



Family Handbook

Palomar College
Governing Board
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Contact Information

Any concerns or questions about scheduling, contract times, payments, etc. should be addressed to the ECELS leadership team. If you have any questions and/or concerns about your child in the classroom, please talk to your child's Master Teacher. Teaching support staff (assistants) can listen to concerns but may not provide solutions to questions and/or concerns. If, after discussing the matter with the Master Teacher, you still have a concern or question, please feel free to contact the Site Supervisor and/or the Coordinator.

Staffing is subject to change. See the [ECELS website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

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Welcome and thank you for choosing the Palomar College Early Childhood Education Lab School (ECELS). Our staff is committed to providing a high-quality, developmentally appropriate educational program for your child. We look forward to a time of growth together. Our staff supports families in their significant job of raising competent, caring children, who know their immeasurable worth and are able to utilize their talents to the greatest potential. To support the relationship between school and home, the ECELS practices an open-door policy – meaning that families have the right to enter and inspect the site without advance notice whenever their child or children are being cared for and will never be denied access to their child. Families are welcome at any time and encouraged to participate in daily activities whenever possible. When visiting, please be mindful that the children follow classroom routines and schedules, which when disrupted, can impact the whole group and the flow of the day.

The term “parent” used throughout this handbook refers to any adult who serves as a guardian or holds responsibility for the child(ren) enrolled at the ECELS.

This handbook outlines the ECELS policies, procedures, and program. It contains important information for understanding the philosophy and goals of the school. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask any questions if the information is not clear to you; we welcome your comments and suggestions. We strive to ensure a positive care and educational experience for you and your child.

The Palomar College San Marcos Campus ECELS is licensed for 120 children, ages 6 months to 5 years, and is open Monday – Friday from 7:30 AM- 5:30 PM. The Escondido ECELS is licensed for 44 children, ages 2.5-5 years, and is open Monday – Friday from 7:30 AM- 5:30 PM. All hours are subject to change based on program and family needs. Parents will be notified in advance of any changes to operational hours. See the “[Closures/Holidays](#)” section for a list of days that the ECELS sites are closed. Services are available to children of Palomar College students, faculty, staff, and children of the Community. Subsidized services are provided to the children of Palomar College Students, and to the children of any family within the community, who qualify/meet the guidelines set forth by the State of California (see [CA State Preschool Program](#) section).

Beginning the 2024-25 school year, the ECELS joined the San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI). By collaborating with SDQPI, it ensures that quality is sustained within the program. We are happy to share that both the San Marcos and Escondido ECE Lab Schools received a 5-star rating in their first year. We will continue to partner with SDQPI to maintain a high-quality program.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Palomar College ECELS welcomes the enrollment of children with disabilities and will provide reasonable accommodations whenever possible to aid access to and participation in services, programs, facilities, and activities. Program services and activities for enrolled families shall refrain from religious instruction, worship, or practices.

After our experience with the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a time when a document is created that would supersede parts of this Handbook. Please refer to the most current guidelines that will be distributed to all families.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Palomar College Early Childhood Education Lab School (ECELS) is to provide high-quality education and care for the children of students, staff, faculty, and community families. We serve as a model early childhood program which is available for academic, curricular, and research purposes, including student training, fieldwork, and observation.

We have committed ourselves to:

- Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle.
- Basing our work with children on knowledge of child development.
- Appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and the family.

- Recognizing that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society.
- Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual.
- Helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard.

The ECELS believes there are five important goals to be a successful program. They include children, families, staff, students, and the community.

Children

To provide a safe, stimulating, and developmentally appropriate learning environment in conjunction with a quality educational curriculum that assists the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth of all children.

Families

To create a supportive environment that accepts and promotes all parents as equal contributors to their child's education and the program. To communicate, educate, and partner with families by providing parent orientation, training, referrals, parent conferences, and family events that foster the family-school connection.

Staff

To provide a healthy, positive, and optimal team-teaching work environment that respects each employee's contributions to operate successfully. To advocate for a living wage, benefits, and compensation that is based on education, experience, and responsibility.

Students

To operate an exemplary program, with a welcoming atmosphere, providing guidance and support, for college students to observe and participate and includes Child Development student teachers. Students from any discipline who have projects involving work with children are also welcome.

Community

To exemplify and model a quality college campus-based program within the local community and California State system of Early Childhood Education. To advocate for children and families based on the premise of how important early learning is for individual future success and society as a whole.

Statement of Philosophy

Our learning philosophy at the ECELS is grounded in the research-based idea that children learn best through play. Children are given opportunities to explore their environment with hands-on activities. Concepts such as colors, shapes, letters, etc. are taught through activities and projects that pique their curiosity and relate to the world as they understand it. Our curriculum at the ECELS is based on the California Department of Education's Early Learning System (see [The Curriculum](#) section). We also use various curriculum approaches to create a unique, developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning experience for the children. The curriculum methods and models that are taught in the Child Development Department on campus are represented at the ECELS.

The ECELS acknowledges that parents are the child's primary teacher, and therefore, we strive to maintain a strong, positive home-school relationship with ongoing, open communication. Your child joins us to build upon their home experiences within this new environment of a school. We recognize that each child is a special and unique person. Your child's individual needs, feelings, language, and culture are acknowledged and respected.

Teachers and children work together to create a meaningful learning environment. We value the education of the whole child, by providing developmentally appropriate, open-ended activities, to stimulate the child's interests and problem-solving skills, in the areas of social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and creative growth. We also encourage the child to

initiate and follow through on their own ideas, to make choices, and to make decisions. The Staff trusts the child's abilities to accept responsibility and to succeed.

The ECELS views the child as an eager and active learner. Each child has a unique temperament, personality, style of learning, and pace of learning. Common to all children, however, is the need for hands-on, concrete experiences to assimilate new concepts and information from the world around them. By offering an open, accepting environment, each child is free to explore activities through different styles and develop the learning style with which they are most comfortable. The ECELS also strongly believes that central to this growth is the development of mutual respect and honest communication.

