



SIERRA CASCADE FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES

Head Start, Early Head Start &
State Preschool
Parent Handbook
2025-2026

PROGRAM INFORMATION	
Site Name	
Days of Operation	
Hours of Operation	
Site Phone Number	
Family Educator	
Site Supervisor	
Teacher/Primary Caregiver	
Family Service Worker	
Designated Evacuation Center	

**SIERRA CASCADE FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES
CONTACT INFORMATION AND LOCATIONS**

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES		
CENTRAL OFFICE 424 N. Mill Creek Rd Quincy, CA 95971 P: 530-283-1242 F: 530-283-1024	FISCAL OFFICE 424 N. Mill Creek Rd Quincy, CA 95971 P: 530-283-1242 F: 530-283-1024	Manager OFFICE 38 N. Lassen Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-601-2114
CENTER BASED PROGRAMS		
ALTURAS CENTER Serving Children Ages 3-5 yr 802 N. East, Ste. C Alturas, CA 96101 P: 530-233-4134 F: 530-233-7707 Hours: 7:45-1:45 pm	LASSEN CENTER Serving Children Ages 0- 5 yr 65 N Union St Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-251-4050 Hours: 7:45-4:00 pm	LEAVITT LAKE CENTER Serving Children Ages 3-5 yr 710-400 Willow Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-257-7530 F: 530-257-9035 Hours: 7:45-4:00 pm
PORTOLA CENTER Serving Children Ages 3-5 yr 895 West Street Building #25 Portola, CA 96122 P: 530-832-1029 F: 530-832-4030 Hours: 7:45-1:45 pm	QUINCY CENTER Serving Children Ages 3-5 175 N. Mill Creek Rd Quincy, CA 95971 P: 530-283-0592 F: 530-283-3053 Hours: 7:45-1:45 pm	SUSANVILLE CENTER Serving Children Ages 18mo-5 yr P.O. Box 603/195 Russell Ave Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-257-2343 F: 530-251-5901 Hours: 7:45-4:00 pm
CEDAR CENTER Serving Children Ages 18 mo -5 yr 450 Cedar St. Susanville, CA 96130 P: 530-257-8220 Hours: 7:45-1:45 pm	CHESTER CENTER Serving Children Ages 2-5 158 Aspen Chester, CA 96020 P: 530-258-3194 Ext: 1251 F: 530-258-3195 Hours: 8:00-11:00 pm	GREENVILLE CENTER Serving Children Ages 2-5 225 Grand St. Room 1 Greenville, CA 95947 P: 530-284-7195 Ext: 2711 F: 530-284-6720 Hours: 8:00-11:00 pm
JANESVILLE CENTER Serving Children Ages 2-5 P.O. Box 279/709-435 Pine St Janesville, CA 96114 P: 1-800-404-1242 Hours: 8:00-11:30 am	<p style="text-align: center;">Website: headstart4u.org Facebook: Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities</p>	

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WELCOME

Welcome to Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities. We share your interest in the growth and development of your child and know that we will all benefit from working and learning together.

As the parent of a child participating in an SCFO Program, you will be:

- Treated with respect and courtesy.
- Welcomed in the classroom.
- Informed regularly about your child's progress.
- Given information about your child's individual development and activities that you can provide at home to support your child's learning.
- Encouraged to volunteer.
- Encouraged to participate in a variety of parent trainings and meetings.
- Informed about and participate in decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.

SCFO staff work in partnership with the family and community. We value you as the most important influence in your child's life and invite you to become involved in the program in a number of ways including classroom activities, local parent committee meetings, Policy Council/Parent Advisory Council, and special activities and events.

In this handbook, we use the term parents to refer to foster parents, legal guardians, and other adults who serve as parents to children enrolled in our program.

ABOUT SIERRA CASCADE FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES

Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities (SCFO) is a non-profit organization that provides early childhood development programs to children aged 0-5 and their families in Lassen, Modoc, and Plumas counties. SCFO offers child development services through Early Head Start, Head Start, and State Preschool center-based programs. SCFO receives grant funding through the federal Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, California State Preschool Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. All services are provided at no cost to the participants.

VISION

Our vision is that all children and families will achieve success throughout school and life.

MISSION

Our mission is to operate quality early childhood development programs, which provide comprehensive opportunities for children and families that encourage growth, support positive relationships and foster health and well-being.

CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS

In SCFO Head Start and State Preschool Center Based programs, children participate in a classroom environment staffed by qualified early childhood education professionals. Education, health, and nutrition experiences are planned where children learn through play, exploration, and experimentation.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

OPEN DOOR POLICY

SCFO has always maintained an open-door policy and encouraged parents to visit and volunteer in the classroom. Parents are always welcome to arrive at the center at any time.

It is important for all parents to have a clear understanding of our services and various aspects of the program. All parents will receive individual orientation during the initial enrollment meeting to be introduced to program operations, policies and procedures, and information about our comprehensive child development, health and nutrition, and family engagement services. In addition, all center-based programs will have a Parent Orientation as early in the program year as possible. This event is important for parents to attend and to obtain information and get familiar with their child's program and staff.

PARENT ORIENTATION

It is important for all parents to have a clear understanding of our services and various aspects of the program. All parents will receive individual orientation during the initial enrollment meeting to be introduced to program operations, policies and procedures, and information about our comprehensive services. In addition, all center-based programs will have a Parent Orientation/Open House as early in the program year as possible. This event is important for parents to attend and to obtain information and get familiar with their child's program and staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All files and information regarding children and families in the program are kept strictly confidential. Staff members are the only people who have access to files. Access to files is on a "Need to Know Basis"; only staff members that are involved with your child/family will have access to the records.

RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Our program will not release information from a child's record or file without the consent of a parent. If the program receives a request for information on your child and/or our program would like to obtain information from an outside entity, we will request that the parent sign a Consent to Exchange Information form. Parents have the right not to sign the consent form. Parents have the right to be provided access to their own children's written records and information at any time.

CENTER EMERGENCY AND DISASTER PROCEDURES

SCFO has Emergency and Disaster Plans that will be followed in the event of any emergency or disaster situation that occurs during center operating hours. These plans ensure the care of children until they are reunited with their designated pick-up person in emergencies and provide procedures for the safe evacuation of the premises if necessary.

In the event of an emergency or disaster, SCFO staff will notify parents and give direction as soon as it is safe, and they have the means to do so.

In the event of an evacuation, children will be relocated to a designated area listed in the front of the Parent Handbook. Your child will only be released to those who are authorized to pick up.

USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

SCFO refrains from religious instruction and worship.

Updated May 8th, 2025

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, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is necessary from all program participants to enhance social competence and maximize individual learning opportunities. Consistency is an important factor in creating an environment in which to learn. Children and adults must value their participation in order to get the most from their experience in SCFO programs.

Daily attendance is required in the State Preschool/Head Start programs. If a child is absent for five or more unexcused absences in one month, their enrollment in the State Preschool/Head Start program may be at risk. Staff will discuss the importance of attendance and offer any resources that the family may need.

If individual Average Daily Attendance falls below 40% at any point during the program year, an in-depth attendance analysis will be conducted to determine the appropriateness of continued enrollment for that individual. Analysis will include review of absence reasons and verifications, and all support and communication documentation to ensure extensive support has been offered to the family including direct contact and/or home visits. Circumstances not within the family's control will be considered, and decisions impacting enrollment will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Children who are absent for 30 consecutive days with no communication from the family will be disenrolled as abandonment of care. Staff will attempt to contact and reengage families using a variety of communication methods including visits to the residence and written letters prior to the 30-day cutoff.

CENTER-BASED PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

If a child will be absent, a parent is to contact the center staff immediately and explain the reason for absence. If your child is unexpectedly absent and you have not contacted the program within one hour of the program start time, the site staff will attempt to contact you to ensure your child's well-being. If staff are unable to contact you, they will continue to make every attempt daily to reach you, including conducting a home visit when other methods fail.

State excused absence reasons include:

- Best interest of the child: Limited to 10 days per year. Reasons include, but are not limited to inadequate rest, difficulty adjusting to a family situation, family business, vacation or religious observance.
- Emergency: Crisis situation requiring all family members' attention, situation causing trauma for the child or parent/guardian, death in the family, or natural disaster.
- Illness or quarantine of the child, including medical and dental appointments for the child.
- Illness of an immediate family member.
- Transportation: Any situation where lack of transportation directly impacts the family's ability to get their child to school.
- Court ordered visitations: Court documentation must be on file at the center in order for absences due to visitation to be excused.

Head Start does not have excused absences. All absences are considered when identifying children who are Chronically Absent, or, at risk of risk of missing 10% or more days of school. Chronically Absent children are identified throughout the year so staff can provide individualized support to families based on the reason for absence.

BIRTHDAY AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

SCFO strives to ensure that at no time is a family or child left out of any program operations. In order to make all program activities and functions inclusive to all families, SCFO does not include religious and/or commercial holidays or birthday celebrations in classroom practices. Instead, SCFO chooses to celebrate children and families throughout the entire year, through family participation and sharing of each child/family's culture and diversification.

Neither SCFO staff nor parents may facilitate holiday and/or birthday celebrations or activities during class or program hours, however, families are welcomed to facilitate these types of social gatherings outside of program hours. Please ask your child's teacher for a copy of the SCFO Holiday Policy for more information on this topic.

PEDESTRAIN SAFETY

SCFO recognizes the importance of teaching children pedestrian safety. When walking to school or when walking through parking lots parents can teach and model being a safe pedestrian to their children. Below are some tips to teach your child to be safe around traffic:

- Teach your child to look both ways before crossing a street and only cross at designated crosswalks.
- Put your phone away while walking around traffic near a street or parking lot.
- Always accompany your child while crossing the street.
- Teach your child to be alert for cars backing out of parking spots and driveways.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

SCFO staff are responsible for the health and welfare of all children participating in the program, and as such are mandatory reporters of any suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with Section 11166 of the Penal Code which requires any "Child Care Custodian" to report suspected child abuse. Any staff member that has reasonable suspicion that child abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred, they are legally mandated to report any information to the Child Protective Services agency.

PARENT AND/OR COMMUNITY COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The grievance procedure is a problem-solving mechanism in which every attempt is made to resolve issues at the lowest level of authority, with the least possible amount of program disturbance. A grievance is a written complaint alleging that Early Head Start Regulations, SCFO Policies and Procedures (if applicable), and/or Center policies and procedures:

1. were not followed; or

2. were administered in a discriminatory (unequal) fashion; or
3. were administered in an arbitrary and capricious (unfair) fashion.

Whenever possible, we recommend that you first approach the staff person with your concern(s), or their immediate supervisor, and attempt to resolve the situation as simply as possible. The staff person may be unaware she/he is doing anything wrong or there may be a temporary situation that the staff has not been able to inform you of. Keep a record of this contact, recording the date and the topic or issues. If direct communication does not resolve the problem, contact the staff person's immediate supervisor. At this time, if you are not satisfied with the results, a formal written complaint may be initiated.

