invite you to openly communicate any apprehensions you might have about your child that you believe we should be aware of. This could include changes in the home environment (such as the loss of a parent or divorce) or instances like restless nights.

The Center's Director is readily available to address any concerns. Please do not hesitate to arrange an appointment if you have any worries about your child, their teacher, the school, or any other matter. Your feedback is important to us.

## **Discipline Policies**

1. **Positive Reinforcement:** Our primary approach is positive reinforcement. We will acknowledge and reward good behavior with verbal praise, stickers, or small tokens.
2. **Redirecting:** If a child engages in inappropriate behavior, the teacher will redirect their attention to a different activity or guide them towards a more acceptable behavior.
3. **Time-In:** If a child needs a moment to calm down or reflect on their behavior, a designated quiet area will be provided as a "time-in" space.
4. **Parent/Guardian Involvement:** If persistent behavioral challenges arise, teachers will communicate with parents/guardians to collaborate on solutions and strategies.
5. **Consistency:** Consistent application of the behavior policy across all staff members ensures a unified approach to discipline.

Anything that violates a child's right includes corporal punishment, pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threats, mental abuse, and other punitive actions.

If redirecting the child is unsuccessful, or the child exhibits a behavior that is harmful to themselves, or others, the following will happen:

### **Behavior Management Policy**

#### **Purpose:**

To provide a structured and consistent approach for addressing challenging behavior in children, ensuring a supportive

and constructive environment for all students.

### **Procedure:**

#### **1. Identification of Challenging Behavior**

- The Center Director and the child’s teacher will assess and identify the challenging behavior.

#### **2. Documentation Initiation**

- Begin documentation of incidents, including antecedents (events leading up to the behavior) and responsive notes (how the behavior was addressed).

#### **3. Behavior Team Observation**

- A formal observation will be scheduled with the behavior team to assess the child’s behavior and gather additional insights.

#### **4. Ongoing Documentation**

- Continuing documenting behaviors and responses to monitor patterns and effectiveness of interventions.

#### **5. Parent Meeting**

- A meeting with the child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) will be scheduled to discuss observations, concerns, and potential strategies for improvement.

#### **6. Action Plan Development**

- An individualized action plan will be created to address the child’s specific behavior.
- The action plan will outline steps to correct the behavior and provide necessary support, including a referral to an outside agency.
- If the behavior persists despite interventions, the action plan will include a pathway for possible dismissal.

### **Implementation & Review:**

- The behavior team, Center Director, and teaching staff will work collaboratively to ensure the consistent implementation of the action plan.
- Progress will be reviewed regularly, and modifications to the action plan will be made, as necessary.

This policy is designed to support the well-being of all students and staff while providing clear expectations and steps for addressing challenging behaviors.

Parent conferences will be scheduled in accordance with the behavior plan policy; failure to attend can/will be cause for immediate dismissal.

### **Parental Involvement**

Research shows that the child who has an interest, involved parents will adapt better to the world and can score higher on the intelligence and achievement tests. We believe in forming a parent partnership. We encourage parents to become involved by joining your child for lunch (if your schedule allows it), reading a story, or collecting “beautiful junk” to be used in art projects or in any other way that shows your child you care. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent activities and to attend any other activities the Center sponsors throughout the year.

Children’s Choice has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to visit the Center at any time. We feel it is helpful to your child to have your involvement. If time does not permit you to volunteer, you are always welcome as an observer.

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

Children’s Choice, Inc. is open year-round for the convenience of working parents. Our hours of operation are

Monday – Friday      6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Woodside, Los Coches, 2<sup>nd</sup> St School Age, and Chula Vista)  
6:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Escondido and Vista)

Children’s Choice, Inc. is for the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day\*
- January 17, 2025, Staff training (exact date is subject to change from year to year but will be mid-January)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- President’s Day
- May 16th, 2025 – Staff training day (exact date is subject to change from year to year but will be mid-May)
- Memorial Day
- June 19th
- Independence Day\*
- Labor Day
- October Staff Retreat/Development Week (2-5 days TBD)
- The fourth Thursday of November and
- Friday after the fourth Thursday of November
- December 22, 2025-December 26, 2025\*\* (exact dates are subject to change from year to year but will be at the end of December)

Note: Full tuition will be charged for the weeks that these holidays occur.

