# Parent Handbook
# Head Start / Early Head Start Programs

## 2026-2027

# Welcome to Head Start!

Dear Parent/s and Guardians:

Congratulations on enrolling your child in Head Start. This is an exciting time for your family! I am sure that you have many questions. This booklet has been prepared to familiarize you with the operation of our programs as well as answer your questions.

Our goal is to provide a program that is challenging and supportive. Young children need a nurturing environment that allows them to explore, question and create without fear of failure or criticism. The staff nurtures each child's self-confidence and problem-solving skills. Children in the Palm Springs Unified School District's Early Childhood Education Program develop a positive attitude toward school and leave prepared for school.

Parents have unlimited access to their child while they are in our care. I encourage you to volunteer in your child's classroom. It is a rewarding experience. It is my goal that we work together to give your child the best experience possible.

A Parent Bulletin Board is in each classroom. Check the parent board on a regular basis for new information and communications. Notes may also be attached to your child's sign-in card or may be written on the classroom parent boards.

Each month a parent newsletter and menu are sent home. The newsletter and menu contain important information and dates.

We look forward to working with you and your child. Welcome to Early Childhood Education!

Sincerely,

Early Childhood Education Administration

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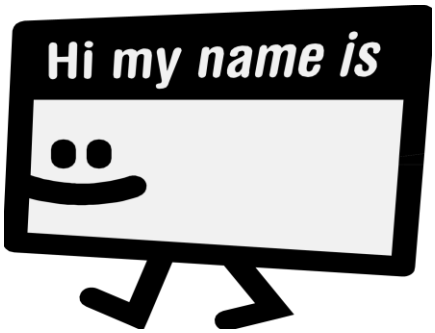
**PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**
**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

# GENERAL INFORMATION




## ECE OFFICE - GENERAL INFORMATION

150 District Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262
Telephone: (760) 883-2703 Press 1

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

Linda Rodriguez, Early Childhood Education Director
Vacant , Early Childhood Education Coordinator

## SUPPORT STAFF

Ramona Ryberg, Teacher on Special Assignment Sharon Bua, Teacher on Special Assignment

Anabel Teran, ECE Administrative Assistant

Samira Aguilera, Office Technician
Rosa Hernandez, Office Technician
Luis Monroy, Office Technician
Erica Kniffen, Office Technician

Marina Melero, Office Technician

Luz Benitez, School/Community Liaison
Ermine Teran, School/Community Liaison
Marianna Viazcan, School/Community Liaison

Sarah Burford, School Nurse

# Head Start Sites

Agua Caliente
30800 San Luis Rey Cathedral City, CA 92234
(760) 416-8235

Arroyo de Paz
66-765 Two Bunch Palms Trl. Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
(760) 251-4019

Bubbling Wells
67-501 Camino Campanero Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
(760) 251-7230 Ext 3

Cahuilla
833 E. Mesquite
Palm Springs, CA 92264
(760) 416-8171

Cathedral City # 1 & #2
69-300 Converse Road Cathedral City, CA 92234
#1(760) 770-8585 #2 (760) 770-8583

Cielo Vista 1 & 2
4150 Paseo Dorotea Palm Springs, CA 92264
(760) 416-8257

Coyote Run #1
3701 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs Ca, 92262
(760) 322-9901

Della Lindley #1
31495 Robert Road Thousand Palms, CA 92276
(760) 343-7574

Julius Corsini #1 & #2
68750 Hacienda Drive
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
#1 (760) 251-7264 #2 (760) 251-7265

Katherine Finchy

777 Tachevah Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 416-8193

Rio Vista
67700 Verona Road  Cathedral City, CA 92234
(760) 416-1109

Edward Wenzlaff
11625 West Drive
Desert Hot Springs Ca, 92240
(760) 329-3310

Two Bunch Palms #2
250 West Drive
Desert Hot Springs Ca, 92240
(760) 329-8094

# Early Head Start Sites

Arroyo de Paz
66-765 Two Bunch Palms Trl. Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240
(760) 251-4019

Coyote Run #2  &  #3
3701 N. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs Ca, 92262
(760) 322-9901

Desert Highland
480 Tram View Road
Palm Springs Ca, 92262
(760) 904-6984

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ECE: | Early Childhood Education |
| Subsidized: | Families who meet the Federal and State income guidelines and are not paying a fee. Income is verified for these families |
| PC: | Policy Council-representatives from each agency throughout Riverside County |
| PPC: | Parent Policy Committee |
| PSUSD: | Palm Springs Unified School District |
| RCOE: | Riverside County Office of Education |
| SPC: | Site Parent Committee |

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## OVERVIEW

Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) offers a multitude of Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs that serve families within the District. PSUSD includes Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Thousand Palms, and the unincorporated area of Sky Valley.

The ECE Program is made possible through the approval and support of the Palm Springs Unified School District's Board Members and Administrators. The ECE Program collaborates with the Riverside County Office of Education and the California State Department of Education to provide support for preschool children in PSUSD.

Head Start is one of the programs offered through PSUSD

**HEAD START –** This Federally funded project provides an extensive school-year preschool program for children three and five years of age. Family's income must meet Federal poverty level. Full day classes are provided for 146 days per school year. There is no fee for participation.

**EARLY HEAD START**
This Federally funded project provides an extensive school-year preschool program for children two and three years of age. Family's income must meet Federal poverty level. Full day classes are provided for 184 days per school year. There is no fee for participation.

# MISSION STATEMENTS

## PSUSD MISSION STATEMENT

Students will graduate from high school prepared and motivated to succeed in their chosen career and higher education, ultimately contributing to the common good.

## ECE Programs Mission Statement

The dedicated staff of the ECE Programs in conjunction with the district will partner with its students, their families and the community to provide each entity with integrated services that promote the most appropriate educational and social service opportunities. Implementation will be done in a safe, secure, healthy, nurturing environment so all individuals achieve their full potential as contributing members of the community.

