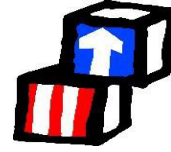




PaRa loS niñoS



for the childRen



# Para Los Niños Early Childhood Education Parent Handbook



My Child Attends: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child's Teacher is: \_\_\_\_\_

The Telephone Number at my Child's Site is: 213-250-4800 ext. \_\_\_\_\_

My Area Supervisor is: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.paralosninos.org](http://www.paralosninos.org)

## Para Los Niños Early Childhood Education Program

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to Para Los Niños (PLN) Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program. Our ECE is made up of Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS) and State Child Development Services (CDE). We are excited that you have chosen our program for your child and family.

Para Los Niños mission is that “we believe in the children, youth and families we serve. We foster pathways to success by striving for excellence in education, family support programs and comprehensive social, emotional, and community-based services”. Our “vision is thriving children and youth through excellent education, powerful families, and strong communities”. We have six core values: Excellence, Constant Learning, Teamwork, Community, Inclusion and Trust.

These are some of the most important years of your child’s growth and development. Through effective early education practices, our caring staff will provide a quality early education experience for your child. In addition, we incorporate family and community engagement, health, nutritional services, mental health, and disability services, with our school readiness’s to strengthen the child and family’s capability to participate successfully in school.

In this handbook, you will find highlights of important policies and procedures regarding our program and opportunities for you to be involved in your child’s education, as well as the roles that pertain to the ECE. We hope this information will help you understand how our program operates and our expectations for families.

We look forward to having you join us as we work together building a strong foundation for your child’s educational future.

Sincerely,

Para Los Niños Early Education Program Staff



Excellence · Constant Learning · Teamwork · Community · Inclusion · Trust

## Para Los Niños Early Childhood Education Program

All sites are licensed, safe, and provide developmentally appropriate environments for Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS) and California State Preschool Program (CCTR and CSPP) eligible children. Sites are in Downtown Los Angeles (Garment District), Cypress Park, East Hollywood, Burbank, and Pico Union Area (Keck).

Our sites serve children and families without regard to sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference, and/or physical handicap. The program refrains from any instruction that is religiously based. Our services are designed to meet each child's developmental needs within the confines of the Department of Social Services, Child Care Licensing (Title 22), California Department of Education and the Head Start Performance Standards. PLN HS, EHS, and CDE offer an Open Door Policy. An open-door policy allows parents/guardians to visit their children on our sites any time they wish. We do ask parents/guardian who plan to visit their children to check in with the teacher, Family Services Specialist (FSS) or Area Supervisor prior to visit and to follow the classroom routine, to avoid disturbing classroom schedules and activities; as well as PLN volunteer policy.

Para Los Niños (PLN) Head Start program provides services to children ages 3-5 years in four of Los Angeles neighborhoods; Cypress Park (Cypress), East Hollywood (Hollywood), Pico Union (Keck), the Garment District (Caruso) and at one neighborhood in Burbank (Magnolia). In addition, PLN offers Early Head Start (EHS) services in the Hollywood area (Vine), the Garment District (Caruso); children ages 6-weeks to 36-months-old, and at Cypress Park (Cypress) and Burbank (Magnolia); children ages 2-3 years old.

Please check with the site Family Services Specialist (FSS) for more information. Note: Guidance from CDC, Federal and State partners will be considered regarding class size and services during modified program services.

Parents/guardians will be provided with a program calendar for the school year at Parent Orientation. Monthly parents/guardians will receive a site calendar of events specific to your child's site.

### PLN Holidays

Sites will be closed in observance on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth Day
- First full week of July (including Independence Day)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Days between and New Year's Eve)

\*Actual dates may vary each year and are subject to change without notice.

## Community Care Licensing

PLN ECE sites are governed by the California Code of Regulation, Title 22, Community Care Licensing (CCL) Division of the Department of Social Services and the Head Start Performance Standards. The CCL Division licenses and monitors our sites to ensure PLN provides a safe and healthy environment for enrolled children. By law, licensing agency officials and consultants can visit and inspect PLN sites and all other licensed facilities at any time, without notice. During these visits and inspections, licensing agents have the right to interview children and are not required to obtain permission from parents to do so (CCL101200(b)). In compliance with CCL, annually parents/guardians will sign and date Parents Rights (LIC 955) and Personal Rights (LIC 613A). Copies of both forms can be located on the Parent Boards of each site.

## Grievance Policy and Procedures

PLN provides a formal procedure for families and legal guardians to express and resolve a complaint or grievance through an established fair hearing process. A grievance is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction that includes services, treatment, outcomes, or experiences with services provided by any of the agency's programs. The grievance process is made available to all families and reviewed at the time of admission and/or intake during orientation. PLN's goal is to be responsive, impartial and to come to a resolution to grievances. To do so the program has developed various levels of program staff and supervisors to address these concerns. Area Supervisors are the leads of each of their assigned sites and provide direct support and supervision to all teaching staff. Parents and legal guardians should address their concerns with the Area Supervisor first and foremost. The FSSs are supervised by the Family & Community Engagement Coordinator (FCEC). The (FCEC) is onsite on occasion and can be reached at (213) 250-4800 extension 619.

## Confidentiality of Records

All family information is considered confidential and will be treated as such. Family information is filed securely and not accessible to unauthorized individuals. The use of your family's financial status and your child's records will be limited to the administration of our program. No other use of this information shall be made without prior consent. Parents/guardians will have full access to all information contained in their child's individual file. Parents/guardians may request to review their files, in writing. PLN will have fourteen (14) days to respond to a parent/guardian's request. PLN Area Supervisors and/or FSSs will work to coordinate a time and place to review the file. Community partners such as Department of Children and Family Services, LAUSD providers, court represents shall submit consent or juridical orders with parent consent to review files to the Family Services Specialist and/or Area Supervisor.

## How to Qualify for the Program

**Eligibility: Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS)** are funded by Los Angeles County Office of Education Head Start Grantee. Policies for providing services are developed in accordance with California Child Care Licensing Requirements, Head Start Performance Standard Procedures, and Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Funding Terms and Conditions Contract and have been adopted by PLN.