The following steps may be taken: Community Complaint for a Formal Written Procedure

Step 1: All complaints must be filed in writing to the Executive Director within twenty (20) calendar days following the incident which gives rise to the complaint. If the complaint is about the Executive Director, the written complaint must be filed with the Board President, and thereafter, within this policy, where the Executive Director is mentioned, the Board President will act. The written complaint shall contain:

- a. The name of the complainant and the program/site involved,
- b. The date of the incident,
- c. A detailed description of the complaint,
- d. The desired relief or adjustment.

The Executive Director shall render a written decision which will be sent certified mail to the complainant within fifteen (15) calendar days following receipt of the complaint. A copy will also be sent to the Board of Directors and Policy Council for review. This written decision shall become final unless the complainant initiates Step 2 within five (5) working days.

Step 2: If the complainant is not satisfied with the written decision from the Executive Director, the complainant may forward a copy of the written decision from the ED to a Joint Hearing Committee of the Head Start Policy Council, Board, and Executive Director requesting in writing a formal hearing. No complaint will be considered by the Committee unless it has previously been submitted to the Executive Director as required by Step 1. No complaint may be expanded after it has been reviewed by the Executive Director in Step 1.

Step 3: The Joint Hearing Committee's shall hear the complaint within 10 working days of receipt of the request for a hearing. The decision of the Joint Hearing Committee shall be sent in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of the formal hearing. The Joint Hearing Committee decision shall be final.

Step 4: The Joint Hearing Committee shall consist of the Head Start Policy Council Personnel Committee, the Executive Director, and a member of the Board.

All complaints regarding personnel matters shall be kept strictly confidential. A person filing a complaint regarding personnel matters does not have a right to know the details of the outcome of the complaint but shall know the grievance was handled according to the procedure.

CENTER OPERATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Your child's school maintains a safe environment by adhering to many health and safety requirements. A Health and Safety Checklist is used on a daily basis to ensure there are no potential hazards and to maintain ongoing quality and safety. Each center is licensed by California Child Care Licensing Program that provides oversight and enforcement for licensed childcare centers throughout the state.

CHILD SUPERVISION

Vigilant child supervision is a priority in all SCFO programs. Children will be under the direct supervision of qualified teaching staff at all times. SCFO adheres to the California Child Care Licensing "staff to child ratios" at all times and position themselves to see all areas where children may be playing. Staff will move around as needed to remain attentive to children. Staff members are aware of the whole group even when working with individual children or small groups. Staff coordinates their supervision so that all areas that are occupied by children are actively supervised. When dropping off, please ensure staff is aware of your child before leaving and be mindful of your surroundings for the safety of other children.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents are responsible for transportation to drop off and pick up children during the hours of operation for that classroom. SCFO requests that children arrive within the first half-hour to the start of the classroom day.

Upon arriving at the center your child must be accompanied by a caregiver where staff will complete a wellness and temperature check. Parents and children are then asked to immediately wash hands. Parents are required by California Community Care Licensing to sign their child both in and out of the center on the Daily Attendance Sheet. Each day, the person who signs the child in and out **must use his/her full legal signature and record the time of the day**. Signing with initials or incomplete names is not permitted.

Children are released to only authorized persons who are listed as an authorized pick-up person and with a proper photo ID. Parents are responsible for maintaining current names, addresses, and telephone numbers of individuals authorized to pick up their child or who may be contacted in case of an emergency. Staff will request to view the photo ID of the adult picking up your child and compare it with the pickup list until they are familiar with them. Parents are responsible for ensuring that all adults listed are prepared to bring their photo ID with them.

LATE CHILD PICK-UP

SCFO does not have the capacity to care for children after the center hours of operation. It is important for parents to make arrangements and have backup plans in place to pick up your child from the center. If you are going to be late picking up your child, please contact the teaching staff immediately. If your child has not been picked up from the school after the session has ended,

staff will contact people listed on the Emergency Pick Up list. If no one can be contacted and the child is still at the site, the Site Supervisor and/or staff will develop a plan of action. If it becomes necessary, staff may call the local Police Department and/or Child Protective Services to report the situation to the authorities.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND CENTER CLOSURES

Our centers will be closed when the public schools in the area of the center are closed due to bad weather. Please listen to your local radio station for these announcements.

If the center is closed for other reasons, families will be notified via telephone or through the Remind text messaging notification system that families can sign up for during enrollment. **Families must ensure that the centers have all updated contact information.**

Home-based services will be canceled if local travel conditions are too dangerous. Families will be notified by telephone.

SUPPLIES

SCFO provides all necessary supplies including diapers, wipes, cribs/cots, and sheets, and age-appropriate toys and learning materials for the classroom. All food and drinks including infant formula are provided. Parents will need to supply a change of clothing to be left in the child's cubby to be used if the child gets wet or dirty. For children in the process of toilet learning, a minimum of two clean changes of clothing, including socks, are needed. Soiled clothing will be sent home for laundering.

TOYS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS

Although many children wish to bring toys and other items to school, we ask that these things be left at home. All classrooms are well equipped with clean, safe, and age-appropriate materials for children to use during the day. We have found that children become upset when their personal toys are lost, broken, or used by other children. We are unable to ensure the safekeeping of these items and ask for your cooperation in keeping them out of the classroom.

CLOTHING

Children are involved in different kinds of exciting and sometimes messy activities. In addition, children engage daily outside play unless the weather is extreme. Dress your child in comfortable, weather-appropriate play clothes and shoes. Jackets, hats, gloves, and snow boots are often needed during the winter months. Open-toe shoes or sandals are not recommended since children will be involved in activities such as running and climbing on playground structures.

TOILETING POLICY

SCFO supports children at all stages of toilet learning. Parents will be asked to provide information about the child's toileting practices to assist us in supporting each child and their individual needs. SCFO maintains clean and sanitary restroom and diaper changing practices. SCFO provides diapers and wipes.