## Support Staff Vision

As the ECE Support Staff, we ensure that families are enrolled, classrooms are maintained and instructional staff needs are met in order to provide a safe and nurturing environment so all families and children can reach their full potential as they transition out of the ECE Programs.

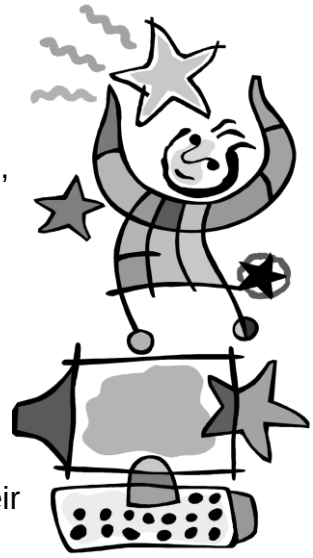
## ECE Program Philosophy

Our philosophy is to provide a program that offers a challenging and supportive environment where children can explore, question and create without fear of failure or criticism. The staff is to nurture each child's self-confidence and problem-solving skills. Children in the Palm Springs Unified School District's Early Childhood Education Program develop a positive attitude toward school and leave prepared for kindergarten.

**Beliefs:**

- Students and their future are at the core of every decision.
- Individual potential is reached through relevant, rigorous educational experiences with positive relationships.
- Lifelong success requires lifelong learning.
- Good decisions result from collaboration with stakeholders.
- Respecting the diversity of others is essential to a healthy community.
- Civil Rights are fragile, necessitate protection and are balanced with accountability and responsibility.
- Learning occurs best in environments characterized by safety and managed by high expectations.
- Different learning styles require a wide variety of teaching techniques.
- Good Governance is characterized by fair treatment of all stakeholders, transparency and all financial stewardship of all resources.
- An effective, qualified staff, highly trained and supported, is fundamental to the district's success.

# PROGRAM GOALS



**The goals of the ECE Programs are:**

1) To provide a happy, healthy and safe environment.
2) To provide stimulating experiences that promote mental, physical, social and emotional growth.
3) To provide early identification of children with special needs.
4) To provide resources for parents to improve parenting skills.

**When these goals are implemented:**

1) The children enrolled in the program are more successful in their school and home environment.
2) The parents become more effective and improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their children.
3) The community benefits because families and children have the resources needed to be successful.

**PSUSD HEAD START SCHOOL READINESS GOALS**

**Language and Literacy** refers to the knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for reading and writing. This is an important area for success in school.

The Head Start Program of the Palm Springs Unified School District has identified a goal to help children be prepared to read.

Our goal is **"*Children will increase their awareness of sounds that make up language.*"**

Each month the ECE Parent Newsletter will contain information about things that you can do at home to support your child to achieve this goal. The monthly site parent meetings will include additional activities for you to do at home.

**Logic and Reasoning** refers to thinking critically and solving problems. This helps children to use information to understand the world around them.

The Head Start Program of the Palm Springs Unified School District has identified a goal to help children be prepared to think critically and solve problems.

Our goal is: **"Children will increase their ability to reason logically, think critically, and use strategies to solve challenging problems."**

The monthly ECE Parent Newsletter will include an idea for a critical thinking activity to be implemented at home.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality, trust and respect are highly valued by our program.
We ask members of our staff and all parents to honor these attributes.
All information is held in strictest confidence.

## IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION

**Emergency Procedures:**
In the event of a disaster, ECE Program staff will remain with the children until parents or authorized person, 18 years and older, can pick up their child from the center. Children will not be released to anyone whose name is not on the Emergency Card. It is important that parents make every effort to pick up their child as soon as possible. Also, parents are requested not to call the center, staff will be caring for the children and phone lines must remain open for emergency personnel. **Emergency cards must be kept current for all children enrolled in the programs.**

**Enrollment Documents:**
Please keep all copies of forms given to you at enrollment and at the parent orientation in a convenient place at home and use them for reference.

**Questions about your child's progress:**
The classroom teacher welcomes questions from parents. Each ECE classroom has at least one Spanish speaking staff member. If the teacher is not available, please leave a message and the teacher will contact you.

**Funding and Staffing:**
Federal funds are used to operate the Head Start programs. Palm Springs Unified School District supports the program with an allotment of Title 1 and Federal dollars. The program operates under the direction of the District. All staff are District employees.

**Staff Qualifications**:
Each classroom has a fully qualified teacher who possesses, at a minimum, a Bachelor's degree and a Child Development Site Supervisor Permit issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Paraprofessionals possess, at a minimum, a Child Development Associate Teacher Permit, issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. These permits authorize holders to work in the care and instruction of children in a child care and development center.

# FEDERAL AND DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

No person shall on the basis of sex, race, national origin, or non-limiting handicapped conditions, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program offered by Palm Springs Unified School District. Programs offered by the District include a variety of vocational education programs, including those in the areas of Business, Consumer Home Economics and Technical/Industrial. There are no special admission requirements for these programs except to progress sequentially from level to level. Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in vocational education programs. Listed below are the District's Compliance Officers:

Title IX (Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex)
Antonia Hunt Ed.D.
Coordinator and Equity and Compliance Officer
150 District Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92264
Phone: (760) 883-2703

SECTION 504 (Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicapped)
Laura Meusel
Executive Director, Student Support Services
150 District Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92264
Phone: (760) 883-2703

The Early Childhood Education Programs do not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children are served.

## HEAD START GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Palm Springs Unified ECE Programs welcome constructive participation in all ECE Programs. The Head Start Parent Policy Committee has established the following procedure for persons who wish to file a grievance.