### **Mealtimes and Snacks**

Children’s Choice is committed to ensuring that the children have nutritious meals and snacks during the time in which they are in the program. Meals & Snacks:

- Meet federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or National School Lunch Program guidelines.
- Be culturally & developmentally appropriate.
- Be provided at no additional cost to families.

Our meals and snacks are thoughtfully designed to be nutritionally balanced, appropriately portioned, and offer a variety of foods in accordance with the recommendations of the CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food



Program). Mealtimes are opportunities for children to enjoy both "familiar" and "unfamiliar" foods.

We offer breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. A copy of the menu is prominently displayed on the parent's bulletin board. We place a strong emphasis on promoting good nutrition, and our policy refrains from including sweets in our program. We are delighted to participate in celebrating your child's birthday at the Center. If you choose, you can provide a nutritious store-bought snack for sharing.

Should your child have any food allergies, we require written notification along with documentation from a physician out, and precautions.

In cases where your child necessitates a special diet, we request a statement from the child's physician detailing the specific dietary requirements, as well as one or more of the proper CACFP forms (. We will arrange a discussion with you to determine if we can accommodate the special diet within our program or if you will need to provide substitute foods.)

### **Children's Clothing**

Ensure that your child is dressed comfortably. Keep in mind that learning to perform tasks independently is a crucial aspect of a child's development. Clothing with easy-to-use buttons and zippers (avoiding pins and ties) aids in this teaching and learning process. There is no need for your child to be overly dressed up. Given that children will engage in activities like playing in sand and dirt, painting, working with clay, sliding, and climbing, it is advisable to dress them appropriately for such activities.

Closed-toed shoes are mandatory. Also, kindly provide a spare set of clothes (with your child's name clearly written in permanent ink on the inside labels) to be kept at the center.

### **Diaper Policy**

Children's Choice has determined that the families will provide diapers for their own children, but Children's Choice will provide wipes.

### **Quiet Time**

Quiet time is observed from 12:30 to 2:30 pm. During this period, each child is provided with their own mat. To ensure your child's comfort, kindly bring a fitted crib sheet, a small crib-size blanket, and a pillowcase to enclose the bedding (ensuring it does not come into contact with others' bedding). Bedding will be sent home with the child on Friday for washing and should be returned on Monday. It is important to note that the sheet and blanket should be crib-sized to accommodate storage limitations and mat dimensions. During rest time, gentle music is played, back rubs are given, and every effort is made to create a calm and cozy atmosphere for the children.

The primary objective of our naptime policy is to ensure your child's afternoon remains pleasant and safe, both before, during, and after their nap. Nap schedules for children can vary based on age and individual requirements.

While not all children may fall asleep during naptime, we ask that those who remain awake do so quietly to maintain a peaceful environment for their peers. Sleep is never required; rather, teachers create a restful atmosphere and encourage relaxation. If a child does not sleep, they may sit or lie quietly, or engage in a quiet

activity on their mat, such as looking at a book. If a child refuses to lay or sit on their mat, a supervised alternative quiet activity will be provided outside of the napping area. This approach helps support children who are napping while fostering a calm and soothing setting. The naptime environment includes soft music, dim lighting, and individual mats for each child (infants up to 12 months will use cribs for sleeping).

Our teachers thoroughly sanitize and clean the mats after each use. Our nap time routine commences after lunch, and our teachers follow a consistent procedure each day to ensure that children understand what is expected of them, fostering a sense of safety and security.

Nap or rest time is compulsory for all children present in the center from 12:30pm-2:30pm. Your child will have an individual space to rest. It is essential for parents to recognize that all children benefit from rest.