According to Regulation 1302.12 a child is eligible for HS or EHS services when the family meets the requirements for age and family income as established by the regulations.

Age (Head Start) - Requirements mean, a child must be at least three (3) years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community in which the PLN program is located; and be no older than the age required to attend school.

Age (Early Head Start) – Requirements mean, a child must be an infant or a toddler younger than three years old.

Verification of age includes - Birth Record (State or Hospital), Passport, County welfare department record, and/or other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent.

Family - For eligibility means all persons living in the same household who are: (1) Supported by the income of the parents or guardians of the child enrolling or participating in the program; and (2) related to the parents or guardians by blood, categorically marriage, or adoption.

Categorical Eligibility - is based on documentation and verification of at least one of the following:

- Homelessness
- Foster Care
- Income - Total countable income means all income of the individuals counted in the family size according to HS/EHS regulations, for example:
- Gross cash income – based on 12-month preceding date of application; completed 1040 or W2.
- Current cash aid (also known as TANF, CalWORKs)
- Social Security Benefits (SSI, disability only)
- Unemployment compensation

FSS will ensure that sufficient documentation is gathered to accurately capture the time to be considered for eligibility, twelve months immediately preceding the month in which the application is made.

In cases where the family (applicant) cannot provide any of the documents mentioned above, staff will determine what documents to request to determine eligibility. Families can complete applicant statement as a last resort for eligibility purposes. The applicant statement must include the following information:

- The time frame and income amount earned during the specified time frame. Is the job permanent or temporary/seasonal?
- How many years have the parent been employed?
- What are their hours? Days? How often are you paid? How are you paid?
- Is this your only form of income?
- If the family did not complete taxes, they must indicate why they did not.
- Parent/Guardian signature and date
- Family's address including city and zip code
- Write the child's name and date of birth
- Sign and dated by PLN staff member
- Family must indicate why taxes are not completed

Note: If the FSS assists in writing the applicant statement for the family, the FSS must document why this was done.

**Eligibility: Full day HS/EHS CSPP/ CCTR partnered classes:** PLN partnered classes are funded by LACOE and California Department of Education State Preschool Program. Families must meet the requirements above in addition to the verification of need for the CSPP/ CCTR portion. For some families, there will be a monthly family fee. Family Fee will be discussed later in this document. Eligibility for CSPP/CCTR full day partnered classes are determined by the residency in the State of California, family size and need of a family.

Residency – Parents/ guardians must provide verification of living in the State of California. Acceptable forms of address verification for enrollment include:

Utility bill (electricity bill, water and/or gas)

Rental Agreements

Official document (for example, letter from Social Services)

Identification (for example, Driver's License or Identification card)

Car registration (current year)

Family Size – Parents/ guardians and the children for whom the parents/guardians are responsible who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living. When a child and his or her siblings are living with a family that does not include their biological or adoptive parent, "family" shall be considered the child and related siblings.

Parent – Means a biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, foster parent and caretaker, relative, legal guardian, and domestic partners of the parent or any other adult living with a child who has legal responsibility for the care and welfare of the children. The parent shall provide documentation of the relationship of each child to a parent(s):

- Birth Record – State or Hospital
- Child Custody Court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster care placement records
- County welfare department records
- Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent.

Need - To qualify for the CSPP/CCTR need portion families must meet one of the following criteria:

- Child Protective Services or At-Risk (5 CCR Section 18092)
- Parental Incapacity
- Homelessness
- Employment – full time/ part time – verification of employment or Vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofessional, or profession.
- Seeking Employment
- Seeking permanent housing for family stability

Applicants who are employed or self-employed are required to provide all documents requested by staff including but not limited to the following:

Employed

- Income Tax with proper signatures for previous year or e-receipt. Twelve months immediately preceding the date of application.
- Release authorization and payroll check stubs

- Release authorization and official letter from employer
- Another official record of wages issued by the employer.

### Self Employed

- Official letter from source of income
- Copy of the most recently signed and completed tax return.
- Other business records, such as ledgers, receipts, or business logs (if applicable).
- Completion of applicant statement.
- In cases where applicant is not able to provide any of the documents mentioned above, staff will determine what documents to request to determine eligibility.

The PLN ECE reserves the right to ask for additional documentation to verify income. Eligibility for the program is not based on “first-come, first serve” but is determined by the priorities established by PLN, LACOE, the Office of Head Start (OHS) and California Department of Education.

### Priorities

Families are placed on “new status” when an application is completed. Information from the application and the initial interview between the parent/guardian and Family Services Specialist priority points are assigned. Priority points are based on:

- Age - Four-year-old children receive higher priority points over three-year-old children.
- DCFS case/ referral – children who are in foster services or under Child Protective Services receive additional priority points.
- Families who self-identify as homeless also receive priority on registration.

### Income Eligibility

Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent income ranking schedule (ranking is based on family size and total gross income).

Disability Status – Children with an Individual Family Services Plan, Individual Education Plan and/or concern.

Other areas include Language; employment status of parent(s); educational level of parents, etc. Family may request a copy of the Selection Criteria from the Family Services Specialist in writing at time of enrollment or anytime during the program year. Information on the selection criteria is confidential.

In 2017, the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division implemented new eligibility requirements. This will affect how PLN manages requirements for your child and family. Below is information on what is new and what the new regulations mean for you.

Once you enroll or recertify your need and eligibility your child remains eligible for care for no less than 12 months under Management Bulletin 17-14. During these 12 months, you can voluntarily request a change in schedule or reduction of family fees by contacting your Family Service Specialist and submitting a written letter or completing a voluntary report form.

You only need to report a change in income if it exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI). Income is calculated by averaging your monthly gross income.

What does this mean for you?

You are still required to follow your approved childcare hours unless you request to change in hours by speaking to your FSS, submitting a voluntary report form and proving supporting documentation (new class schedule or work schedule/ verification, etc.).