ECELS Program Goals

The ECELS program is based upon the growth and developmental needs of children from 6 months through 5 years. Each child grows and develops at an individual pace. Consequently, the curriculum is planned to meet the individual needs of each child, as they grow physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

For the Child: To provide a stimulating environment, with varied planned experiences to facilitate:

1. Growth and development of mental, social, physical, and emotional capacities.
2. Learning through play experiences.
3. Development of creativity, self-expression, self-control, responsibility, independence, and respect for self and others.
4. A multi-cultural and bias-free atmosphere.

For the Parent: To provide:

1. Opportunities to meet and work with other parents and teachers, who have as their common concern, the interests and needs of children.
2. Resources and support in the significant job of raising competent, caring children.

For the ECELS: To ensure all children are making progress in the domains of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development by:

1. Using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), a tool developed by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, to assess the development of children.
2. Assessing children within 60 days of enrollment and every six months thereafter.
3. Gathering parent input as a necessary component of this assessment.
4. Using the assessment to plan and conduct age and developmentally appropriate activities for the children.

The Curriculum

The ECELS utilizes the California Department of Education's (CDE) Early Learning System. This system consists of tools and assessments to ensure that all areas of development are addressed to maintain a quality program. The Early Learning System is comprised of the following interrelated tools:

- The [California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations \(PTKLF\)](#) outline key knowledge and skills that most children ages three to five and a half years old can achieve when provided with the kinds of interactions, instruction, and environments that research has shown to promote early learning and development. The foundations can provide preschool and transitional kindergarten (TK) educators, parents, and the public with a clear understanding of the wide range of knowledge and skills that children typically attain when given the benefits of a high-quality preschool program, whether it be in center-based, home-based, or TK settings.

- The [California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks](#) present strategies for early childhood educators that enrich learning and development opportunities for all of California’s preschool children. The Frameworks include ideas for how to intentionally integrate learning into children’s play; implement child-directed and teacher-guided activities; plan environments, interactions, routines, and materials that engage children in learning; and individualize curriculum based on children’s knowledge, skills, needs, and interests.
- [Desired Results Developmental Profile \(DRDP\)](#) – This assessment instrument is designed for teachers to observe, document, and reflect on the learning, development, and progress of children, from birth through kindergarten entry. Teachers use the DRDP to look at children’s growth and development. The DRDP informs teachers of a child’s progress and provides information for planning the child’s learning activities. See the Information for Families [brochure](#) for additional information.
- [Infant/Toddler & Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales \(ITERS/ECERS\)](#) – These assessment instruments are designed to assist teachers and leadership in examining their classroom environments, personal care routines, learning activities, interactions, and program structure. Information collected from the ITERS & ECERS is used to inform curriculum planning and improve program quality.
- [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\)](#) – CLASS defines teaching quality through the lens of interactions, it provides the ability to measure and improve the interactions that matter most for children’s outcomes. CLASS implementation will focus on high-quality interactions, measure the quality of those interactions, and improve teaching quality through individualized professional development.
- [CLASS Environment](#) – in collaboration with the CLASS tool, CLASS Environment offers a streamlined and comprehensive program to measure and improve the learning environments that matter most for supporting effective interactions between educators and children.

Best practice (developmentally appropriate practice) is an anti-bias concept based on the knowledge that a child’s development and ability to successfully accomplish certain physical and intellectual tasks follow a set pattern. For example, we know that the infant learns to crawl and then stand before learning to walk. The pattern is the same for all children; however, the rate at which a child learns these skills may vary.

Therefore, guiding our work with children is the belief that given appropriate opportunities and adult interaction, children learn and achieve skills when they are developmentally ready. If adults expect a child to acquire skills for which they are not ready, such as sitting still for long periods of time, they may comply, demonstrating that they can follow directions. However, this does not indicate that the child has acquired the skills or understood the concept of sitting still. Best practice provides caregivers with a framework for thinking about, planning, and implementing high-quality programs for your children and their families.

Each teacher develops a balanced, developmentally appropriate, and flexible program, to meet the needs of the children in their classroom. Our program follows the research findings of Jean Piaget and other noted child development experts, which state that children of this age need to be active in their learning environment, experiencing the world with all of their senses, through hands-on, concrete experiences, to assimilate information.

The staff also tries to have many one-to-one experiences with each child to help them: gain confidence and the ability to problem-solve and learn basic skills in all areas of development so that the transition to a more formal education in kindergarten is an easy step forward.

The curriculum is planned for the age span of the children in the group and is attentive to the needs, interests, and developmental levels of individual children. In addition to planning curriculum and activities, the curriculum emerges from the interests of the children and circumstances within the environment. Emergent Curriculum is a flexible approach to learning; the teachers have the freedom to adjust their planned activities to enhance student learning and foster a passion for learning. Opportunities to explore, investigate, experiment, manipulate, observe, and discover exist in all the following areas of the curriculum:

Physical Development: The program promotes each child's physical development by providing sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials, and guidelines for active play and movement. This includes games and activities that foster physical development- like climbing, balancing, eye-hand coordination, and dexterity of large and small muscle skills.

Dramatic Play: Activities that allow for the expression of real-life experiences and language, as perceived by the child. Children are learning every time they take on the perspective of someone else in their role play. They are learning what it feels like to be that hero or nurturing parent. Examples include doctor's offices, post offices, fix-it shops, housekeeping, restaurants, etc.

Language/Literacy: The program provides for the development of each child's cognitive and language skills by: using various strategies, including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, and exploration; ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue; promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults; and supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development. This is accomplished through story experiences including reading, listening, dramatizing and writing stories, group discussion with new vocabulary, dialoguing as children play, and introducing concepts like the alphabet.

Science: Activities that allow for the discovery of how things work, what will happen if ... and how things compare and go-together, experiments to test ideas and develop critical thinking, appreciation, and respect for nature and living things.

Math: Activities that reinforce math concepts such as patterning, matching, sorting, counting, classifying, and problem-solving.