Steps to Resolving:

**Step 1.** Request for a meeting between the person making the complaint and the person named in the complaint.

**Step 2.** If the situation is not resolved, the person issuing the complaint must fill out a Complaint Form. A Complaint Form can be obtained from the ECE Office or the classroom teacher. A meeting between the ECE Coordinator and the person named in the complaint will be scheduled.

**Step 3.** If the situation is not resolved, the Complaint Form is submitted to the ECE Principal. A meeting is set up with the person filing the complaint, the person named in the complaint, the ECE Coordinator and the ECE Principal.

**Step 4.** If the situation is not resolved, the Complaint Form is submitted to the ECE Parent Policy Grievance Committee for review. The person issuing the complaint, the person named in the complaint and the committee will be provided information about the complaint. The Committee will then render a response to the complaint.

**Step 5.** If the situation is not resolved, the Riverside County Office of Education Program Supervisor is notified and a meeting is set up with the person issuing the complaint, the person named in the complaint and the ECE Principal. The RCOE Program Supervisor will render a response to the complaint.

**Step 6.** If the person filing the complaint is a Head Start parent and deems the resolution unsatisfactory, the complaint will be submitted to the Riverside County Office of Education Policy Council. The Policy Council will make the final determination in the complaint after all previous steps have been reviewed.

**THE COMPLAINT PROCESS RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS WILL BE HANDLED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE RECEIPT OF COMPLAINT AND WILL ADHERE TO ALL AVAILABLE CIVIL LAW REMEDIES.**

## UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

***Palm Springs Unified School District***

***2026-2027 School Year***

## NOTIFICATION OF THE UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES (UCP)

For students, employees, parents/guardians, school and district advisory committee members, private school officials, and other interested parties.

The Palm Springs Unified School District annually notifies our students, employees, parents or guardians of its students, the district advisory committee, school advisory committees, appropriate private school officials, and other interested parties of the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) process.

The District's current Uniform Complaint Procedures Annual Notice is available on the District website and may also be obtained from any school office or the Educational Services Department.

We are primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, including those related to unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying against any protected group, and all programs and activities that are subject to the UCP.

**Programs and Activities Subject to the UCP**

- Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Pupils
- Adult education
- After School Education and Safety
- Agricultural Career Technical Education
- Career Technical and Technical Education and Career Technical and Technical Training Programs
- Child Care and Development Programs
- Compensatory Education
- Consolidated Categorical Aid Programs
- Course Periods without Educational Content
- Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying against any protected group as identified under sections 200 and 220 and Section 11135 of the Government Code, including any actual or perceived characteristic as set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics, in any program or activity conducted by an educational institution, as defined in Section 210.3, that is funded directly by, or that receives or benefits from, any state financial assistance.
- Educational and graduation requirements for pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, pupils from military families, pupils formerly in Juvenile Court now enrolled in a school district, pupils who are migratory, and pupils participating in a newcomer program.
- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Local control and Accountability Plans
- Migrant Education
- Physical Education Instructional Minutes
- Pupil Fees
- Reasonable Accommodations to a Lactating Pupil
- Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
- School Plans for Student Achievement
- School site Councils
- State Preschool
- State preschool Health and Safety issues in LEA's Exempt from Licensing
- And any other state or federal educational program the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) or designee deems appropriate.

## Filing a UCP Complaint

A UCP complaint shall be filed no later than one year from the date the alleged violation occurred.

For complaints relating to Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP), the date of the alleged violation is the date when the reviewing authority approves the LCAP or annual update that was adopted by our agency.

A pupil enrolled in any of our public schools shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.

A pupil fee complaint may be filed with the principal of a school or our superintendent or their designee.

A pupil fee or LCAP complaint may be filed anonymously, that is, without an identifying signature, if the complainant provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance.

## Contact Information

Complaints within the scope of the UCP are to be filed with the person responsible for processing complaints:

| | |
|---|---|
| **NAME/TITLE:** | Antonia Hunt Ed. D. Title IX Coordinator and Equity and Compliance Officer |
| **OFFICE:** | Office of Title IX and Compliance |
| **ADDRESS:** | 150 District Center Drive, Palm Springs, California 92264 |
| **TELEPHONE:** | 760-883-2703 |
| **EMAIL ADDRESS:** | ahunt@psusd.us |

## The above contact is knowledgeable about the laws and programs that they are assigned to investigate in Palm Springs Unified School District. Responsibilities of the Palm Springs Unified School District

We shall post a standardized notice, in addition to this notice, with educational and graduation requirements for pupils in foster care, pupils who are homeless, pupils from military families, pupils formerly in Juvenile Court now enrolled in a school district, pupils who are migratory, and pupils participating in a newcomer program.

We advise complainants of the opportunity to appeal an Investigation Report of complaints regarding programs within the scope of the UCP to the California Department of Education (CDE).

We advise complainants of civil law remedies, including injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders that may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws, if applicable.

Copies of our UCP procedures shall be available free of charge.

The above contact is knowledgeable about the laws and programs that they are assigned to investigate in Palm Springs Unified School District.

## For UCP Complaints Regarding State Preschool Health and Safety Issues Pursuant to Section 1596.7925 of the California *Health and Safety Code (HSC)*

In order to identify appropriate subjects of state preschool health and safety issues pursuant to section 1596.7925 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) a notice shall be posted in each California state preschool program classroom in each school in our agency.

The notice is in addition to this UCP annual notice and addresses parents, guardians, pupils, and teachers of (1) the health and safety requirements under Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (5 CCR) that apply to California state preschool programs pursuant to HSC Section 1596.7925, and (2) the location at which to obtain a form to file a complaint.

A pupil fees complaint is filed with the Palm Springs Unified School District and/or the principal of a school. Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, must be filed within six (6) months from the date the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, occurred or the date the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, unless the time for filing is extended by the superintendent or his designee.