If you increase your hours of care, your family fee will not be affected. It will remain the same until your 12-month recertification.

If applicable, you must pay your Family Fee by the first of every month, unless you have requested a new income calculation completed. You must speak to your FSS, complete a voluntary report form and provide current income documentation (paystubs, work verification, other proof of income, etc.).

For more information on these new regulations please see your FSS, Area Supervisor or visit [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) and search "MB17-14".

### **Notice of Action and Updating Records**

The "Notice of Action" (NOA) is a written notification of status change for CSPP/CCTR: (i.e., Provision, approval, change, and termination of services). Once a child is enrolled it is the parent(s)/guardian(s), responsibility to keep all documents and information updated. Parents/guardians may request a change in the Family Fee if necessary and provide documentation in writing. Emergency card information is critical and must always be complete and current.

A notice of action will be issued by staff when any of the following occurs:

- Certification is completed.
- Changes that affect need, fees and eligibility occur
- Termination of services

Upon receipt of a Notice of Action, all participants have the right of appeal. Please see the back of the NOA for information about the appeal process (please note that the appeal process is time sensitive).

### **Fees/ Payments**

There are no fees assessed for the HS or EHS program. However, the CSPP/CCTR portion of the day may require a sliding fee for the full day program. Families must be eligible to qualify for this program; children will be admitted according to income guidelines, and eligibility requirements. Family fees are due on the first (1st) of the month. Payment can be made by money order, cashier's check or cash.

#### **Delinquent Fees**

Fees shall be considered delinquent after the 7th (seventh) calendar days from the date the fees were due. If fees are not paid, the parent will receive a Notice of Action form that will include the total amount of unpaid fees, fee rate, and period of delinquency. Services shall be terminated two weeks from the date of the Notice unless all delinquent fees are paid before the end of the two-week period.

Parents experiencing challenges paying their fees should speak to their FSS to discuss developing a reasonable payment plan for paying delinquent fees.

#### **Abide by Agency Policies- Procedures and Program Requirements**

It is the responsibility of the parent to abide by all policies, procedures, and requirements to obtain and continue receiving preschool services.



## **Safety of Children**

PLN takes all possible safety precautions to guard children in our care against bodily harm, illness, injury and/or any other form of maltreatment. PLN employees are mandated reporters suspected of child abuse. In cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, PLN must comply with state guidelines. Possible child abuse indicators that mandate a call to Department of Child and Family Services and/or the police include (According to Penal Code Section 11165):

- Physical abuse – Unexplained bruises, burns, welts, fractures, lacerations etc.
- Sexual abuse – Difficulty walking or sitting, pain when urinating/defecating, injury or pain to genital area, unusual foul odor emanating from genital area.
- Mental/Emotional abuse – Failure to thrive, depression (child appears sad often, empty facial expression), severe aggression towards self and others.
- Neglect – Underweight, poor growth pattern, consistent hunger, unattended physical problems or medical/ dental needs, general unattended appearance (soiled clothing, inappropriate clothing, and unusual body odor).

In the case of a parent or other authorized person arriving to pick up a child in an intoxicated state or under the influence of a controlled substance, an alternative emergency contact person will be called to pick up the child. In some cases, Child Protective Services (CPS) will be notified of the occurrence(s), as will our licensing agency. Please be reminded children will only be released to people on the emergency card who are 18-years plus and present photo identification.

## **Fire Drills**

In addition, PLN ECE sites participate in agency-wide fire drills monthly. Each site has posted information regarding Disaster Preparedness and Response on the parent or licensing board at the sites. During drills and in case of an emergency the staff has access to your child's identification and emergency information in a separate binder within the emergency red backpack. Staff will stay with the children in emergency situations until the crisis subsides and will also make efforts to comfort children during these high-stress situations.

## **Lockdown or Shelter in Place**

In the event of a lockdown or shelter in place, while children and staff are inside the classroom, staff is to follow the following procedures:

- Lock the doors to the classroom or building.
- Allow no person to enter or leave the classroom/site until an all clear via phone or text is received.
- Cover and stay away from windows (Lockdowns) or continue with quiet play activities in the classroom (Shelter in Place)
- If a lockdown or shelter in place occurs while the children and staff are outside of the classroom, they will move into the nearest classroom/ enclosed area as soon as possible and follow the procedures identified above.

One telephone line will be kept available, as much as possible, to receive calls from the outside. If there is more than one line available, one line might be kept open to the program management. Parents/guardians will be notified by PLN staff members onsite and provided with instructions. If

necessary, PLN staff members off site may contact parents/guardians in situations where phones are inoperable. Parents/guardians are encouraged to follow these guidelines and not show up at the site during lockdown or shelter in place activities.

If it appears that a lockdown or shelter in place is going to extend beyond dismissal time, parents will be notified, and the Director/Program Manager coordinates with staff on the release of the class as soon as it is determined to be safe and the lockdown or shelter in place has been lifted.

Despite best efforts, occasions may occur when extraordinary measures are needed to ensure everyone's safety. These occurrences may originate from within program, sites and/or classrooms, from circumstances that occur on the campus or from the nearby community. Annually, PLN staff review the site / department emergency procedures and how to know what to do and can proceed in a calm, effective manner. At a PLN site meeting of the beginning of the school year, the Area Supervisor (AS) and FSS will review the site emergency location with parents/guardians.

### **Dress Code for Children**

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that will allow them to participate in various activities. Children must always wear appropriate flat enclosed (back and toe) shoes and socks. Open toe sandals and shoes or heels are not allowed to prevent accidents. Jewelry, watches, and personal toys should be kept at home as they are easily lost or damaged.

Parents/guardians **MUST** bring an extra set of clothing, including pants, shirt, underwear, and socks. The extra set of clothing must be labeled with the child's full name, always kept in a bag and available. If a family needs assistance in obtaining extra clothing, please contact the FSS at the site.