Art: Art experiences, both free choice and planned, foster creativity and self-expression through exploration with different art media. The ECELS focuses on process driven art exploration. As such, crafts, coloring sheets, and other product-oriented activities are not considered to be best practice in the ECELS program. Any use of worksheets, coloring sheets, etc., should be cleared with the leadership team prior to use and are only considered in special circumstances.

Music/Movement: Opportunities to sing, play instruments, dance, and move creatively, with exposure to many different types of music.

Nutrition: Healthy meals and snacks are provided family-style (with the exception of the infant room). Children try new foods and do simple cooking projects.

Circle Time: Opportunity to participate as a group, including stories, songs, creative movement, discussions, and child participation. This helps strengthen attention span and develop a sense of classroom community, as well as respect for one another.

Social/Emotional: Our goal for each child is to provide a welcoming, warm, and accepting environment that promotes positive self-esteem, freedom to express feelings and needs, friendship and respect for others, and confidence in self-help skills with assistance from adults, as needed. The program supports children's social and emotional development by building trust; planning routines and transitions so they can occur in a timely, predictable, and unhurried manner; and helping children develop emotional security and facilitating social relationships.

Water Play: A variety of water play opportunities are available daily. Due to the weather and climate, water play is available throughout the year. It is very important to have a second set of clothing at school, so your child can be changed into dry clothing when they are finished with water play. Children gain sensory experiences, as well as science and pre-math opportunities from the water table.

Field Trips: All classrooms are encouraged to take walking field trips across the campus. The college has many great opportunities to offer to the children, and the staff takes advantage of them. Walks may include going to the arboretum, mailroom, cafeteria, clock tower, theater, library, or art gallery.

Beginning of School and Separation

Parents will be sent or given an orientation packet for the classroom that their child will be enrolled in; please read the orientation materials and direct any questions to the classroom Master Teacher. Parent orientation meetings will be offered at various times during the school year as new enrollments increase. When offered, parents are expected to attend an orientation meeting with their child's Master Teacher. The orientation meeting and packet will provide valuable information that will help both the child and the parent prepare for school.

To ease the transition before the child begins school, ***we encourage families to bring their child to visit the school at least once before the first day of school.*** Children will benefit from having some time to become familiar with the environment, teacher, and other students with the security of having their parent or guardian present.

When you bring your child for the first day of school, allow time to stay with your child before leaving for the day. Separation anxiety is normal for children; all children exhibit separation anxiety differently, but most children will cry, scream, tug at their parent's legs and arms, or run after the parent.

Our staff is trained to help children who are anxious, and these behaviors will diminish over time. For most children, the signs lessen within 5 to 15 minutes. Some children will show signs for 2 to 3 days, and others for several weeks. The Master Teachers are happy to give additional advice on how to make your child's transition to school easier.

Ways to Help with Separation Anxiety and Transitions:

1. ***Let Your Child Know What to Expect*** – Tell your child they will be starting school and mom/dad will be at work, school, etc. Get them excited about school; remind your child of the fun activities and new friends.
2. ***Be Consistent*** – Follow a daily routine.
3. ***Always Say Good-Bye*** – Children lose trust in their parents if they sneak out and leave without saying goodbye. No matter how difficult it is for you and your child, say goodbye, give a hug/kiss, and state "I will be back." Then leave the room or playground quickly. Your child's teacher will take care of your child's needs after this point.
4. ***Prepare Your Child for Any Changes*** – Even if your child's daily routine changes just a little, let them know what to expect. The more information and support you provide, the easier the transition will be for your child.

Cubbies/Family Files

Help your child learn to locate and recognize their individual cubby to encourage proper care of belongings. In each classroom, there is a file for artwork and important messages. It is the parent's responsibility to check their child's file daily.

Clothing

School is a place for investigating and hands-on learning. Clothing should not distract from classroom activities. Please avoid clothing that portrays violent characters (i.e. Ninja Turtles, Batman, Power Rangers, superheroes) as well as clothing that would inhibit active play (fancy dresses, slippery shoes, etc.). Some investigations become quite messy and/or wet. We may use smocks at the paint easel; however, the staff and the child will be more relaxed if they wear at school, the same play clothes worn at home. For water play and when the temperature is comfortable, children are given the freedom to wear a minimal amount of clothing. Younger children may wear only a diaper/underwear, and older children may wear swimsuits. If you have special instructions about how you would like your child to be clothed, please let the teacher know.

We appreciate clothing that is easily manipulated for toileting. Children are learning to do things for themselves, so please provide clothing that is easy to pull up/down, no snaps, onesies, overalls, or jeans with buttons. Your child will receive help only when it is impossible for them to manage themselves. Please send a spare set of clothing (including underwear and socks) that will be left in your child's cubby. Such clothing should be **labeled** and placed in a plastic bag. Children may borrow clothes from our supply if available, but if we do not have the item available, the child may be sent home. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that there is spare clothing (or diapers) in their cubby, so please monitor the supply daily.

If your child is wearing clothing borrowed from the school, please launder and return it **as soon as possible**. The school will not be financially responsible for lost or stolen personal items (or clothing) brought to school. We appreciate and accept clothing donations that have been outgrown.

For safety reasons, please keep "cowboy" boots, flip-flops, and "dressy" type shoes at home. No footwear should have a heel greater than ½". Children tend to have more injuries when wearing these types of shoes. We recommend tennis shoes or supported sandals with toe and ankle straps for warmer days. We give children the option of removing their shoes/socks in the classroom or outside. We provide a safe environment for this. Children cannot ride bikes or go on walks without safe footwear. **Children may be sent home if they do not have safe footwear.**

Items from Home

Toys

Please check with your child's teacher to see if the class holds a weekly "share time" and to learn about the procedures for participating. Appropriate items for sharing include books, photos, homemade projects, games, nature items, stuffed animals, and—only with prior approval from the Master Teacher—pets.

The ECELS does not permit children to bring weapons of any kind or toys that depict violent characters (such as Ninja Turtles, Batman, Power Rangers, superheroes, etc.).

Except on designated share days, we kindly ask that all toys be kept at home.