During nap time, bottles or sippy cups are not allowed. Ideally, we aspire for this period to offer rejuvenation, relaxation, and personalized care to meet each child's unique needs.

### **Injuries and Illnesses While at the Center**

To ensure the safety of both children and staff, all staff members are required to hold a current First Aid and CPR certificate. They can address minor surface-level bumps and bruises. If a minor scratch, bump, or bruise occurs during play, parents will be informed through the Parent Engagement App (ProCare) and when the child is collected.

For medical or dental emergencies, parents will receive an immediate phone call. If neither parent nor any individual listed on the emergency contacts can be reached and the situation is deemed urgent, paramedics will be contacted. In such cases, if necessary, the child will be transported to the local hospital for emergency treatment.

### **Disaster Preparedness**

**Earthquakes:** Our children will be trained in the "Duck and Cover" procedure at the Center. In case of a significant earthquake, the children will remain indoors until the shaking subsides.

Subsequently, they will be led to an open area outside, away from potential dangers. Our teachers will stay at the Center until ALL children have been safely collected by a parent or an authorized individual. The Center is equipped with emergency supplies to cater to any extended stays, even potentially overnight, if required. In the aftermath of a major earthquake or other calamity, roadways might be inaccessible, and communication lines might be down. Please rest assured that your child's well-being will be looked after until your arrival.

**Fire Drills:** Fire drills are conducted at the Center once a month. When the fire alarm sounds, all adults and children exit the classrooms and proceed to a designated evacuation spot. The evacuation plan is visibly displayed in each child's classroom near every exterior exit. They will sit down and remain in place until the "all-clear" signal is given.

### **Transportation and Field Trips**

School Transportation Services: Children's Choice offers transportation services to and from the Center and school. If the cars' arrival is delayed when picking up a child from school due to unexpected circumstances, the Director

will communicate with both the parents of the affected children and the school(s). Regular updates regarding the estimated arrival time or alternative plans will be provided.

Should a parent personally pick up their child from school for any reason, we kindly request that you notify CHILDREN'S CHOICE by phone, informing us that transportation is unnecessary. The driver will not depart from the school without ensuring that a child is present. Calling to inform us is essential as it ensures efficient coordination and prevents delays in the pickup process at subsequent schools. Failure to notify CHILDREN'S CHOICE will result in a \$10.00 penalty charge for each instance.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook, Uniform complaint procedure, ADA & Non-Discrimination policy, as well as the Lead Prevention Brochure on the date indicated below. I recognize my responsibility to thoroughly review the entire handbook.

I have received, read, and have been instructed on the contents of the Parent Handbook provided by Children’s Choice. I fully understand my responsibilities as a participant of CHILDREN’S CHOICE and agree to comply with the rules and regulations of the program. With your initials below you indicate you understand, and agree to comply with the following specific policies of CHILDREN’S CHOICE:

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to comply with the Adult Standards of Conduct

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to comply with the requirement of, and how to correctly fill in a sign in & out sheet attesting to fill it out truthfully and accurately

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand it is in the best interest of my child to have regular attendance, and that I attend parent meetings and parent collaborations and conferences

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to comply with the 30 day “reporting of becoming over income Requirement”

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to comply with the Non-Discrimination Policy

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to comply with the Child Absence Policy

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to comply with the Fraud Prevention Policy

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and agree to contact the school when my child will not be in attendance.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and hereby agree to fill out/submit all paperwork truthfully and accurately under the penalty of perjury

I have read and understand the Program requirements and hereby agree to comply with all the program requirements, procedures, and reporting responsibilities. I understand that all the information requested of me is used for determining my eligibility and/or participation in the program, so that I may receive childcare services paid for by the State of California. I understand that my failure to provide truthful and correct information may result in prosecution for fraud, and that if after investigation, I am found guilty of fraud, I may be required to pay back any monies used for care on my behalf, and be subject to other civil penalties, including but not limited to fines and imprisonment. I therefore affirm under penalty of perjury, that all the information I have provided and given, in seeking to participate in Children’s Choice, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eligibility Specialist Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Print Name