### **Staff Development**

PLN ECE is committed to ensuring that families receive the help and referrals they need to support their children's success. Our entire staff, Child Development (teachers and Area Supervisors), FSSs and our Content Leadership team (Education, Family/Community, Health/Nutrition, Mental Health, and Disabilities Coordinators) are committed to ensuring that your child's and family's needs are priority. All staff members hold appropriate credentials or permits required by the State of California and Head Start Performance Standards.

Prior to hire, the law requires that all employees go through a criminal background check. Employees receive two and half days of new hire orientation by PLN Human Resource Department and a site orientation by their assigned supervisor to guide them to understand how PLN policies relate to their respective job description.

PLN supports continuous growth by assessing the needs of the staff members and providing professional development activities based on professional goals to enhance growth. Staff are evaluated during their introductory period of 180 days and annually thereafter. Internal communications are in place, including email and voicemail to provide staff with information necessary to carry out their respective duties.

### **Curriculum**

PLN sites utilize the Creative Curriculum ©. This curriculum emphasizes that children's goals are based on a developmental continuum. The overall framework is designed to address how children develop,

what children learn, the significance of the environment in the process of learning, and the teachers and family’s roles. The Creative Curriculum © places a high priority on creating a classroom environment where children experiment, explore, and pursue their own interests commonly known as active learning. The curriculum is also easily linked to the assessment tools used in our program and is inclusive of all children. The program incorporates parent input into the curriculum implementation and the development of individualized child goals.

The individualized instruction, ongoing observations, and child assessments are based on eight domains of development: language, literacy, math, science, and approaches to learning, social-emotional, physical/health, and creative arts. The instruction also includes active learning experiences, building on success and previous knowledge, developing skills necessary for a successful entry into kindergarten. During the school day/ school week, instruction is designed to develop children’s abilities to follow routines, work in a cooperative environment, follow health and safety rules, and successfully function in individual, small group, and large group settings. PLN Child Development staff conducts two home visits and two parent conferences held during the year to discuss children’s progress and plan mutual goals. The standards for the child development and education program component shall include, but not be limited to the following, the program:

- Approach is developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.
- It is inclusive of children with special needs.
- Provides opportunity for parent involvement including input into the lesson planning process.
- Encourages respect for the feelings and rights of others.
- Supports children’s social and emotional development, by building trust, planning routines and transitions so they can occur in a timely, predictable, and unhurried manner.
- Helps children develop emotional security and social relationships.
- Provides for the development of each child’s cognitive and language skills by using various strategies, including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, exploration, opportunities for creative self-expression through activities.
- Promotes each child’s physical development by promoting sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials, and guidelines for active play and movement.
- Develops and maintains practices that are healthy and safe.

**School Readiness Goals**

SR Number	School Readiness Domain	Goal – Children will
1	Language and Literacy	Increase their understanding and expression of written and spoken language in English and their home language
2	Cognition	Increase their ability to reason, analyze, and understand math and science concepts
3	Approaches to Learning	Increase their efforts, persistence and motivation in learning experiences
4	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development	Demonstrate healthy behaviors and safety practices and will develop improved perceptions, physical coordination and control.
5	Social and Emotional Development	Learn to regulate their behavior and emotions; increase their abilities to develop positive relationships with children and adults.

## Desired Results Development Profile

The goal of PLN Early Childhood Education is to ensure that all children progress in the domains of: Approaches to Learning/Self-Regulation, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy Development, English Language Development, Cognition, including Math and Science, Physical Development-Health, History-Social Science, Visual and Performing Arts.

PLN uses the Desired Results Developmental Profile 2015 (DRDP) for HS and the DRDP Infants and Toddlers (2015) for EHS, an observation-based tool to track child progress...

Parents' input is an essential component of this assessment.

The assessment is used to plan developmentally appropriate activities for children, and individualized goals.

Desired Results Developmental Profiles will be a part of parent conferences.

## Classroom Assessment Tools

### ECERS-R and ITERS-R

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R) are quality classroom assessments used in the early childhood that consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions.

### CLASS

Classroom interaction and teacher effectiveness are assessed using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which focuses on three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. The CLASS tool promotes quality classroom interactions and enhances learning experiences.

## Parent Involvement & Education

PLN supports an open-door policy for parents/guardians of children enrolled in the program. In the PLN ECE program, FSSs and Child Development staff work with families to establish an exchange of ideas we believe is an essential means of developing innovative strategies for educating young children.

Parents/Guardians are highly encouraged to actively participate in their child's education. In addition to participating in two parent conferences and two home visits in partnership with PLN teachers, parents can also participate in the following ways:

- Talk to your child about their school experience and the things they are doing each day. Help the child understand that the center is a fun and exciting place where they will learn and play.
- In selecting our school for your child, you have chosen to become a contributing member to our program by actively engaging and participating in school events, parent meetings, regular daily attendance, etc.
- Check the bulletin boards for notices.
- Become part of the Parent Policy Committee (PC)
- Volunteers in or visit your child's classroom (Note: Guidance from CDC, Federal and State partners will be considered regarding volunteers during modified program services).

- Attend parent conferences that take place in fall, winter, and spring of each fiscal year.

Parent/Guardians who volunteer must complete a volunteer application, orientation and submit proof of influenza, pertussis, measles, and tuberculosis to FSSs. During the parent orientation parents/ guardians will be informed of policies and procedures regarding volunteering in the program.

The law, SB 792, effective September 1, 2016, requires employees, volunteers and interns working in the Early Education Program to be immunized against influenza, pertussis, measles, and tuberculosis. Children at this young age range do not have fully developed immune system and as such, it is required by the law that individuals working with students in these environments are fully immunized to protect the students from life-threatening complications from many diseases.

### **Policy Committee (PC)**

PC members are elected and represent PLN from October of the program year to the following October. In addition, PC members ensure, at a minimum, that all monthly PC meetings are conducted following both the requirements of Brown's Act and Robert Rules.

PLNs PC shall be comprised of a group of parents whose children attend PLN sites and Community Representatives (local business representatives and /or former parents). The committee shall meet monthly with the Family and Community Engagement Coordinator and /or the Program Manager.