Please note that ECELS is not responsible for any personal items that are lost or damaged.

Medications/Snacks

In order to ensure the safety of all children, please check to make sure that no snacks or medications are traveling to school with your child or in your child's bag/backpack or pockets. Due to allergies, we have a program-wide no-nut policy. Due to other allergies, there may be additional items that need to be restricted in individual classrooms. Families will be notified as needed. Candy and gum are not allowed at school.

The danger with medications may seem obvious, but you may not have considered the Tylenol in the pocket of your child's backpack. Both prescription and non-prescription medications pose a danger. Due to licensing regulations, even over-the-counter items like ChapStick, vitamins, or lotion must be kept out of the reach of children. Please do not bring medications or over-the-counter items to school. You may find it easier not to use a backpack. Thank you for helping us protect the children by being vigilant with items that are brought to school.

Birthdays

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please speak with the Master Teacher ahead of time. If you're considering bringing a small treat for the class, be sure to coordinate with the Master Teacher and refer to the "[Treats/Snacks](#)" guidelines in the Food/Nutrition section.

If you choose to send birthday party invitations to school, please place them in each child's cubby or art file for parents to pick up. Party favors may be brought in, but they will be distributed at the end of the day (see list of party favor suggestions). Please note, it is the parents' responsibility to check all items brought home to make sure they are appropriate for their child. Thank you for helping us minimize classroom disruptions and ensure a smooth celebration for everyone.

Celebrating Holidays

The population at the ECELS is diverse and multicultural, bringing a wonderful richness to everyone's experiences. The ECELS is a place where adults and children from any background can feel comfortable, welcome and respected. We aim to celebrate holidays in a manner that is meaningful and age-appropriate for young children, focusing on developmentally supportive activities rather than commercial aspects of holidays. Below is our approach to holiday celebrations:

- General Holiday Approach:
 - We do not promote or encourage commercialized holidays (e.g., Valentine's Day, Halloween) in the classroom. This includes avoiding store-bought items such as cards or decorations that focus on material aspects.
 - Instead, we focus on learning experiences related to the essence of the holiday (e.g., friendship, appreciation, nature).
 - Holidays are acknowledged in a non-intrusive way, and celebrations should not interrupt the children's regular activities or routines.
- Examples of Holiday Activities:
 - Fall Harvest
 - Winter Wishes
 - Friendship Week
 - Hello Spring/New Beginnings
 - Parent Appreciation Breakfast/Brunch
- Cultural and Family Celebrations: We welcome families to share their own cultural traditions in a developmentally appropriate manner. For example, families might share cultural foods, instruments, or stories. This helps bridge home and school life while respecting diverse celebrations. Please contact your child's Master Teacher to coordinate any special cultural activities.

Behavior Policy and Procedures

Our goal is to maintain an environment with reliable and consistent boundaries, reasonable routines, procedures, and expectations. The teaching staff help children learn what should and should not be done, to be safe, to respect the equipment and others, and to become happy, self-reliant individuals. Positive discipline and redirection are used. We are teaching the children to express their needs and frustration with words, not actions. We want them to develop self-control, and the classroom must be a safe place for all children.

Redirection and natural and logical consequences are used when children are unable to follow classroom rules (i.e. throwing sand, hitting another child, throwing materials, biting...). A child will be given a choice of two different areas or activities. All classroom rules are made for the protection and safety of each child.

A key component in the operation of our ECELS is the cooperation between parents and staff. This is particularly true in the area of behavior. Positive discipline is used at all times. All adults in the preschool environment, including parents, will never use any corporal punishment, which is defined as physical harm to the child, including but not limited to: spanking, slapping, pulling arms or hair, and pinching. Verbal or emotional abuse (name-calling or making threats) is not permitted. We work with children to help them find alternatives to responding negatively in stressful situations and strive to make our program a safe place where physical and/or verbal abuse is not tolerated. The basic goal of all discipline will be to help the child learn self-control.

It is essential that children receive consistent messages about behavior at home and in our program. While we recognize that acting out, physical aggression, and disruptive behavior are all part of the normal child's developmental process, we also realize that there are times when parents and staff need to form an alliance to develop an action plan to limit challenging behavior.

If any persistent and/or serious behaviors progress to the point of disrupting the normal flow of classroom activity, the following procedures listed below will be followed. Persistent and serious behaviors are defined as either repeated patterns of behavior that significantly interfere with the learning of other children, or interactions with peers and adults that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance. This includes, but is not limited to, physical aggression, property destruction, and self-injury.

1. Immediate or natural consequences including removal from an activity or project, or loss of privilege will occur. We will then review our expectations with the child and inform the parents of the situation. At this time, we will share with the parent the current situation and what is being done in the classroom with the child. Parents will be asked to reinforce appropriate behavior at home.
2. If the behavior persists, the ECELS Leadership and/or the child's Master Teacher will meet with the parents or legal guardians to collaborate, and a plan of action will be developed. This will include an agreement or time frame for behavioral change, parental action, and/or program action. At this time, consultation with a specialist, such as a child or family therapist, may be suggested or required. The time frame for seeking referrals, implementation, and evaluation of an action plan with teachers and parents may not exceed 2 weeks after initiation.
3. Once the action plan is in place, if the child continues to exhibit persistent and serious behaviors, one or more of the following options may be implemented:
 - Suspension – means any removal of a child from all or part of the program day, or the prevention of a child from attending the program for one or more days, in response to the child's behavior.
 - Suspension will only be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances when there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated without removal of the child. To the greatest extent possible, the ECELS will attempt to ensure the full participation of the child in all program activities.
 - If suspension is deemed necessary, the ECELS will help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by doing at least, all the following:
 - Continuing to engage with the parents or legal guardians and continuing to use, and provide referrals to appropriate community resources, such as, but not limited to, an early childhood mental health consultant and the local resource and referral agency.
 - Developing a written plan to document the action and supports needed.
 - If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), the ECELS, with written parental consent, will contact the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to seek consultation on serving the child.
 - Expulsion – means the permanent dismissal of a child from a program in response to a child's behavior.
 - Prior to expulsion, if a child exhibits persistent and serious behaviors, the ECELS will:
 - Diligently pursue and document reasonable steps to maintain the child's safe participation in the program, including, but not limited to, consulting with the child's parents or legal guardians and teacher, and, if available, engaging an early childhood mental health consultant.
 - Provide written notice of the process that the ECELS follows to the parents or legal guardians of a child exhibiting persistent and serious behaviors. This will include a description of the behaviors of the child and the ECELS' plan for maintaining the child's safe participation in the program.
 - If the child has an IFSP or IEP, the ECELS, with written parental consent, will contact the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to seek consultation on serving the child.
 - Consider, if appropriate, completing a comprehensive screening to identify the needs of the child, including, but not limited to:
 - Screening the child's social and emotional development using resources such as, but not limited to, the "Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional" and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials.
 - Referring the child's parents or legal guardians to community resources.