Complaints will be investigated and a written Decision or report will be sent to the complainant within sixty (60) days from the receipt of the complaint. This time period may be extended by written agreement of the complainant. The person responsible for investigating the complaint shall conduct and complete the investigation in accordance with local procedures adopted under section 4621.

The complainant has a right to appeal our Decision of complaints regarding specific programs, pupil fees and the LCAP to the California Department of Education (CDE) by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving our Decision. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the originally-filed complaint and a copy of our Decision.

The complainant is advised of civil law remedies, including, but are not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders that may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws if applicable.

A copy of the Palm Springs Unified School District's complaint policies and procedures is available free of charge.

## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children with disabilities, as defined by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), are welcomed to enroll into the ECE Programs when Head Start has been deemed the most suitable placement by the Assessment Team. The ECE Programs understand the requirements of ADA and will make reasonable accommodations and implementations for children. (Public Law 101-336, 104 Stat. 327 ADA of 1990, 42 U.S.C. Sections 12101 et seq. (2000), Title 5 Section 4900 et seq.)

## RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

The Palm Springs Unified School District's Early Childhood Programs refrains from religious instruction or worship in ALL classrooms governed by the District.
*(Constitution of California, Article XVI, Sec. 5; CPM, VI-CD 15)*

## VEHICLES SUBJECT TO SEARCH

**BY ENTERING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPERTY, THE PERSON DRIVING ANY VEHICLE IS DEEMED TO CONSENT TO COMPLETE SEARCH OF THE VEHICLE, ALL ITS COMPARTMENTS AND CONTENTS, BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS OR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL, FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER. THIS NOTICE APPLIES TO ALL VEHICLES OF ANY TYPE AND IS IN FORCE 24 HOURS A DAY. DVD 21113(A)**

## PERSONAL RIGHTS
## COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES AND CHILD DAY CARE FACILITIES

Regulations in Title 22, California Administrative Code, require that persons admitted to a facility (or their representative) must be advised of their personal rights.

### 101223 PERSONAL RIGHTS

(a) The licensee shall ensure that each child is accorded the following personal rights:
- (1) To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.
- (2) To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.
- (3) To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature including but not limited to: interference with functions of daily living including eating, sleeping or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
- (4) To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative informed, by the licensee of the law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, information on confidentiality and the address and telephone number of the Department's complaint unit.
- (5) To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice.
  - (A) Attendance at religious services in or outside of the center shall be voluntary. The child's authorized representative shall make decisions about the child's attendance at religious services.
- (6) Not to be locked in any room, building or center premises by day or night.
  - (A) The licensee is not prohibited by this provision from locking exterior doors and windows or from establishing rules for the protection of children provided the children are able to exit the center.
  - (B) The licensee shall obtain prior approval from the Department to utilize means other than those specified in (A) above for securing exterior doors and windows.
- (7) Not to be placed in any restraining device. Postural supports may be used as specified in Section 1012223.1.
- (8) To receive or reject medical care, or health-related services, except for minors for whom a guardian, conservator or other legal authority has been appointed.

(b) The center shall inform each child's authorized representative of the rights specified in (a)(1) through (8) above.
- (1) The center shall give each authorized representative a copy of the Personal Rights form (LIC 613A).

**PERSONAL RIGHTS (Cont'd)**

(A) Each authorized representative shall be asked to sign and date the acknowledgment-of-receipt statement. This documentation shall be kept in the child's file.

(2) The center shall post a copy of the LIC 613A in a prominent, publicly accessible area in the center.

(c) The licensee shall ensure that each child is accorded the personal rights specified in this section.

THE PARENT HAS THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF THE LICENSING AGENCY TO CONTACT REGARDING COMPLAINTS. CLIENTS SHOULD CONTACT THE AGENCY STATED BELOW.

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Inland Empire Child Care-Community Care Licensing |
| Address: | 3737 Main Street, Suite 700 |
| City, Zip Code: | Riverside, CA 92501 |
| Telephone: | (951) 782-4202 |

## CHILD CARE CENTER NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS

**PARENTS' RIGHTS**

As a parent/authorized representative, you have the right to:

1. Enter and inspect the child care center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office.
3. Review, at the child care center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the child care center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the child care center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.

# ADMISSION AGREEMENTS

Palm Springs Unified School District preschool centers are licensed by the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing. Community Care Licensing has the responsibility and authority to enforce the regulations as stipulated within Title 22. Pursuant to Title 22, Sections 101200 (b) and (c) - INSPECTION AUTHORITY.

***101200 (b) and (c) INSPECTION AUTHORITY***

- *The Department has inspection authority to enter and inspect a facility without advance notice.*
- *The Department has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or Child Care Center records, without prior consent.*

***101219(b)(6) ADMISSION AGREEMENTS***

- *Title 22 states that Admission Agreements shall specify the right of the Department to perform the duties authorized in Sections 101200(b) and (c),*

# ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT FOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The parent or legal guardian must complete an Eligibility Form and provide the child's birth certificate, immunization record, and proof of income in order to be placed on the "Eligibility List". Please note, this does not guarantee placement. Priority of enrollment is based on lowest income and age and **NOT** on a "first come first serve" basis.

# RECRUITMENT, ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Recruitment forms are available **throughout the year** for parents interested in the Head Start for their child at all sites and at the ECE Office for students 0-5 years old.

In April of each year, ECE Recruitment Notices are sent to all elementary school families. Recruitment forms are screened. Parents are then notified to bring in necessary documentation to verify eligibility.

After verification by staff, applications are ranked according to priority of enrollment for any of the ECE Programs. Families who do not meet our guidelines receive letters of regret.

Parents of children selected for enrollment are notified by mail or phone to complete the application process by setting up appointments with ECE Staff. An eligibility list is kept of eligible children for whom there are no available slots.