Parents/Guardians have an opportunity to provide input into the curriculum, training, program improvement and overall suggestions for PLN ECE sites monthly. The purpose of PC meetings is to offer shared decision making by acquiring parent input and approval on some program requirements.

The PC, with the program staff's advice, shall be responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of the parent/guardian participation program at the sites. PC members shall help plan monthly parent meetings and activities at the site. PC members will assist in encouraging other parents to volunteer in the program including special events and activities.

### **Family Partnership Process**

FSSs work collaboratively with parents/guardians to establish positive partnerships, which in turn results in mutual trust. This trust is a key component that assists our FSSs in helping families identify any existing strengths, and/or ideal supports/services the family may need. In addition to this ongoing partnership, FSSs will offer each family an opportunity to develop and implement an Individualized Family Partnership within 90 days of the child's start date. FSSs will offer support and collaboratively work with families to help complete an identified goal the family may have. This support may be offered through referrals to community services providers, workshops, or services provided within PLN. Through this offered support, FSSs will encourage families to continue making progress toward their goal by conducting a minimum of two follow-ups a year. However, if families feel they may need more support, PLN encourages them to see their FSS.

All families will also be reassessed within 180 calendar days of the child's start date. The purpose of this family reassessment is to assist our FSSs in identifying any new or additional supports/ services the family may need.

## Positive Guidance

We believe in fostering a safe and positive learning environment where children feel supported and empowered to learn. Our commitment to positive discipline strategies ensures all interactions with children are nurturing and focused on teaching valuable life skills:

- **Individualized Attention:** We recognize each child is unique and tailor our approach to their developmental needs and learning styles.
- **Positive Strategies:** Our staff implements positive strategies to guide behavior, promote well-being, and prevent challenging situations.
- **Redirection & Calming Techniques:** Children are to be redirected to positive activities. One-on-one calming time with their teacher is utilized when needed.
- **Positive Classroom Management:** We emphasize teaching social skills, appropriate interaction, and natural consequences for actions.
- **Safety & Supervision:** No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.
- **Respecting Needs & Autonomy:** Spanking, hitting, yelling, put-downs, threats, humiliation, isolation, with holding of food/drink or toileting assistance as form of punishment are strictly prohibited.
- **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** We work with families to address concerns and develop positive solutions that support each child's success.
- **Focus on Solutions, Not Punishment:** We believe in active play and will not withhold it for misbehavior. Instead, redirection will be used to help children calm down and re-engage cooperatively.

**LACOE Head Start and Early Learning is committed to providing a positive and nurturing environment where all children can thrive.**

## Nutrition

Children are served healthy, balanced meals and snacks throughout the day at no cost to the families under the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Children enrolled in Early Head Start and/or Head Start are automatically eligible under the free eligibility category for services under CACFP. Families do not need to complete the meal benefits form. Families must verify their application annually by completing the Family Contact Information page.

Meals play a critical role in supporting the wellness, health, and development of children through the provision of nutritious foods. All meals are served Family Style; adults and children eating together, sharing the same meal, and talking together in an informal way. Children are encouraged to serve themselves, try new foods, but are never forced to eat.

Note: Guidance from CDC, Federal and State partners will be taken into consideration regarding meals during modified program services, which may include teachers providing all meals individually to children.

The CACFP program is 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, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

#### Meals Served

- A.M. classes are served Breakfast and Lunch
- P.M. classes are served Lunch and an afternoon Snack
- Full-day classes are served Breakfast, Lunch and an afternoon Snack

#### Food Allergies

The program needs to be informed of all food allergies at the time of enrollment or when a new allergy is identified. The child's doctor must complete a Medical Statement to Request Special Needs and/or Accommodations Form and the Food Restriction Form. These forms will instruct program personnel as to what foods cannot be consumed by your child and the appropriate substitute foods. The child cannot attend class until the proper documentation has been received.

#### Health Policies

Daily health checks of each child are completed and recorded daily upon the arrival of the child by staff members to determine recent illness and/or injury to the child and/or the family. This is an important way to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases and enhances regular school attendance. This consists of checking your child's temperature, asking a few questions and a quick head to toe observation for obvious signs and symptoms of illness. Staff will discuss any health concerns with parents before they leave the site. Parents must sign in children after the health check is completed by staff.

A child should NOT attend school if he/she is directed by his/her physician to remain at home, or if the child has ANY of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4F/ 38C or higher
- Fever suggested by illness with behavior changes, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, progressive rash with the above symptoms
- Illness that requires a need for care that is greater than staff can provide
- Live lice
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Persistent stomach pain (2 hours or more) or stomach pain associated with fever or dehydration
- Vomiting two (2) or more times in the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea two (2) more times in the last 24 hours or stools contain blood or mucus
- Fever and was given fever reducing medication in the prior 24 hours
- Mouth lesions if unable to contain drool or unable to participate because of other symptoms
- Skin lesions if they are weeping or draining and cannot be covered with waterproof dressing
- Pink eye diagnosed by a physician
- Illness preventing participation in activities

A child will be sent home if any of the above-mentioned symptoms are present or if the Area Supervisor or designated representative program staff deems that the child is sick.

#### Communicable Diseases

If the Area Supervisor or designated representative believes a child may have a communicable disease, staff will ensure that the child is isolated from other children in a manner that maintains their connection to a nurturing familiar adult. Parents will be contacted and advised to pick up their child.

A physician's note could be required for children to return to the school. The Health/Nutrition Coordinator and/or Nurse will make the determination if a note is needed. The physician's note must be clear and indicate the type of communicable disease and the child is cleared to return to school. \*\*\*Per the Department of Public Health (DPH), Physicians are not allowed to clear symptomatic children to return to school\*\*\*

Children who have live head lice will be checked by staff to make sure that all live head lice have been completely removed before returning to site. \*\*To reduce the spread of lice/nits, individual belongings (blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, backpacks, etc.) from home are not allowed.

Per Licensing Code 101226.1 Children with obvious symptoms of any illness including but not limited to fever, or vomiting will not be accepted into the center.