- Implementing behavior supports within the program.
- If the ECELS has pursued and documented the above reasonable steps to maintain the child's safe participation in the program and determines that the child's continued enrollment would present a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, the ECELS may expel the child and will refer the parents or legal guardians to other potentially appropriate placements, the local childcare resource and referral agency, or other referral service available in the local community, and, to the greatest extent possible, support direct transition to a more appropriate placement. This determination to expel the child will be made in consultation with the parents or legal guardians of the child, the child's teacher, and, if applicable, the local agency responsible for implementing the IFSP or IEP, as described above.

The ECELS must follow the regulations outlined by the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) regarding suspension and expulsion. The most recent regulations are linked [here](#).

Reasonable Limits

Reasonable limits are set for safety and to provide a smooth-running program. All rules and guidelines fall into three main categories: we keep ourselves safe, we keep others safe, we keep our environment safe. For example,

- Walking is the way we move indoors.
- Talking, singing, whispering, and laughing voices are used in our indoor space.
- Sand must be kept down; it may not be thrown.
- The climbing equipment is safe for climbing; railings and fences are not.
- We encourage children to talk about their disagreements. We do not allow children to hurt other children, adults, or themselves.

Hours of Operation

The Escondido and San Marcos ECELS locations are open from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, all year, except for the holidays and dates of closure listed below. *Hours are subject to change.*

Closures/Holidays

The ECELS follows the Palomar College holiday/campus closure [calendar](#). We will be closed for the following holidays:

Fourth of July	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Labor Day	Lincoln's Birthday
Native American Day	Washington's Birthday
Veterans Day	Spring Break (1 week)
Thanksgiving Day and the day after (Friday)	Memorial Day
Winter Break (Approximately 2 weeks)	Juneteenth

The ECELS also retains the option of closing for Staff Professional Development Days (usually 3-5 days per school year). Please refer to the school calendar for the exact dates of these closures.

Arrival/Departure

Children's arrival and pick-up times **must** be consistent with your contract times or class schedule and certification documents. Due to the Department of Social Services Licensing requirements, ***all parents must sign in/out with the exact time of arrival/departure and full legal signature (first and last name) or digital sign-in/out each time. Initials are not allowed*** unless documentation is submitted to prove that initials are consistent with the legal signature. This sign-in

document provides a record of the children's actual attendance. It would also be used in case of an emergency to verify the number of children in attendance, so it is vital that you remember to sign in and out.

Each child is greeted by a staff member, who will check for signs of illness and ask parents for more information if there are any concerns. Sick children will not be admitted to school (see [Keep Me Home if I'm Sick](#) section). Arrival and pickup should be limited to 5-10 minutes. Otherwise, the children and their parents distract the group and their activities. It also causes the teachers to divide their attention, rather than focus on classroom activities and supervision.

Timely Arrival

Children must arrive early enough to allow for a smooth transition into the classroom. This expectation is driven by our classroom/teacher. Parent interactions are very important and valued in our program. Our Master Teachers want to be able to personally greet each family as they arrive. To ensure this happens before morning routines begin, we ask that families arrive with enough time to settle in and say goodbyes. Every classroom, from infants to preschoolers, has a lesson plan and curriculum. We are not a drop-in daycare, and the quality of our program suffers when there are constant interruptions. When children arrive late, it disrupts the learning opportunities and routines of the classroom. Out of respect for our teachers and program (from the youngest class to the oldest), we ask all families to prioritize arriving on time each day.

Delayed Arrival Due to Appointments

Children who have a doctor, dentist, or another service-related appointment before coming to school should plan to arrive early enough to transition smoothly into the day. If a child needs to leave school for an appointment and come back later, we ask that their return aligns with the classroom's routine, paying close attention to the nap time schedule. Children who will be napping at school should return before nap time begins, otherwise, we ask that families wait until nap time has ended to return. If your child is receiving ongoing services that require a modified schedule, please contact the leadership team. We appreciate your cooperation in making every attempt to schedule appointments accordingly.

Pick-Up/Late Charges

Once you have arrived at the school to pick up your child, it is your responsibility to let your child's teacher know that you have arrived and are taking your child. While on our site, it is your responsibility to supervise your child(ren), both enrolled children and siblings, and to observe and enforce our rules. **Children cannot be left unattended at any time, including in vehicles.** Please limit drop-off and pick-up to 5-10 minutes. Parents must sign out each child at the end of the day, with the departure time.

Only parents and/or adults over 18 years old, on the child's authorized pick-up list, with photo identification, will be able to sign the child out and remove the child from school. This ensures the safety of all children.

It is assumed that both parents are allowed to access their child at the school unless a copy of a current Court Order stating that the non-custodial parent cannot have access to the child is submitted to the ECELS leadership team. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the necessary documentation; otherwise, both parents would be allowed to pick the child up.

If an emergency arises and you are unable to pick up your child on time, please notify the ECELS leadership team or closing room staff by phone. Written authorization of permission must be given to the ECELS leadership team if someone not already on the authorized pick-up list will be picking up your child.

You may **not** drop off your child earlier or pick up your child later than the contracted time of arrival and departure without prior approval. **Three (3)** violation notices of this policy may result in the termination of childcare services.