June/July/August - Staff will enroll eligible children for all ECE Preschool Programs.

# HEAD START ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**ELIGIBILITY**

**Part Day for 90%**

1. Age: 3 to School Cut-Off for kindergarten
2. Income: 0-100% of Federal Poverty Level and 10% Over-income
3. Categorical: Foster Care, Homelessness, Public Assistance

**ENROLLMENT**

**Full-Day for 90%**

1. Age: 3 to School Cut-Off for kindergarten
2. Income: 0-100% of Federal Poverty Level and 10% Over-income
3. Categorical: Foster Care, Homelessness, Public Assistance

**For 10% Enrollment**

1. Children with an IEP must be between three years - to Kindergarten eligible age. Income.

### ENROLLMENT

Upon notification, the parent or legal guardian must complete an application at the ECE Program Office. All details on the application and other documents in the child's file concerning the family or the child enrolled are strictly confidential.

**For Federal Programs**, Income verification for current 12 months must be presented. The following are also required: immunization records, a copy of the Passport to Services for CalWORKs recipients, medical card(s) for enrolled child, and if applicable, school verification signed by the school registrar.

***Self-employed parents*** must provide proof of clients and of employees as well as a profit and loss statement or business records that verify monthly income. In addition the most current income tax statement with supporting documentation for income and expenses is required.

***Single parents*** must show proof of single parenthood status.

Single parents who have attempted to obtain, or have obtained, child support through the District Attorney's office must show documentation.

### FRAUD

Programs must make reasonable effort to recover costs of services from individuals who provide fraudulent and/or deceitful information regarding their eligibility for Head Start.

If enrollment was gained by providing the District with fraudulent information the evidence will be turned over to the District Attorney's Office. If fraud is to be evident by the Palm Springs Unified School District ECE Programs, it can be determined that services are no longer to be provided.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES

### SIBLINGS IN THE CLASSROOMS

To maintain mandated adult/child ratios parents/guardians that volunteer or observe in an ECE Program classroom may **not** bring other children with them (Title 5, section 18290(c) ). Please make alternative child care arrangements for other children so you can give all of your attention to the child enrolled.

### PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's classroom. Parents have unlimited access to their child while they are in our care. Access is denied if a court issues a restraint order. If an order exists, a copy of the restraint must be on file at the ECE Office, in your child's classroom, and at the local Police/Sheriff Department. Please refer to page 19 for information concerning the PSUSD Volunteer Procedure.

# Volunteer Interest Notice

PSUSD PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Palm Springs Unified School District

**THANK YOU** for choosing to serve the students of Palm Springs Unified School District. Volunteers play a very important role in providing enrichment opportunities and extra attention that enhances the educational experience of our students.
**Your support is invaluable.**

## To become a Volunteer, here's what you will need to do:

1. **DETERMINE THE TYPE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE YOU WANT TO PROVIDE**:

   - **Non-Supervisory** – A volunteer that is **never** left alone with students; **OR**
   - **Supervisory –** A volunteer serving alone as a supervisor to students (i.e. driving students, field trips, tutoring, or any supervision away from the certificated teacher or approved supervisory employee.

2. **COMPLETE ONLINE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION. The website is**
   **http://volunteers.psusd.us**

   **Non-Supervisory Volunteer Application Process**

   -Copy of current U.S. Identification is required and uploaded on Application

   -Complete Mandated Reporter Training (Send copy of Mandated Reporter Certificate of Completion to Human Resources)

   -Attend a volunteer orientation before volunteering

   -Early Childhood Volunteers Only: Provide copies of immunizations against Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Measles, and Influenza to Human Resources

   **Supervisory Volunteer Application Process**

   - Copy of current U.S. Identification and current CA Driver's License are required and uploaded on Application
   - Copy of live scan criminal background check clearance (using District Live Scan form provided on the application) is required and uploaded on Application. The cost of fingerprints are paid by the District.
   - Complete Mandated Reporter Training (Send copy of Mandated Reporter Certificate of Completion to Human Resources
   - Early Childhood Volunteers Only: Provide copies of immunizations against Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Measles, and Influenza to Human Resources

   (For ECE volunteers: Assistance is available at the ECE office if you do not have access to a computer)

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES

## CAUSES FOR TERMINATION FROM ECE PROGRAMS

- For the safety and emotional well-being of all children, staff, and other parents, abusive behavior – yelling, demeaning comments, threatening remarks or physical abuse to any child (including your own), staff, or other parent – **may be** grounds for immediate termination.
- Failure to abide by Parent Contract and Program Rules

## Arrival and Departure

It is very important to bring and pick up your child according to the Center's operating hours.

ECE classroom teachers must be notified by 8:00 AM for both AM and PM schedules if your child will not be in attendance.

It is important that children arrive on time for preschool. We understand that a child may occasionally be late. However, excessive tardiness will result in a re-evaluation of your child's placement in the program.

**LATE POLICY**

It is important to follow the posted hours of operation. The program acknowledges that there are times when emergencies arise. You must make other arrangements so that your child will be picked up promptly by an adult who is on the emergency card and is 18 years of age or older. It is also critical that you communicate with your child's teacher in advance as to the arrangements.

Please note that the parent is called when a child is not picked up by **10 minutes** past the end of class. If the parent does not answer, the individuals listed on the emergency card will be called. If there is no answer at the emergency numbers, the teacher waits until it is 30 minutes past the end of class and then calls an ECE administrator for the next step. This could include waiting an additional amount time (e.g. 10 minutes) or calling the police/sheriff. The ECE administrator will authorize this type of call. The child is now considered as "abandoned". The police or sheriff will instruct you as what to do next. If they are unable to assist, Child Protective Services will be contacted. The teacher will remain with the child during this process.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES

The following are specific rules and procedures regarding **late drop off or pick up** of children:

1. When a child is tardy **(at drop off or at pick up)** the first time will be a verbal warning then if the tardiness continues after the warning the **next three times** a late notice will be issued. The teacher will schedule a conference with the parent. This conference will include a review of the **Late Policy**. A copy of the late notice will be sent to the ECE Office and placed in the child's file.