TOOTHBRUSHING

Dental care is part of the health education within the children's daily curriculum. Children will be instructed in the proper tooth brushing procedures and brush 2x daily in all classrooms – after breakfast and after lunch. SCFO provides age-appropriate toothbrushes and toothpaste for each child and toothbrushes are kept in sanitary holders and replaced frequently.

MEALTIMES

At SCFO centers, meals and snacks are provided. Depending on the operating hours of the center, children may be provided meals including breakfast, lunch, snack, and infant formula.

SCFO participates in the Federal and State-funded school meal program, Child, and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All meals and snacks follow the CACFP and SCFO nutrition guidelines and portions. These guidelines have a strong focus on balanced nutrition and children are introduced to new, healthy foods that offer a variety of tastes, textures, and flavors. The menus for the program are designed by the SCFO Health Manager with support from a Registered Dietician to ensure meals are nutritious and appealing.

Family Style meal service is used in all SCFO classrooms. Family style is a type of meal service which allows children to serve themselves from common bowls of food with assistance from adults. Children are encouraged to taste all foods, but they are never forced to eat anything they do not want. Children also set the tables for meals and snacks as well as clear their places after they are finished.

Teachers sit with the children during mealtimes, model appropriate eating behavior, and initiate conversations. Mealtime is an opportunity to incorporate learning and components of the curriculum.

All parents are provided a Menu Handbook that includes the menu for the program year, SCFO's Mealtime Policy, SCFO Nutrition Policy as well as CACFP requirements information.

Parent Volunteers at Mealtimes

Parents are welcome to have a meal at the center if they have volunteered that day in their child's classroom or kitchen. Our food program is designed and budgeted for enrolled children. We cannot feed parents or other adults unless they are volunteering that day. Adults will be served child-sized portions. The main purpose for having adults at the meal table is so they can model mealtime behavior and support conversation.

SPECIAL DIETS

All meals served in our program meet federal and state guidelines for children. If your child cannot eat certain foods, menu adjustments may be made by speaking with center staff and completing the appropriate documentation. Accommodations and substitutions will be made for children with food allergies. We discourage sending food from home unless specific arrangements have been made for a child's special dietary needs.

BREASTFEEDING

At SCFO, we want to do everything possible to support you as you continue to breastfeed your baby. SCFO staff will properly store, thaw, warm and feed your baby any expressed breastmilk that you provide. Please make sure that all milk you bring to the center is properly labeled with your child's name and the date. Please talk with SCFO staff if you need any breastfeeding support or resources.

SIPPY CUP POLICY

Early Head Start infants are ready to begin the transition to whole milk from formula or breast milk and from a bottle to a cup around 12 months of age. To help with that transition, a sippy cup is often used for the child to get used to drinking from a cup. SCFO considers sippy cups to be a training tool from the bottle to cup and are discontinued shortly after the first birthday. At age 18 months when a child transitions into the toddler room, they are usually successfully drinking from a regular cup. Sippy cups are not used in the toddler classrooms for the following reasons:

- Sippy cups, especially used as a pacifier at nap time, can promote dental decay if they contain any beverage except for water.
- The sucking motion on the sippy cup can affect tongue positioning and create articulation issues when used for long periods of time.
- Speech pathologists believe sippy cups used over time can encourage the development of lisps and other speech problems.

NAP TIMES

In SCFO's full day and extended day programs, your child will be given an opportunity to nap or rest every day. Toddler and Preschool naptimes will begin after lunchtime and will vary in length depending on the need of each individual child. Infants will nap as needed so they can fall asleep and wake up naturally.

In the toddler and preschool classrooms, after two hours of napping the nap area will have shades opened and lights turned on and children will be allowed to wake up naturally. After 45 minutes to an hour after naptime has begun, if a child is not asleep, he or she will be allowed to get up from his/her cot and play quietly at a table. No child will be forced to stay awake or to stay in the napping area longer than the normal napping period. If you need to pick up your child during nap time, please contact the center staff.

A cot or crib and a blanket and sheet are provided for each child. Children's bedding is stored in a manner that ensures they will not come into contact with another child's bedding. Cots are labeled with children's names and are cleaned a minimum of weekly. Blankets and sheets are laundered a minimum of weekly.

INFANT SAFE SLEEP GUIDELINES

The staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at SCFO Early Head Start classrooms adhere to the following recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and Community Care Licensing to provide safe sleeping environments to infants. "Infant" means a child under two years of age.

Sleep Position

- While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, when an infant can turn over it must be documented on an Infant / Toddler Needs and Service Plan Form – Section C.
- · Once documented that the infant can easily turn over from back to front and front to back the infant will be placed on their back to sleep, but they can remain in whatever sleep position that they prefer once asleep.
- · Infants will be placed flat on their backs to sleep every time unless there is a physician-signed sleep position medical waiver on file. In case of a waiver, a waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib without identifying medical information. The full waiver will be kept in the infant's file. The waiver shall be attached to the Individual Infant/ Toddler Needs and Service Plan Form and contain the following criteria:
 - a. Instructions on how the infant shall be placed to sleep, including sleep position.
 - b. Duration the exemption is to be in place.
 - c. The licensed physician's contact information.
 - d. Signature of the licensed physician and date of signature.
- Infants will not be placed on their side for sleep.
- Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used since they are not proved to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should the pacifier fall out once they are asleep.

Sleep Environment

- SCFO will use Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses.
- Infants will not be placed to sleep on any standard bed, couch, air mattress, or any other soft surfaced.
- Only one infant will be placed to sleep in each crib. Siblings, including twins, etc., will be placed in separate cribs.
- The crib will have a firm tight-fitting mattress made specifically for the size crib they are being placed in and covered by a fitted sheet and will be free from loose bedding, toys, and other soft objects (i.e., pillows, quilts, comforters, stuffed toys, etc.).