Late Pick-Up Fees – Families must leave the site by the designated program end time per site. See site/program-specific information for times and additional information regarding the consequences of three (3) or more violations.

Non-Enrolled Children Visits

Siblings or former students are welcome to come and visit our program provided advance notice is given to the Master Teacher/ECELS leadership team , and there is an adult accompanying the child on-site during the visit. Parent(s) are responsible for the safety of their children and the ECELS will not be liable for loss or injury. **Children cannot be left unattended at any time, including in vehicles.**

Health and Social Services

We strive to maintain a positive environment for children and assist families in receiving additional services to support the health and well-being of the children in our care. The ECELS identifies the needs of the child and the family for health or social services through observation, interaction, and dialogue with the family. Master Teachers and/or Leadership staff will refer a child and/or family to the appropriate agencies in the community based on the health or social service needs. Follow-up procedures with the parent(s) will also be conducted to ensure that the needs have been met.

Immunizations/Physical

At the time of enrollment, we must review your child's up-to-date immunization record. The ECELS follows the immunization requirements that are made by the County of San Diego and the State of California. **Immunization requirements must be met before a child can begin, so please set your child's start date with this in mind. The start date on the contract is the date that fees will begin to be incurred; therefore, it is in the parent's best interest to ensure that immunization requirements have been fully met before committing to a start date.**

A physical examination form ([Physician's Report](#)), which includes a Tuberculosis (TB) screening, must be completed, signed by a physician, and returned to the ECELS leadership team prior to enrollment.

Keep Me Home If I Am Sick!

Your child should not be brought to the school if, **within the last 24 hours, the child has been sick.** It is important that you have **alternate care for your child.** The ECELS staff should be informed if your child will be absent due to illness, so we can watch for symptoms in other children.

The ECELS should be notified immediately if your child has contracted one of the common communicable childhood diseases such as COVID, RSV, measles, chickenpox, mumps, head lice, pink eye, streptococcal infections, sore throat, scarlet fever, or whooping cough. We can then alert other parents to watch for the symptoms in their children. **Children must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is sent home due to illness, they cannot return the next day.**

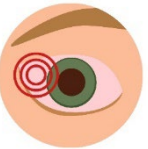
In addition to the guidelines below, children must be well enough to participate in all parts of the program to attend. If a child is lethargic, complaining of pain or discomfort, or otherwise not able to participate, the child will be sent home. If you are contacted to pick up your child, either a parent or someone authorized to pick up must arrive at the ECELS to pick up your child within 30 minutes.

Additional requirements may be necessary in the event of a public health emergency. Families will be notified if protocols differ from the above information.

To safeguard the health of all children and the staff, the ECELS will conduct a daily visual health check when your child arrives at school.

Parents must also **follow the guidelines below** when deciding if their child is well enough to attend school and participate in all parts of the program:

Sign/Symptom	Symptom definition and additional criteria for when the child should stay home
Abdominal pain/ stomachache 	Definition: Pain experienced anywhere between the chest and groin; pain may be continuous or may come and go. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Pain is severe enough that the child has difficulty participating in routine activities • Pain starts after an injury • Bloody or black stools • Diarrhea (see Diarrhea) • Vomiting (see Vomiting) • No urine for 8 hours (dry diaper, or ask older children if they have urinated since they woke up) • Fever (see “Fever” for return guidance)
Cough and cold symptoms 	Definition: May include runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, sneezing, congestion, body aches, and/or cough, typically lasting up to 7–10 days. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Fever (see “Fever” for return guidance) • Difficulty with or rapid rate of breathing (see “Difficult or noisy breathing”) • Cough is severe or the child cannot catch their breath after coughing • For a cough suspected to be associated with asthma: coughing that cannot be controlled by the medications that the school has been instructed to use.
Diarrhea 	Definition: Stools that are more frequent (typically at least two more than normal) or less formed than usual <i>for that child</i> AND not associated with a change in diet. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Stool not contained in the diaper or toilet (when toilet-trained) • Stool looks like it contains blood or mucus, or appears like sticky black tar • Yellow skin/eyes (jaundice) • Diarrhea that occurs during an outbreak, and exclusion is recommended by the local health department
Difficult or noisy breathing 	Definition: Wheezing (high-pitched sounds) that can be heard when a child breathes in or out, chest retractions (see below), OR extra effort is required to breathe. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Wheezing that is new for the child or cannot be controlled by medications the school has been instructed to use for known conditions (e.g., asthma plan) • Skin or lips seem purple, blue, or grey, depending on skin tone. • Fever (see “Fever” for return guidance) • Behavior changes • Very rapid breathing or increased effort to breathe • Breathing problem that causes the child to have pursed lips, difficulty speaking, or difficulty feeding

Sign/Symptom	Symptom definition and additional criteria for when the child should stay home
Earache 	Definition: Pain (dull, sharp, or burning sensation) experienced inside the ear. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Fever (see “Fever” for return guidance) • Behavior changes • Pain prevents participation in routine activities
Eye irritation, pink eye, or drainage 	Definition: Red or pink appearance to the white part of the eyeball. The child’s eye may also be itchy, have crusted/matted eyelashes, more watering than normal, or yellow/white drainage. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Problems seeing (vision changes) • An injury to the eye involving forceful impact to or penetration of the eye • Pain or discomfort that the child cannot tolerate • Discharge from one or both eyes
Fever 	Definition: An oral (under the tongue), temporal (forehead), rectal, or axillary (underarm) temperature above 100.0°F. Unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider, a child with another symptom or sign of illness who also has a fever should NOT attend school. Return when: • The child has been without a fever for at least 24 hours – without using fever-reducing medications, e.g., Tylenol®, Advil®, Motrin® (acetaminophen or ibuprofen); AND • Other symptoms (if applicable) are improving, and the child can participate comfortably in routine activities.
Headache 	Definition: Pain experienced in any part of the head, ranging from sharp to dull; may occur along with other symptoms. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has: • Concussion symptoms: Pain occurs after a fall or other injury to the head and is severe or associated with vomiting, vision changes, behavior change, or confusion.
Head Lice 	Definition: Head lice are parasitic insects that feed on human blood. You can find them mostly on your head, but also on your eyebrows and eyelashes. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Live lice • Nits (lice eggs)