2. **If the child continues to be late at drop off or pick up after the third notice a site conference will be held with the parent, teacher, and the ECE Coordinator. A plan of action will be discussed to resolve the problem.**

3. If the problem continues the parent, teacher, and ECE Coordinator will meet to discuss any challenges or barriers that may be affecting timely pick-up and to work together to identify supportive solutions.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES
# (Cont'd)

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Communication
Parents/Guardians are provided an orientation to the program. The orientation for parents includes topics such as program philosophy, program goals and objectives, volunteer opportunities, due process procedures and program activities, as well as the importance of confidentiality.

Parent-Teacher Conference and Home Visits
Teachers must conduct at least two (2) home visits and two (2) parent conferences a year. This is an opportunity to discuss skills that your child demonstrates during class and establish future goals for your child. The two home visits and two site conferences are scheduled during the school year. Parents and staff will work together to set realistic goals for future success of the students and family.

Parent Program Activities and Services
The program activities and services meet cultural, linguistic, and other special needs of families being served. The program addresses the needs of limited and non-English speaking parents by providing materials and written information and oral translation in the native language of the families.

Parent Meetings
As the parent/legal guardian of an enrolled child, there is a variety of opportunities for you to participate on Parent Committees. Parent Policy Committee (PPC) is composed of a representative from each site . Meetings operate in accordance with the Head Start guidelines. Meetings are held monthly and help to advise the program on issues related to services to families and children. The PPC also assists in the evaluation and review of program activities and suggests improvements, plans parent activities and helps parents to become informed about legislation or community action which may possibly affect early childhood education. All parents/legal guardians are welcome at all meetings.

Parent Education
The programs offer many great parent education trainings, topics include: Nutrition, Parenting, Child Development, Transitions, Pedestrian Safety, Early Literacy for School Success, Stress, Discipline, Child Abuse, and other areas of interest to parents and staff. Parents are encouraged to attend the trainings.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES
# (Cont'd)

## HOLIDAYS

Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Recess
Designated Winter Recess Days
Martin Luther King's Birthday
Lincoln's Birthday
President's Day
Designated Spring Recess Days
Memorial Day
Independence Day

A student calendar will be given to all parents at Parent Orientation. **Please** keep this calendar posted for reference.

## SIGN-IN CARDS

**According to State law, children must be signed in and out each day by an adult who is at least 18 years of age.** At the end of the month, the contracted parent or guardian must sign the bottom of the Sign-In Card to verify all information.

If your child is absent, please fill in the reason for the absence the day your child returns to the classroom. Please state whether the absence is due to illness (and indicate if the illness was for the student or other family member), appointments or if the child was with a relative.

Children must be picked up by an adult who is at least 18 years of age. ECE staff will not release any child to anyone **under 18 years of age and/or whose name does not appear on the child's emergency card. A copy of photo ID will be kept on file at the site for those individuals whose names are on the Emergency Card.**

***Restraining Orders:*** A child will be released to a parent unless there is a **current** restraining order that has been served to the parent listed on the restraining order, is on file at the site and at the local Police/Sheriff Department. The law does not permit the staff to withhold a child from a parent without the proper court papers.

# Head Start Attendance Policy

Each enrollment opportunity is precious and consistent daily attendance is a requirement of the program for all students to achieve maximum benefit from carefully planned daily activities. It is the parent(s)/ guardian(s) responsibility to call staff every day that a student is absent and provide the reason for the absence. Absences that are not called in to the school on the day of the absence will be considered Unexcused.

Parents must notify the classroom teacher before 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence to allow staff to cancel meals. In the event of illness, please let us know if it is a contagious disease so we can notify other parents whose children may be exposed.

When you know in advance that your child will not be in attendance for reasons such as: medical appointments, parental visitation, vacation, etc. you must call to notify the classroom teacher.

**Absences that are Considered Excused *(verification may be requested/ required):***

- Student or parent illness
- Family emergency
- Death in immediate family
- Court hearing or court ordered visitation
- Medical/dental appointments for child
- Public Assistance appointments (e.g. CalWORKs, WIC, Social Security, Medi-Cal)
- Trips out of the area to visit family may not exceed one consecutive 10-day period or two separate consecutive 5-day periods within the program year (must be requested in writing, in advance and approved by the Site Manager)
- Extended absences due to medical emergencies for child or parent (must be requested in writing, in advance with proper documentation and approved by program administration)

**All other absences are considered Unexcused**

Unexcused absences (consecutive or not) in excess of 10 school days may result in a program transfer or otherwise jeopardize participation in the program. The program will issue up to four written notices including but not limited to staff and parent meetings as well as conducting a Home Visit in the implementation of its Unexcused Absence policy.

**Sporadic Attendance/ Chronic Absenteeism:** Sporadic attendance is defined as attendance that is irregular, not consistent, occasional or unpredictable. Chronic absenteeism is defined as overall absences in excess of 15 percent or more school days during a student's enrollment. The program will issue up to three written notices in the implementation of its Sporadic Attendance/ Chronic Absenteeism policy and failure to improve student attendance may result in a program transfer or otherwise jeopardize participation in the program.

Per Head Start /Early Head Start Attendance Policy, Excused Absences may not exceed 10 consecutive school days. However, the program understands that in certain situations some children (or parent/ guardian) may require medical treatment or care in excess of 10 consecutive days. Furthermore, the program understands in some cases the need for such an allowance may result from an unforeseen medical emergency. In such instances and under a case by case review, there may be exceptions to the 10-day Excused Absences policy. Consultation with the program's LVN and ERSEA Coordinator will be required in all instances before such an allowance is granted.