If a child is out more than three (3) days due to a communicable disease or an inconsistent history of illness or injury, a physician's note could be required for children to return to school. The Health/Nutrition Coordinator and/or Nurse will make the determination if a note is needed. Parents should contact the program as early as possible if the child will not attend the program.

Emergency Procedures for children who become ill while at school:

- The child's temperature will be taken when deemed necessary.
- Child may be isolated and attended to in an appropriate location of the classroom by Teacher or Area Supervisor (Isolation for Illness Code 101226.2)
- Every effort will be made to keep the child comfortable.
- Staff will stay with the child until the parent arrives. No child will be left alone.
- No emergency medication will be given to a child.

Area Supervisors or designated representatives will decide if the child can stay, and PLN staff will notify parents/guardians. Child must be signed out by parent or designated guardian due to illness.

### **Children Needing Emergency Medical Attention**

Parents will be called immediately to get notification of the medical emergency. If a parent cannot be reached during a medical emergency, program personnel will stay with the child until the parent arrives. Dental emergencies are cared for in the same manner. The child's medical records will accompany him/her to the medical/dental facility.

### **Immunizations, Physical and Dental Exams**

Health and safety issues are extremely important, that is why we want to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Each child must have a current physical and dental examination (within the last 6 months) signed by a physician upon enrollment, and current throughout his/her enrollment at the site. An up-to-date immunization prior to/and throughout his/her enrollment at the



site.

If the child has a known medical condition (such as allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, etc.), please notify the FSS to create “Individual Health Plan” or procedures as needed for the care of your child if a problem should arise.

Requirements Include:

- Current Physical exam: lead, hemoglobin, vision, hearing, height, weight
- Preschool Immunizations: Polio – 3 doses, DTaP or DTP – 4 doses, MMR – 1 dose on or after the 1st birthday, Hib – 1 dose on or after the 1st birthday, Hepatitis B – 3 doses, Varicella – 1 dose
- Early Head Start Immunizations: Immunization must be up to date according to age at enrollment.
- Follow-up referrals for medical and dental treatment
- TB screenings or skin test within 30 days from the child starting, and no older than a year.

### **Medication Procedures during Program Hours**

Every effort should be made to have any medications given at home, if possible. Parents should consult with their child’s physician to determine whether the medication schedule can be adjusted so that the medication can be taken at times other than during program hours.

There are some special circumstances that require the cooperation of the physician, parents and program personnel in overseeing the daily administration of prescription and/or non-prescription medication to children. In those special cases where a child needs to take prescribed and/or non-prescription medication during a regular school day, staff will administer the medication. PLN staff will follow the medication administration procedures on the label of the medication and/or as prescribed by the physician.

The child’s physician must complete and sign a Physician Authorization Form for ALL medication prescribed. This form indicates physicians’ authorization for administering medication during program hours. Provide appropriate cup/spoon/syringe used to administer medicine. Once all necessary paperwork is completed by the physician, an appointment will be made with the Health/ Nutrition Coordinator and/or Nurse to check-in medication. The child cannot attend classes until the proper documentation and medication has been received and checked in.

A parent or guardian must bring the new medication (prescribed and non-prescription) in the same container in which the prescribing physician or pharmacist dispensed the drug to the program office. The parent is responsible for seeing that the program is supplied with an adequate supply of medication. Additionally, the parent is responsible for seeing that the program is supplied with a 3-day supply of the child’s medication in case of a disaster.

### **Disposal of Medications**

The medication for each child shall be kept and stored in the originally received containers. No drug shall be transferred between containers.

All expired or deteriorated medication will be returned to the child’s parent/guardian with clear instructions to return it to the child’s physician or pharmacy for proper disposal.

No medication may remain at the program site when the program is not in session. Medication will be returned to the parent/guardian on the last day of the program year. Any medication left will be disposed of at the local fire department.

### **Diapering and Toileting Procedures**

Head Start and Early Head Start programs understand that potty training happens at a child's own pace. We welcome children of all abilities and do not require them to be potty-trained upon enrollment. Para Los Niños provides a safe environment that ensures that there is effective implementation of hygiene, sanitation, and disinfection procedures to significantly reduce health risks to children and adults by limiting the spread of infectious germs and maintaining the child's skin integrity.

We believe in a collaborative partnership. Our teaching staff will work closely with families to develop a positive and individualized toileting plan for each child. This plan will consider the child's developmental needs, family preferences, and respect for the child's comfort level. Teaching staff will provide age-appropriate guidance and support to help children feel comfortable and successful in the bathroom, fostering a positive learning environment for hygiene and toileting independence.

#### **Working Together for a Smooth Transition:**

We understand that some children may initially refuse toileting or diapering assistance in the classroom setting. In these cases, we will contact parents or guardians to help change soiled items. This allows the child to feel supported by a familiar face while building trust with the teaching team. The goal is to facilitate a smooth transition towards toileting independence at the child's own pace.

During school hours, children are encouraged and reminded to use the bathroom as needed and have access to bathrooms whenever the child may need. Diapers will be checked by staff at minimum at least hourly and visually inspected at least every two hours, and whenever the child indicates discomfort or exhibits behavior that suggests a soiled or wet diaper.

PLN is committed to the health and safety of all children and has procedures in place for EHS and HS children who require diapering.

PLN provides all diapers, wipes and A&D diaper ointment for all children who are enrolled in the program. If children require any other diaper, wipes, or diaper ointment other than what PLN provides, parents will need to obtain medical documentation from their medical provider before the child can start school. FSS will support parents with the appropriate required documents during enrollment. Children enrolled in EHS and HS are encouraged by teaching staff to clean themselves. Staff will only assist children with cleaning themselves when appropriate or as needed based on the child's ability.

#### **Extra Clothing:**

For the comfort and well-being of all children, we kindly request that each enrolled child keeps one complete change of clothes readily available at school. This change of clothes should include:

- Pants or a skirt
- Shirt
- Underwear (if applicable)
- Socks

Please label all clothing items with your child's name for easy identification. We recommend checking your child's extra clothing bag regularly and replenishing it as needed. Staff will notify you if your child's

extra clothing needs to be restocked. If you need assistance with clothing, please reach out to the FSS and Family & Community Engagement Coordinator.