- Crib mattresses will be covered with vinyl or similar moisture-resistant material, wiped with a detergent/disinfectant daily, and when soiled or wet and maintained in a safe condition with no exposed foam, batting, or coils.
- Floor mats or cots that meet the requirements of Section 101239.1(b) shall be provided for all infants who have the ability to climb out of a crib. A lightweight blanket may be used only when an infant is using a floor mat or cot. The blanket will not come up higher than the infant's chest.
- To avoid overheating, the temperature of the rooms where infants sleep will be checked and will be kept at a level that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Bibs and pacifiers will not be tied around an infant's neck or clipped to an infant's clothing during sleep.
- An infant will not be swaddled while in care.
- An infant's head will not be covered while sleeping. Sleep clothing such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, may be used.
- If an infant falls asleep before being placed in a crib, staff will move the infant to a crib as soon as possible.
- No infant shall be forced to sleep, to stay awake, or to stay in the designated sleeping area.
- Infants will use bedding provided by SCFO. Crib bedding will be changed daily or more often if required. Cot bedding will be stored individually. Cot bedding will be changed and washed a minimum of weekly or as needed. Infants will not share bedding.

Training and Supervision

- When infants are in their cribs they will be within sight and hearing of staff at all times.
- Staff will physically check on sleeping infants every 15 minutes and document the following: Labored breathing and/or signs of distress, which includes but is not limited to flushed skin color, increase in body temperature, and restlessness.
- When an infant is awake, they will have supervised "tummy time".
- Infants will spend limited time in car seats while at the center. Car seats are used to carry the infant from the car to the classroom or from the classroom to the car only.
- All Early Head Start Staff, substitutes, and volunteers will review this policy. The signed signature page will be placed in their personnel file at the Center and at the Central Office.
- All parents or guardians enrolling an infant in an SCFO Early Head Start Classroom will review this policy. The signed signature page will be kept in the infant's file at the center and at the Central office. It will be kept in the enrollment folder.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned to enrich the curriculum and expose children to the community. SCFO parents and staff work together throughout the year to find activities, events or guests that are of interest to children and are age and developmentally appropriate. Local Parent Committees will vote on field trip activities at their regular Parent Meetings. In House Field Trips are often coordinated where community members are invited into the classroom to share skills/activities.

Offsite field trips can be arranged as walking field trips if an activity is within reasonable walking distance for the children participating. Field trips that require transportation can be arranged following the Field Trip Transportation Policy. SCFO does not have transportation services, therefore, parent transportation is required.

Classroom Volunteering

SCFO encourages parents to volunteer and participate in activities at their site. All parents are welcome at any time to spend time at the center participate in classroom activities and events.

We invite you to talk with your child's Teacher about becoming a regular volunteer in your child's classroom. Regular volunteers enhance the success of SCFO programs. In addition, volunteering is a great way for parents to build their own individual skills. Many SCFO staff began by first volunteering for their child's program.

All regular volunteers must be 18 years of age or currently be enrolled in an appropriate and approved Regional Occupational Program, complete volunteer training and meet health requirements. All volunteers must be supervised by qualified program staff and will not be left alone with children.

LOCK DOWN PROCEDURE

In the event that a site and/or classroom would need to make the decision to go into a "lock down" mode, the following procedure should be followed.

1. Assess the situation and determine the level of seclusion that is needed, such as; do all children and all staff need to be in a secluded location for their safety; or if the facility is secured may staff and children go on with their daily activities.
2. If needed have one person call 9-1-1 immediately. If calling 911 DON'T HANG UP THE PHONE UNTIL RELEASED BY 911 OPERATOR
3. Keep all staff and children indoors unless otherwise directed by law enforcement and/or administration on a school campus.
4. Designate a lead person to lock all doors pertinent to the seclusion area and close window shades.
5. If gunfire is an issue or concern use furniture to create a protected barricade and turn off lights.
6. If there is no immediate threat, when it is possible and safe, or when directed by law enforcement or administration, have the SS or someone designated by the SS contact Central Office.
7. Send a notice to families. Example, "your child is safe. Our center experienced a (what it was) today. Your child may come home with questions or want to share their experience with you. If you have any questions, please reach out to us."
8. An Unusual Incident Report will need to be filed, following SCFO's Unusual Incident procedure when class is over, and it is safe to do so.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION POLICY

It is the role of SCFO to ensuring that all children and staff are in a safe environment. When a child exhibits persistent and serious behaviors, staff will explore all possible solutions and work with the proper resources to facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. SCFO will always work in partnership with the parent/guardian and will offer services from a mental health consultant and utilize appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine the best strategies to put into place to support children in the program.

If a child's behavior is out of the scope of typical behaviors for his/her age, SCFO staff and the parent will meet and work together to create a plan that ensures all children and staff are safe while participating in the program.

For more information on this topic, you may ask any SCFO staff member for a copy of the full SCFO Suspension and Explosion Policy.

As the parent/guardian you may also receive information on how to file an appeal if needed. Contact your child's teacher for this information.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

SCHOOL READINESS

SCFO believes that school readiness is directly linked to life readiness and is a process that begins at conception and continues through infancy to preschool. Everything we do with children and families at SCFO ultimately prepares children for school and life readiness.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

SCFO uses high-quality, research-based curriculums which support measurable progress toward children's development. The content and learning outcomes of the curriculum align with Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), the California Preschool Learning Frameworks and Foundations, and the California Infant Toddler Frameworks and Foundations. The curriculums provide guidance on the content and teaching practices that is drawn from current child development research and science.