## ECE Daily Classroom Program and Curriculum

Schedule

The classroom daily schedule is posted in each classroom. This schedule is modified as needed by the teacher to meet the classroom and curriculum needs and to allow for flexibility.

Developmental Screenings
Developmental screenings are completed within the first 45 days of enrollment to ensure appropriate services. We use ASQ online to obtain these screenings from the parents.

Assessments

Assessments are performed by the teachers in the program, using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) as an assessment tool. Parents and teachers confer as often as necessary to discuss the children's progress and needs.

The Curriculum

The World of Wonders Pre-K curriculum is a research based, developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is a literacy-based curriculum that is designed to prepare your child for Kindergarten while meeting all of their developmental needs. World of Wonders has embedded components to address Literacy, Math, Social/Emotional, Science and Social Studies.

ST Math is a standards-aligned program that creates opportunities to move away from mere digitized math drills and puts them in the mindset to think creatively. Challenging games help kids explore non-routine problems and build number sense instead of memorizing disconnected facts.
ST Math starts by teaching the foundational concepts visually, then connects the ideas to the symbols and language. With visual learning, students are better equipped to tackle unfamiliar math problems, recognize patterns, and build conceptual understanding. Without language barriers, the problem is accessible to all students, regardless of skill level or language background. www.stmath.com

The Second Step Curriculum is used in all classrooms. The program is researched based and promotes success in the early learning classroom, school readiness, and social and life success. www.secondstep.org/early-learning-curriculum

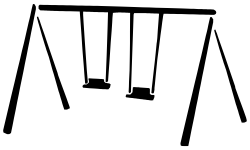
In addition, all ECE program accept all students with various abilities.

**Individualization**

Using resources such as World of Wonders, ST Math, and the Second Step Curriculum, developmentally appropriate lesson plans are created to enhance learning in all areas of development for each child. Curriculum is individualized to meet the developmental needs of each child.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES (Cont'd)

## PLAY EQUIPMENT



When enrolling your child in the ECE Programs you are giving your consent for your child to use all the play equipment and participate in all of the activities of the ECE Programs. Please note that the play equipment is for **enrolled** children only. Please do not allow siblings to play on the equipment.

## TOYS FROM HOME

Toys, video games, Game Boy, skateboards, skates, roller blades, scooters, etc., from home are **not** allowed in any of the ECE classrooms.

## FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM

No outside food is allowed in ECE classrooms. This includes special activities such as birthdays and holidays. PSUSD Food Service Department provides all food. Good nutrition is promoted.

Food will not be used as a reward, punishment or the focus of social events in ECE Programs. Teachers are mandated to provide health and nutrition education. They teach children to choose nutritional foods and how to minimize dental cavities by brushing their teeth.

## CELEBRATIONS

Palm Springs Unified School District's Governing Board Policy prohibits the use of formal graduation ceremonies for ECE children. Children shall not wear caps and gowns for any purpose, including photographs. The exercise of a graduation ceremony for preschool children is developmentally inappropriate. Preschool children do not have the capacity to understand the significance of graduation. All ECE classrooms staff, children, families and community partners come together at end of the traditional school year to celebrate the children's accomplishments at each site. The day provides an opportunity for each parent to share in the success of his or her child. It is enjoyable for both parents and staff to have an "end of the year" celebration of some kind. Children also enjoy sharing their parents with the group.

## CLOTHING

Preschool children should wear clothes that are washable, suited to the weather and appropriate for play. Shoes with non-skid soles are recommended. **All shoes must have a strap or backing around the heels**. Children cannot wear thongs, flip-flops or shoes with heels. Closed toe shoes are highly recommended to prevent toe injuries.

Children must be dressed in clothes easy for them to manipulate when they need to use the bathroom. Boxer type pants or shorts are preferred over snap waistbands.

It is recommended that a change of clothing be brought from home in case of an emergency. It must be marked with a permanent pen so that ownership can be easily determined.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES (Cont'd)

## JEWELRY

Jewelry (such as rings, bracelets, necklaces, pins) can cause a safety problem at school. Please do not send your child to school wearing jewelry. The program is not responsible if it is lost or stolen.

## NAP TIME

The children in full day programs rest for one hour each day. Each child has his/her own cot. Sheets and blankets are provided. The sheets and blankets **DO NOT** go home. The ECE Program washes them on a weekly basis.

## DISCIPLINE

The goal of discipline is to establish internal self-control rather than impose external control. Discipline means teaching children to set their own limits so they can accomplish tasks and work cooperatively with other people.

Children in our centers are **not "punished"** but rather an attempt to change undesirable behavior through techniques such as redirection and positive role modeling. All staff members consistently use these methods and most children respond well to these types of discipline.

Due to Title XXII Licensing regulations if, for some reason, a child displays unusually negative behavior that endangers others physically, the teacher may find it necessary to call the parent to arrange to have the child picked up and excluded from the center for the rest of that day. The teacher must obtain approval from ECE Management prior to excluding a child from the center. **A parent conference will then be called to develop a Plan of Action to assist the parent, child and staff with a positive course of action.** If the negative behavior continues, alternative measures may be necessary to find the most appropriate setting for the child or could result in termination from the program.

## CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

All staff members in the ECE Program are mandated to report any signs and/or actions, which may indicate that a child is being abused or neglected. Strictly enforced laws require the staff to report such findings immediately. Staff is mandated to do so even if there is some measure of doubt.

The reporting staff member makes a written report and Child Protective Services (CPS) is called to investigate the findings. Parents may not be forewarned of this action.