## **Attendance: Absence Policy/ Sign in/out**

### **Attendance / Absences**

We recognize that regular attendance and arriving at school on time is vital to your child's success in achieving the School Readiness Goals. To take full advantage of the educational, social and emotional programming, children must arrive on time daily. Attendance is the number of present days a child is physically within the site's classroom. Research shows that good attendance will help your children do well in elementary school and in the future. This is a great time to start building a habit of good attendance.

We understand that there are days when attending may not be possible. Absences must be classified as excused or unexcused, and the reason for the absence(s) must be documented. Parents/guardians must notify FSSs or site staff within the first hour of the class session regarding the child's absences. If not, a courtesy call or text message will be made by the FSSs. If they are unable to reach the family, the absence is considered unexcused; until verification of excused absence can be documented.

Excused absences can be categorized as:

- Sick – Child ill (Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea); Child must be cleared 24 hours.
- Medical Exclusion – Short term exclusion due to health requirements, medication, or health condition
- Best Interest - may not exceed 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) in a program year and should be used when: a child is absent to attend court-ordered visitations with another parent or because of a mutual agreement between both parents and a child is absent to go on a family vacation.
- Other – Illness: An absence due to an illness of the child's sibling, parent, or guardian
- Other - Death in the family, family emergency or Religious/ Culture Holidays. Request of religious/ cultural holiday must communicate to the FSS/ teacher in advance. The family must complete a half sheet documenting the religious/ cultural holiday. Other also includes Court order visitation.
- Community Concern - PLN closure due to natural/community disaster, lockdown, or shutdown. This may also include guidance from CDC, Federal and State partners will be considered regarding the safety of the program's children, families, and staff.

Unexcused absences are categorized as:

- Child did not feel like coming to school.
- Woke up late (parent or child)
- Parents did not feel like bringing their child to school.
- No adult to pick up children from school.

Absence Report Forms are available in each classroom, for parents to complete and note the reason for absence. Parents/guardians must be specific when recording reasons for absences (i.e. Flu, Fever, Vomiting, etc.). Parent/guardian must provide full signature and provide supporting documentation about the absence to ensure proper categorization. Please be reminded that general explanations such

as sick, not feeling well, personal, etc. are not acceptable. If a parent/guardian is not sure about recording the absence, please consult with the FSS or your child's teacher.

In the case of children with excessive unexcused absences, a child may be terminated from the program if he/she is at school less than 85% of the regular school days. A monthly attendance rate of less than 85% may trigger the development of an attendance plan.

Please note that four unexcused absences in a row will trigger an attendance plan that may include termination.

### **Modified Attendance Policy**

This statement outlines our policy on modified attendance for children enrolled in our Early Head Start or Head Start program.

#### **Modified Attendance:**

- A child attends less than the regular hours or days of operation for their enrolled class type.
- Examples include attending part of the day, attending fewer days per week than classmates, or a combination of both.

#### **Allowed Reasons for Modified Attendance:**

1. **Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):**
  - Modified attendance must be documented in a child's active IEP or IFSP.
2. **Custody Arrangements:**
  - Modified attendance may be necessary to accommodate court-ordered custody agreements.

#### **Important Note:**

- Modified attendance for reasons other than those listed above may be considered a suspension or expulsion.
- Our program cannot expel or terminate a child's enrollment due to their behavior.
- Our program cannot encourage or persuade a child's parent or legal guardians to prematurely pick up a child due to a child's behavior before the program day ends.

### **Arrival**

When dropping off your child at their designated start time, your child will receive a daily health check by teacher. This consists of temperature taking, quick head to toe observation for signs and symptoms of illness. Staff will check in with the parent to see if there are any concerns the parent may have of the child (for example, the child didn't sleep well). Parent/guardians must then sign in to children with the exact time of approval on your contract and with a full signature on the sign in/out after the health check is completed by staff. Children must be dropped off on time to avoid disrupting the classroom's routine.

## Departure

Children must be picked up from the center as agreed by their contracted time. Changes to the child's Emergency Cards must be completed in person. For your child's safety, only custodial parents/guardians, and authorized adults (those listed on the emergency cards) can sign out or remove a child from a classroom/site. The full name as shown on the person's Identification Cards must match the child's emergency card. A picture identification will be asked if the PLN staff is unfamiliar with the adult picking up the child. Individuals under eighteen (18) years will not be allowed to sign children in or out unless the individual is the child's custodial parent or legal guardian. For your child's safety, no exceptions to this policy will be made.

Children must be picked up from the site on time or within five (5) minutes of dismissal time. After five (5) minutes, PLN staff will:

- Call the parent at home or at work, using phone numbers provided by parent on the emergency card.
- Call other emergency contacts listed on the emergency card.

If the child is not picked up within one hour after the center's closing, and/or no one on the emergency contact can be reached, the program will release the child to the local police department and surrender it.

### Consequence for Late-Pick Up

- First Late Pick-Up
  - The teacher will speak with the parents regarding the PLN Head Start Late Pick-up Policy. The parents will sign the Late Pick-Up form indicating they understand the policy.
- Second Late Pick-Up
  - The Area Supervisor will speak with the parents regarding the PLN Head Start Late Pick-up policy. The parents will sign the late Pick-up form indicating they understand the policy.
- Third Late Pick-Up
  - The parent will be given a late pick-up form to sign. The teacher and Area Supervisor will arrange a conference with the parent, teacher, FSS, Area Supervisor, ERSEA team, FCEC, and the Program Manager/ Director (as needed) to create an action plan to ensure the family has the adequate support in picking their children up on time. This action plan will identify strategies that will support the family to make sure pick-up time is consistent.

## Joint Custody

Families with joint custody agreements will be asked to provide a copy of the agreement to have on file. If custody of children is shared jointly, children will be released to either parent as described in the agreements. If there is no agreement, the child will be released to either parent or to any adult listed on the emergency card provided by either parent.