CENTER BASED CURRICULUM

SCFO Center-Based Programs use the High Scope Curriculum that is play-based, child-centered, and grounded in research. It features Active Learning at its core and children are guided to explore, interact, and exercise their creative imagination through purposeful and scaffolded play.

In addition, SCFO uses the Second Step Social-Emotional Learning curriculum to support children's development of executive function skills, self-regulation, and social-emotional competence.

Classroom staff are well-trained to utilize the curriculum to formulate daily lesson plans and classroom activities. Contact your child's teacher for more information about the research-based curriculum used in your child's classroom.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE FOR CHILDREN

SCFO's programs use an approach to discipline and guidance that emphasizes respect for each child, developmentally appropriate expectations of children's behavior and the use of positive discipline and guidance strategies.

Behavior concerns are handled by staff in a way that encourages children to solve problems and develop a sense of inner self-control. Children are given authentic choices and the opportunity to be an active part of decision-making in their environment. Staff help children to understand the reasons for rules and limits and to feel good about the choices they make.

Methods for positive guidance and discipline include:

- Prevention
- Redirection
- Problem Solving
- Choices

- Empathy
- Firm Limits and Consequences

Discipline not permitted by SCFO staff include but is not limited to corporal punishment or violation of the child's personal rights.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SCFO believes it is important for conflict resolution skills to be taught in early childhood. SCFO uses the High Scope Curriculum Six Steps to Conflict Resolution in classrooms. Staff use the following steps when conflicts arise:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
2. Acknowledge children's feelings
3. Gather information
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS AND ASSESSMENTS

All children grow and develop at their own rate. During the first weeks of your child's attendance, teachers will conduct developmental screenings and assessments designed to ensure that the program and classroom activities meet your child's individual needs. Sometimes, these screenings may indicate potential developmental delays that require further evaluation. Concerns regarding your child's development will be discussed before further evaluation is conducted.

Staff will work closely with parents, family members, and community agencies to facilitate any additional services necessary to meet each child's developmental needs. Parents who have concerns about their child's development should discuss these concerns with their child's teacher.

In addition, throughout the year, staff will observe your child for continuing progress using the State of California's Assessment tool, Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). Staff will meet with you at Parent/Teacher Conferences throughout the year to discuss their observations and work towards developmental individualized goals for your child.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children with a diagnosed disability or with special needs are supported to actively participate in all aspects of the program. Understanding, knowledge, and support for children with special needs and their families is an integral part of our program. For children with IEP's or IFSP's ongoing communication between you as the parent, the teacher, the school district and other IFSP/IEP members keeps us all up to date on your child's progress and challenges.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION AND SCREENINGS

SCFO is committed to supporting the mental health of children, families, and staff. Early childhood mental health is the same as social and emotional well-being and within the first weeks of your child's entry into a SCFO program, staff will complete a mental health screening that will give them a better understanding of each child's developing capacity to express and regulate emotions, form trusting relationships, explore and learn. The mental health of children and the adults that care for them is essential for school readiness.

SCFO contracts with mental health consultants to support children's mental health and well-being. The mental health consultants provide periodic classroom observations to identify and support children with mental health and social-emotional concerns. In addition, they assist staff with classroom management and teacher practices to implement environments and strategies that promote positive social-emotional well-being.

Mental health consultants are available for parents to access individual support for their child and family.

TRANSITIONS

TRANSITIONING FROM EARLY HEAD START TO HEAD START:

Children in the Early Head Start program will begin the transition process when they are 30 months old. Every effort will be made to accommodate the child in the Head Start Program, but if space is unavailable, a referral will be made to a program that is age-appropriate within the area.

The purpose of the Transition Plan is to ensure a smooth transition and the most appropriate placement for the child. The plan will be developed through active parental involvement during the planning and transition process for continually comprehensive services for parents and children between the different program settings.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION:

Children in the Head Start program preparing for kindergarten will be supported with kindergarten transition activities to support a successful transition. Transition activities will be provided in the classroom for children and families will be supported with needed information and documentation to get them started successfully in their new school.

SCFO Infant/Toddler Needs and Service Plan

The information gathered during enrollment is essential as caregiver relationships provide a strong foundation for responsive interactions and communication between an infant or toddler and his caregiver.

This form (LIC 9277) is required per licensing Regulations 101429 (a)(2)(c). It is required to be completed every three months or sooner if requested by a parent/guardian until the child is 36 months of age and fully using the toilet on his/her own.

HEALTH SERVICES

Health is the foundation of school readiness. To help children thrive, SCFO staff ensure that children are up to date on immunizations and California's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule, learn healthy habits, and can access the care they need. SCFO staff work with each child and family to ensure health needs and requirements are met.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

The California School Immunization Law requires that children be up to date on their immunizations to attend childcare. Parents are required to provide immunization records prior to enrollment and as new immunizations are given.

Conditional Admission can be granted for a child who has received some but not all required immunizations and is not due for any vaccine at the time of enrollment into the program. This can occur for a child who is too young to have received all their immunizations, began getting immunized only recently, or has had a lapse in the sequence of immunizations and has only recently resumed. **Parents have 30 days from the date a child ages into new requirements to provide updated records.**

A personal beliefs exemption is no longer an option for entry into childcare. In certain cases where a child's health could be compromised by immunization a temporary or permanent medical exemption to one or more of the immunizations may be issued through the California Immunization Registry – Medical Exemption website by a physician licensed in California.

If after a child is enrolled, it is discovered that they are missing one or more immunizations, the parent will immediately be notified. In this circumstance, state regulations **allow no more than 10 school days after notifying the parent** for the parent to present a record showing the child received the immunization(s) the child was missing. After the deadline of 10 school days, the child must be excluded from further attendance if the child has not come into compliance with the requirements.