Printed handouts on child abuse and neglect as well as a video on child abuse are available to parents wishing to become more informed about this severe social problem.

# PARENT CONTRACT AND PROGRAM RULES (Cont'd)

## TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

- **You** can go to the Elementary school and pick up an enrollment packet or online, your child **DOES NOT** automatically go to kindergarten from Head Start.
- **You** must submit all paperwork to the office of the Elementary School
- Students must have all the following necessary documentation before registering: Physical Exam, Birth Certificate, Proof of Residency, Current Immunizations and a dental screening
- PSUSD has set boundaries for the Elementary School your child needs to attend If you don't know what school your child belongs at, call Student Services at 760/883-2703 or access the district website at www.psusd.us

  **If you want your child to attend a school that is *not* in your boundary, you must go to Student Services at the main school district office, 150 District Center Drive, and request an Intra-district Transfer**

# HEALTH

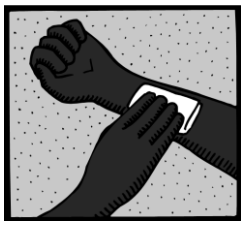
## HEALTH CHECKS

Each child is required to have a NEGATIVE TB result and be current or up to date on all immunizations **prior** to the first day of attendance. **A complete physical is required BEFORE to the of the first day of attendance.**

**Each child receives a daily health check when arriving at the center. If your child appears to be ill in any way he/she will NOT be able to stay. By law, staff is required to exclude any child who they feel may have a condition that is harmful to others. A child must be free from fever, vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school. A doctor's release and diagnosis may be required for child to return to school. That decision will be determined by School Nurse or School Nurses assistant.**

Head lice are a common occurrence in preschool facilities. Routine head checks are done at least once a week. If lice are found in your child's hair, you will be contacted to pick up your child. You will receive Information regarding treatment for the head lice. Children will not be re-admitted until all lice have been removed.

## ILLNESS/INJURY



If a child becomes ill during the day, the child will be isolated from the other children. The child's parent/guardian will be contacted so arrangements can be made to pick him/her up immediately. **It is very important that the center have more than one adult over the age of 18 to contact should your child need to go home.**
Whenever a child is injured, a staff member will complete an Injury Report Form (Ouch Report). One copy is given to the parent and the other kept in the office file. The report includes the date, child's name, and nature of the injury, cause of injury, first aid administered, and signature of the reporting staff members.

If a child is injured and is in need of medical assistance, the parents will be notified immediately. In a life-threatening emergency, 911 will be contacted.

# HEALTH cont.

## GOOD ORAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN

Each year children enrolled in the ECE Programs receive a free dental screening. Children in Head Start brush their teeth daily and participate in a fluoride varnish program. Good oral health is important. Infections in the mouth can cause earaches, sinus infections and other chronic illnesses.

Baby teeth are very important. By age three, a preschooler should have 20 teeth. Early loss of any baby tooth can affect the outcome of permanent teeth. Proper nutrition plays an important role. A diet low in sugar-rich foods and brushing teeth after eating will help a child maintain a healthier mouth. A healthy mouth also helps children to feel more confident about themselves and their smile.

## ALLERGIES

The staff must be notified if a child has any type of allergy.

Notification must be IN WRITING from a physician and must include instructions on how to avoid incurring an allergic reaction and what to do in the event a reaction does occur. All documentation must be submitted prior to the child starting in the classroom.

If medication is needed, the MEDICATION procedure must be followed.

## MEDICATIONS

**ALL MEDICATION MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OFFICE FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL PRIOR TO CHILD ATTENDING. NO MEDICATION MAY BE KEPT BY THE CHILDREN IN THEIR POCKETS, CUBBIES, OR BACKPACKS.**

Children cannot enter the classroom until all medications are documented and in place.

The nurse informs the parent that this process may take time and can delay the first day of school.

The ECE staff will dispense medication ONLY when:

- Medication is PRESCRIBED by a physician and is in its ORIGINAL CONTAINER with the prescription label on which includes the child's name and dosage information.
- Medication is kept in a locked box, out of the reach of children. The medication procedure is followed by Early Childhood Education Instructional Staff as outlined in the ECE Program Policies and Procedures.

# SAFETY

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

There is limited parking at most sites. It is very important that you do everything possible to prevent you or your child from being hurt. Please be aware of your child's safety when dropping off and picking up your child by following these rules:

- Supervise preschoolers at all times
- Keep preschoolers away from any vehicle, particularly emergency vehicles
- Never allow preschoolers to cross the street alone
- Do not park in the *blue handicapped parking slots*, unless you have a handicapped sticker/placard.

## CAR SEAT SAFETY

As of January 1, 2017:

- Children under 2 years of age shall ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds OR is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the car seat. (California Vehicle Code Section 27360.)
- Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.
- Children age 8 or older, or who are 4'9" or taller, may use the vehicle seat belt if it fits properly with the lap belt low on the hips, touching the upper thighs, and the shoulder belt crossing the center of the chest. If children are not tall enough for proper belt fit, they must ride in a booster or car seat. (California Vehicle Code Section 27363.)

## PARKING SAFETY

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

- Double parking or parking where there is not a legal parking space creates an unsafe environment for children and adults. Parents who continue to illegally park will be notified that law enforcement officials have been contacted to enforce appropriate parking.
- Handicap parking at all sites are for vehicles displaying handicap placards. Again, law enforcement will be notified of violators.
- Never leave a child unattended in a car. Effective January 1, 2002 it became a law that it is criminal offense to leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even for a second! The Unattended Child in a Motor Vehicle Safety Act, "Kaitlyn's Law" was enacted when Kaitlyn died because she was left for "just a second".

**ECE staff members are required to enforce the laws and to report such findings. Staff members are mandated to do so, so please do your part and follow the laws.**