Sign/Symptom	Symptom definition and additional criteria for when the child should stay home
Rash or itching 	Definition: An area of the skin that has changes in color or texture and may look inflamed or irritated. The skin may be darker than or lighter than normal, or red or purple. It may be warm, scaly, bumpy, dry, itchy, swollen, or painful. It may also crack or blister. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Oozing, open wound or infection that cannot be covered and is in an area that might come in contact with others. • Rapidly spreading dark red or purple rash (may indicate a rare but severe bacterial infection; usually accompanied by fever). • Tender, red area of skin, rapidly increasing in size or tenderness. • Associated symptoms of a serious allergic reaction (rash with throat closing, abdominal pain, vomiting, or wheezing). • Fever (see Fever for return guidance) • There is concern for a disease like chickenpox or measles. If this is the case, the child should see a healthcare provider, and the local health department should be contacted.
Sore throat (pharyngitis) and/or mouth sores 	Definition: Sore throat includes pain or irritation of the throat, often resulting from a viral or bacterial infection (e.g., cold, flu, strep throat). May feel worse when swallowing. Mouth sores include white patches on the tongue, gums, and/or inner cheeks, white/red spots in the mouth, blisters on lips or inside mouth, or painful ulcers inside cheeks or on gums (canker sores). May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Inability to swallow • Fever (see “Fever” for return guidance) • Breathing difficulties • Excessive drooling or muffled voice • Mouth blisters with fluid.
Vomiting 	Definition: Forceful expelling of stomach contents out of the mouth 1 or more times within 24 hours. May attend school <i>unless</i> the child has one of the following: • Vomiting occurs 1 or more times in 24 hours. • Fever (see “Fever” for return guidance). • Concern for a serious allergic reaction, such as hives appearing with vomiting. • Child has not urinated in the past 8 hours (i.e., has dry diapers, or ask older children). • Recent head injury. • Looks or acts very ill.
The above information has been adopted from the California Department of Public Health. Full guidance and information can be found here.	

Toileting and Diapering

Diapering

Diapering will be done only on the changing tables unless the child is in the process of toilet learning. Changing tables will be cleaned and sanitized following EACH diaper change. **Children are never left unattended on the changing table.** Toileting activities for children in diapers and toilet learning will be recorded on the Diaper/Potty Log for each relevant classroom. Diapering procedures are posted by each changing area for safety and consistency of care.

Toileting

When children are ready to begin potty training or toilet learning, the Master Teachers may use the *Home/School Agreement for Toilet Learning/Independent Toileting* agreement (see [Appendix A](#)). This document ensures that the families and the ECELS are in agreement about the expectations and requirements for toilet learning.

Bathroom practices:

- Children will be visually supervised at all times; including while they are in the bathroom.
- Toileting/diapering times are designated in the schedule for the infants and toddlers, however, children can choose to use the bathroom at any time.
- Since girls and boys use the same bathroom at the same time, the ECELS staff will be matter-of-fact when answering questions regarding differences in their bodies.
- Toilet “accidents” are normal. They are less common with older children but still may happen. If a child has an “accident”, the child will be reassured that we understand, and that we are there to support them in the process.
- Children will be supervised to ensure that they are washing their hands properly after using the bathroom.

Medication

Both over-the-counter and prescribed medications will be centrally stored away from children and administered according to the prescription instructions. These policies are for the protection of the children. The only over-the-counter medications permitted at the ECELS are antihistamines, sunscreen, and cream/ointment/lotions for diaper rash or extreme skin conditions. If a child requires medication (other than those listed below), parents should ask their physician to set a time that meets their schedule. For example, a parent might administer the medication when their child arrives at school, and when their child is picked up to return home. If needed, parents are welcome to come to the school to administer medication during the day, avoiding disrupting nap time (12:00-2:30 PM). Any parents with special problems or concerns, please discuss them with the Site Supervisor and/or Coordinator.

Sunscreen: At enrollment, parents receive information on the sunscreen used at the ECELS and will either grant or deny permission to apply. With parent permission, sunscreen (provided by the ECELS) will be applied at the discretion of the ECELS personnel with consideration to anticipated sun exposure on the given day, especially during the months of March through October, once in the morning and once in the afternoon as the children prepare to play outside. Parents are responsible to check the applications of sunscreen on the sunscreen log to stay informed of applications.

Diaper Rash Cream/Ointment: If a child requires diaper rash cream or ointment, the parent must complete an authorization form and provide the product to be administered. The ECELS staff will check whether a child is authorized to receive the medication prior to applying. Staff will record the applications on the Diaper/Potty Log. It is the parent’s responsibility to check the log to stay informed of applications.

Cream/Ointment/Lotion for Extreme Skin Conditions: If a child has an extreme skin condition, the parent must complete an authorization form and provide the product to be administered. Staff will record applications on the medication log. Parents are responsible to check the log to stay informed of applications.

Inhaler/Epi-Pen/Antihistamine: The ECELS administers medication for life-threatening illnesses while the child is at school. Inhalers, Epi-pens, and antihistamines are allowed with completed authorization forms. Staff will record the medication

administered on the authorization for medication form as well as an Ouch/Incident report for the parents to sign. If an Epi-pen is administered, the child must receive further medical care immediately following. See [Appendix B](#) for the Palomar College ECELS Plan of Operation – Incidental Medical Services.

Nap Time/Rest Policy

All children enrolled for a full day are required to have a nap/rest time. The exact time varies in each classroom. Most classrooms begin nap/rest time around 12:30 PM and the children begin to wake up around 2:30 PM. Please see your child's classroom schedule for exact times. We will turn off lights, and shade windows to assist in rest and relaxation, though there will be enough light for supervision.