PHYSICAL EXAM REQUIREMENTS

All enrolled children must meet the requirement of having an up-to-date physical exam on file within the first 30 days of enrollment.

Head Start/State Preschool children are required to have a physical exam completed every 12 months. Early Head Start children are required to have physical exams completed at 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, and 36 months.

LEAD TEST REQUIREMENTS

Children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs must receive a lead test at 12 and 24 months or receive one during their Head Start entry physical exam at age 3 or 4 years. Enrolled children must meet the lead requirement and have documentation on file within the first 30 days of enrollment.

DENTAL EXAM REQUIREMENTS

Head Start and Early Head Start children as well as prenatal mothers must meet the requirement of obtaining a dental exam by a licensed dentist or Registered Dental Hygienist within 45 days of enrollment. Early Head Start children beginning at 6 months of age will receive a dental screening and screenings will occur thereafter at 6-month intervals during enrollment in the program.

VISION, HEARING AND NUTRITION SCREENINGS

Children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs will receive a vision, hearing, and nutrition screening within the first 45 days of enrollment. SCFO Family Service Workers and Family Educators use age-appropriate screening tools as an important step in the early detection of any possible problems. SCFO staff will share all results of these screenings.

SCFO HEALTH POLICY

Parents will:

- Observe proper handwashing upon entering a center or socializations.
- Stay home from program activities when they are ill, and until 24 hours after all symptoms have gone (fever, diarrhea, etc..) and danger of contagion is passed.
- Keep your child home if he or she shows any of the signs of the contagious conditions listed below. Children will only be allowed to return to program activates 24 hours after all symptoms have gone (fever, diarrhea, etc..), without medications, and danger of contagion is passed; OR 24 hours after appropriate medical treatment has begun; OR when a note is presented from a medical professional.
- Notify staff of an illness in your family or home before a scheduled home visit occurs.
- Cooperate with staff's request to keep or take their child home when asked to do so due to suspected illness.

Staff Will:

- Observe proper handwashing upon entering the center, as well as before preparing food or eating, and after using the bathroom or assisting children to do so, etc.
- Stay home from their program when they are ill, and until 24 hours after symptoms have gone (fever, diarrhea, etc..), and danger of contagion has passed.
- Notify parents when their child has been exposed to a contagious disease.
- Follow the SCFO exclusion guidelines.

SCFO EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

There are three reasons for sending or keeping a child home from participation in Head Start and Early Head Start. They are: 1) to protect other children and staff from a communicable disease; 2) maximum comfort for the child, and; 3) because we are not a sick child facility and therefore we lack the staffing and isolation area required to keep ill children at the center.

The following guidelines will help know when to keep your child home, as well as to clarify why you may be asked to come and get your child from the center.

Exclusion Guidelines Due to Illness

The following guidelines will help know when to keep your child home, as well as to clarify why you may be asked to come and get your child from the center.

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher (until 24 hours after fever has passed without the aid of fever reducing medications). If a child is being sent home due to fever, the temperature will be taken in front of them and documented on the SCFO Exclusion Verification Form.
- Diarrhea – 2 stools that are above normal for that child during the time the child is in the program. A child may return when stool frequency is normal for that child without the use of medications.
- Vomiting – More than 2 times in 24 hours and is accompanied by one or more other symptom(s); or vomiting that appears green/bloody; or child has had recent history of head injury.
- 2 or more symptoms/signs of possible contagious illness / communicable diseases - cough, shortness of breath, rapid or difficulty breathing, wheezing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, earache, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, upset stomach, body rash or child has blood-red or purple rash not associated with an injury.
****If symptoms are due to seasonal allergies a Seasonal Allergy Form must be completed.***
- Body Rash accompanied by other symptom(s) or has oozing/open wound that cannot be covered.
- Head lice or nits and until all nits are gone. SCFO completes monthly lice checks in all classrooms. If a child is found to have lice/nits the parent will be notified but the child may stay through lunch, being picked up before naptime. A check will be completed in front of the parent before the child returns.

- Eye discharge – Until determined to be non-contagious by a medical professional. If diagnosed with pink eye, the child may return 24 hours after treatment has started.
- COVID-19 – Stay home if there are symptoms, until fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving. Wear a mask around others for 10 days after onset of symptoms or a positive test. Day 0 is the symptoms onset date or positive test date. To remove mask sooner than day 10, must have two sequential negative tests a day apart.
*Masks are not recommended for children younger than 2 years old.

For all other illnesses and/or communicable diseases reference Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and School; A Quick Reference Guide.

MEDICATION GIVEN AT CENTERS

If your child in a center requires medication, it is best for the parent to administer the medication either at home or by coming into the center. If it is necessary for a staff member to administer the medication during the day, the parent must work with staff ahead of time to ensure that all of the steps of SCFO's IMS Procedure are completed. All medications administered by SCFO staff, including non-prescription medication, must be prescribed by a physician and be in the original container. EpiPens, inhalers, or nebulizers will be kept in an unlocked location that is inaccessible by children but easily accessible by adults for use in an emergency. All other medications will be kept in a locked box or cupboard in a location that is inaccessible to children.

SCFO staff are trained bi-annually in CPR and First Aid.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Regular and ongoing communication is important for your family and child's success in the program. It is also important that parents stay up to date on program activities. SCFO staff will communicate with your family in a variety of ways to ensure you receive the appropriate information:

- **Monthly Newsletters and Calendars-** Provided monthly and include important dates, program activities, and current news about your child's program.
- **Remind-** SCFO programs utilize the Remind notification system to send text messages to families that include reminders and information. You can also send staff messages through Remind.
- **Handouts-** Important handouts and information are often provided to parents. For families with children enrolled in center-based programs, handouts will be provided at pick up or in weekly packets for Home Learners. Family Educators will often bring information on home visits for families in home-based programs.
- **Phone Calls-** Be sure to update staff if your phone number changes. It is necessary for staff to have a way to contact you by phone.