Should disagreements arise between the parents related to the issues of who may pick up the child, staff

will follow all procedures outlined in court orders. After this, if further disagreements arise, parents will be asked to return to court for clarification.

### **Termination from the Program**

PLN will carefully consider the situation of a family before there is a determination to terminate a family's services. If services are terminated, the parent/guardian will be given resources or referrals where they can seek further assistance.

Conditions when services may be terminated:

- Four consecutive unexcused absences (In the case of excessive absences from a program an attendance plan will be developed).
- Falsification of information or documents (knowingly using incorrect or inaccurate information to obtain a benefit that they would otherwise not be entitled to receive).
- Not cooperating with a program requirement (Violation of contractor's policies and procedures). For example, TB notification by 30-days of enrollments and follow-up on Health requirements.
- Not following through with safety or intervention plans.
- Creation of unsafe environment by doing any of the following: bringing weapons on school grounds, possession and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, theft, willful destruction of property.
- Any conduct by parent/guardian or relatives resulting in harm to children, staff and/or other parent/guardians.
- Inappropriate behavior (i.e. aggression, harassment) towards children, staff and/or other parent/guardians.
- Failure to pay family fees (if applicable) by the 7th of the month.
- Failure to adhere to contracted hours.
- Excessive late pick-ups.

### **Mental Health**

The Mental Health Coordinator is available at each center monthly. Contact information is posted at the center, in case of an emergency. The Mental Health Coordinator is available to connect with parents who have questions about behavior concerns, mental health services, etc.

Parents can contact either the Mental Health Coordinator, Teacher, Area Supervisor or Family Services Specialist at your child's site in starting the process of an In-house referral to support in addressing areas of concerns.

Through the process of the In-house referral the Mental Health Coordinator collaborates with school staff and parents in developing interventions, strategies, and a plan to support with meeting child's needs.

### **Children with Disabilities**

PLN ensures that the educational approach for children with disabilities is developmentally appropriate and individualized according to each child's needs.

PLN supports families in understanding the coordination and integration of services provided by the

program to meet the individual needs of their child.

PLN engages in a collaborative process with Local Education Agencies (LEA) to ensure that children with potential delays in child development are screened, evaluated, and provided with necessary early childhood special education services.

PLN is committed to ensuring that children will not be denied access to the program based on a disability or its severity.

PLN ensures that all children will be screened for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns, in collaboration with parents within 45 calendar days of the child's entry into the program.

PLN is committed to providing inclusive services to children with disabilities enrolled in our sites. This model is consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA); which calls for provision of services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for the individual child.

### **Positive Behavior Support**

PLN uses a positive behavior support approach to helping children develop pro-social behaviors.

Positive Behavior support is a process of guiding the learning of self-control, respect for others and responsibility to help children learn this process, the following behavior guidelines are in place at PLN EEP sites:

- Children assist with making clear and concise classroom rules and limits.
- Adults give positive instructions; reinforcement/attention.
- Adults reinforce appropriate behavior.
- Adults anticipate and redirect inappropriate behaviors.
- Adults give verbal visual reminders of expectations, rules and limits.
- Adults use strategic ignoring.
- Adults will encourage children to respect other people and property.
- Adults will assist children when they are frustrated, engage children in cooperative play with others and share and take turns with others.
- Adults help children use words to express anger, resolve conflicts and express needs and desires.
- Adults will assist children in the conflict resolution process.
- Adults may remove a child from an activity if inappropriate behaviors persist and help the child to find an appropriate activity in which to engage.

### **Challenging Behavior**

If a child displays persistent, serious behaviors, staff will work with families to develop and implement an individualized positive behavior plan to provide support to the child so that the child may experience success at school.

When children pose a danger to self or others, an immediate meeting will be held within 24 hours of an incident to develop a safety plan. Parents will be asked to participate in a meeting with the teacher, Area Supervisor, Education Coordinator, Mental Health Coordinator and Disability Coordinator to support in clearly documenting all attempts to ensure child's success in school. In extraordinary circumstances the instances are judged to be a serious safety threat and all possible means to ensure the safety of children and teachers have been made, a child's schedule may be modified.

## **Field Trips**

Walking field trips may be conducted throughout the year. Site participation varies. To ensure your child's health and safety, the following guidelines apply:

- Parents/ guardians will be notified at least two weeks in advance.
- Parents/ guardians must authorize their child to participate in such field trips as external field trips require transportation.
- Siblings are not permitted to attend field trips.
- Parent/guardians may volunteer and attend the field trip – must meet volunteer requirements including completion of permission forms.
- Parent/guardians may not sign in/out their child during the field trip while the class is away from the site. Children must be signed out upon return to the site.
- Please do not send any lunch or food items with the child. Meals will be provided by PLN (if applicable).
- Arrive on time to site on the day of the field trip.

## **Celebrating Special Occasions with Children**

PLN ECE does not permit celebration of special occasions on site. This policy is designed to support the health, safety, and emotional well-being of all children in the sites. There are no exceptions to this policy.

PLN ECE has a promotion event at the end of each program year. Please note that PLN does not allow distribution of invitations for off-site activities/events on site campus.



## Para Los Niños Early Childhood Education Centers

*\* Early Head Start Sites – Slots for children 6 weeks to 3 years old (space is limited)*

Tina and Rick Caruso\*  
845 E. 6th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90021  
213-250-4800  
Ext. 650 or 652

Keck  
1521 W. 3rd Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
213-250-4800 Ext. 660  
Cypress Park\*  
1145 Cypress Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90065  
213-250-4800 Ext. 630

Family & Community  
Engagement Coordinator  
5000 Hollywood Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90027  
213-250-4800 Ext. 619

Hollywood  
5000 Hollywood Blvd. Los Angeles,  
CA 90027  
(213) 250-4800 Ext. 623

Vine\*  
1147 Vine Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90038  
213- 250-4800 Ext. 671

Magnolia\*  
2828 Magnolia Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91505  
213-250=4800 Ext. 610