READYROSIE

SCFO is proud to offer ReadyRosie as a resource for families. ReadyRosie is a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge. It uses the power of video and mobile technology and Family Workshops to empower families to work with us to promote school readiness.

- **Videos:** As a parent, you will have access to thousands of short, 2-minute "Modeled Moments" videos that are examples of simple activities that promote health and well-being, language and literacy, math and reasoning, and social-emotional learning. Your child's Teacher/Primary Caregiver or Family Educator will send videos via email, text message, or the ReadyRosie App to you regularly that support current curriculum focuses on the classroom, home learning, or home-based program. All the time watching videos and implementing the activities counts toward in kind.
- **Family Workshops:** ReadyRosie workshops will also occur three times annually through a virtual model and will consist of 60-90-minute sessions.

Talk with your site staff to ensure that you get registered with ReadyRosie to access the wonderful resources it has to offer.

INKIND

SCFO receives federal funds in order to provide services to children and families. Federal regulations require that we earn at least 20% of our total grant dollars from parents and the community to support our overall operations. This 20% does not have to come in “real dollars” but can actually be earned through parent and community volunteers, services, and donations. These donations of time, services or goods are called “In-kind” donations.

One of the most important ways we meet the in-kind requirement is through parents volunteering in the program.

An In-kind Log will be provided by program staff for parents to document all volunteers’ hours and will be turned in monthly.

Examples of In-kind Activities:

- Attendance or virtual participation at Parent Meetings and Policy Council Meetings.
- Time spent taking your child to required medical or dental screenings and follow-up appointments.
- Donations of supplies for the program.
- Extending the classroom curriculum at home.
- Time spends completing Home Learning Activities.
- Completing activities directly related to individual Child Goals.
- ReadyRosie videos and activities.
- Preparing materials at home for use in the classroom, home visit.
- Time helping to move, clean, repair, shovel snow, or any maintenance work at program facilities.
- Time spent recruiting (talking with other families about the program).

PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SCFO provides many opportunities for parents to be involved in the program and their child’s early education. Research has shown that parental involvement helps children be more successful throughout life. Talk to your child’s Teacher or Family Educator about ways that you can be involved.

PARENT MEETINGS

As a parent in the program, you are a member of your site’s Parent Committee. The purpose of the Parent Committee is to take a role in the development and implementation of local program policies, activities, and services, have a process of communication with the policy council and participate in recruitment and screening of program employees through the Hiring Committee. Decisions for your site will be made by the majority of parents present at each meeting. This means that if you do not attend Parent Meetings, you will not be able to join in the decision-

making process for your program. Remember, your attendance at Parent Meetings counts toward your in-kind volunteer hours. Parent Meetings will occur every other month at each site. Parents are valued and have an important voice. We want to serve your child and family in the ways that best meet your needs and we need your input to do that!

PARENT LEADERSHIP

SCFO encourages parents to not only be involved but to take active roles in leadership as well. Below are leadership opportunities available to parents.

- **Parent Committee Leaders-** Parents at each site make up the Parent Committee for their site. At the beginning of each program year, a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary are elected at a Parent Meeting as leaders of their Parent Committee. These officers facilitate the monthly Parent Meetings for their site.
- **SCFO Policy Council/Parent Advisory Council-** Parents from all sites are elected by their Parent Committees at the beginning of each year to be a part of the Policy Council- an important decision-making body in the agency. Each site elects a Policy Council Representative and a Policy Council Alternate to represent their center or home-based program. Policy Council members are trained in leadership, information gathering and analyzing, and decision-making skills. They are expected to act as a liaison to bring information back and forth between their Parent Committee and Policy Council. The council meets monthly to guide the program direction of the agency.
- **Hiring Committee-** All parents have the opportunity to be a part of their site's Hiring Committee. As part of the Hiring Committee, parents can participate in the recruitment and hiring process for new staff.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES AND HOME VISITS

Center-Based Programs will offer two conferences at the school and two home visit conferences during the program year to meet with your child's Teacher/Primary Caregiver and Family Service Worker. During the Parent/Teacher conferences, staff will share information about the program and classroom, review your child's progress, develop child and family goals, review screenings and assessments, and have ongoing conversations regarding school readiness and transitions.

SCFO believes there is great value in teachers conducting home visits for two of the conferences. In addition, it is a requirement of the Head Start Performance Standards. Home visits allow parents, teachers, and family service workers the opportunity to meet and simply talk and collaborate for the benefit of the child and family. When teaching staff comes to your home, they are empowering you to bridge that gap between home and school. A child's learning is best supported when parents and teachers are working together on shared goals. SCFO staff absolutely do not conduct inspections of the home. The visit is simply about building relationships and dedicating time for each individual family and child in their own environment.

FAMILY CONFERENCES

SCFO is dedicated to partnering with families in all aspects of the program. If a concern or issue arises, parents or staff may request to meet for a Family Conference. The purpose of a Family

Conference is to make a plan for parents and staff to work together on issues such as challenging behavior, attendance, communication, health needs, or more.

PARENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE

After reviewing the Parent Handbook, please sign the appropriate lines below. Tear off this page and return this form to the staff at your program. You will generate in-kind for the time you take to review the Parent Handbook.

I have received and read the SCFO Parent Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures given to me and agree to adhere to the program's policies.

Please Note: SCFO's policies and procedures are subject to change to reflect the needs of the program, children, and families we service. We may also make changes or modifications in our policies if required by our licensing/funding agencies or if local, state, or federal guidance changes. Families will be notified of any changes made.

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____