Each child is provided with their own nap mat and sheet. Sheets are laundered, and nap mats are sanitized every week. Please provide a **small** blanket from home (should fit in cubby space with room to spare) and ask your child's Master Teacher for their classroom policy on favorite sleeping items.

After all the children are settled and the majority are sleeping, if your child is not asleep, they will be offered quiet activities on their nap mat such as books, puzzles, or coloring.

If you need to pick up your child during naptime, please inform the teacher when you drop off your child. The child will be napping in an area convenient for pick-up. Otherwise, you are expected to wait until the end of naptime to pick up your child.

Accidents

If an injury is deemed severe or life-threatening, we will seek immediate medical attention and notify the parents.

For any injuries above the shoulders, the parent will be notified. Head injuries can be dangerous, and we want to err on the side of caution when it comes to the health of the children in our care. The parent will have the opportunity to talk to the teacher to discuss the details of the injury and to decide whether or not to seek medical attention. If your child's injury seems to need medical review but is not severe, the child must be picked up within 30 minutes. If the parents are unavailable, the persons listed on the authorized pick-up list will be contacted. Any minor injury/bump/bruise will be documented with an "Ouch" Report by the child's teacher and placed in a central location per classroom. Parents need to sign and keep the white copy and return the colored copy to the ECELS for their child's file.

Food and Nutrition

Our program participates in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) that provides reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks served to children. In accordance with the regulations of the CACFP, we plan and serve nutritious meals to ensure that the children have the energy to learn and play at no cost to the families. All families are welcome to apply for the CACFP, but it is not a requirement. Reimbursement rates are higher for families that qualify in the "Free" and "Reduced-Price" categories according to income, category, or automatic eligibility (according to CACFP requirements for eligibility). Families that opt not to apply will be claimed at the lowest "base" rate. Applications are valid for one year, so families that choose to will need to reapply annually.

All meals and snacks are culturally and developmentally appropriate for the children being served and meet the nutritional requirements specified by the CACFP. Menus are posted in a prominent location of the lobby, rotated every week, and updated as needed.

In the **full-day classrooms**, meals are served to enrolled children at no additional cost at the following approximate times:

- Breakfast 8:30 AM
- Lunch 11:30 AM
- Snack 3:00 PM

In the **part-day classrooms**, meals are served to enrolled children at no additional cost at the following approximate times:

- Breakfast 8:30 AM (for children enrolled in the morning program)
- Snack 3:00 PM (for children enrolled in the afternoon program)

We serve meals family-style at both sites. Family-style meal service is a type of meal service that allows children and adults to serve themselves from communal platters of food with assistance from supervising adults if needed. Family-style meal service allows children and adults to be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good eating habits. Unlike other types of meal services, family-style meals afford some latitude in the initial portion of food that is served. Additional servings of each food are readily available at each table and more can be served at any time. Water is available to children throughout the day both indoors and out.

Please alert the ECELS Leadership staff and teaching staff of any allergies (food or otherwise) your child may have. Allergies will be listed on your child's Emergency Form as well as our Allergy List. **We are a nut-free program, so items containing nuts are not allowed.** Substitutions for dietary restrictions can be made as permissible by the CACFP but may require a signed doctor's statement.

Milk – Milk is served at breakfast and lunch at both sites and with most afternoon snacks at the Escondido site.

- **Whole milk** is served to children **under 2 years old**
- **Skim/non-fat or 1% fat milk** is served to children **2 years old and older**

If a child cannot consume fluid milk due to a medical or other special dietary need, the following options are available:

- Lactose-Free milk is allowable according to the guidelines above regarding age and percentage of milk fat.
- For children who have medical or special dietary restrictions (not defined as a disability), a non-dairy milk substitute that is nutritionally equivalent to milk may be served instead at the written request of a parent or guardian using a "[Parental Request for a Fluid Milk Substitution for Children in ChildCare](#)". If a non-dairy substitute is requested, families must choose one of the soymilks listed in [Appendix C](#), as these products have been reviewed by the ECELS Leadership Team and meet the CACFP requirements.

Any menu substitutions made for non-disabled children must meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. Food substitutions (including lactose-free milk and non-dairy milk alternatives) for non-disabled children are to be supplied by the parent.

Children with disabilities with special dietary needs that have been documented with a signed medical statement by a recognized medical authority will be accommodated by the ECELS.

Please refer to the following links for CACFP meal patterns that include portion sizes and food requirements for breakfast, lunch, and snacks: [infants](#), toddlers, and preschoolers ([breakfast](#) and [lunch](#)). Most parents choose to provide their infant's meals in the ECELS infant room. Please contact the leadership team for further information.

Please refer to the USDA Non-Discrimination Statement under [Disclosures](#) for additional information.

Treats/Snacks

We understand that families sometimes want to bring in treats for special occasions like birthdays or the last day of school. Here are the guidelines for bringing in food to the classroom:

- **Treats for Special Occasions:** Treats are acceptable for **birthday celebrations** or other special events, but **not for holiday celebrations** (e.g., Valentine's Day, Halloween). These holidays are celebrated through other non-commercial activities, as outlined in the [Celebrating Holidays](#) section.

- **Food Guidelines:**

- **Pre-approval Required:** Please get approval from your child's Master Teacher or the office **before** bringing in any treats. Treats without prior approval may be denied.
- **Store-Bought Only:** To ensure safety and to avoid allergens, all treats must be store-bought so we can verify ingredients.
- **No Nuts or Nut Products:** Treats cannot contain peanuts or any other nuts. Items made in nut-free facilities are acceptable if they do not list nuts as an ingredient.
- **Healthy Snack Options Encouraged:** We encourage treats that are healthier, such as fruit or vegetable-based popsicles (100% fruit/vegetable), fruit kabobs, or smoothies. Large, store-bought items like Costco-sized cupcakes should be avoided.

Non-Food Activities: We also encourage families to consider **non-food activities** to celebrate, such as bringing in a book to read, sharing a special skill or craft, or organizing a simple game. Please talk to your child's teacher for ideas.

Additional School Policies

No Cell Phone Zone

In an effort to ensure that attention is properly given to the children and their supervision, we have a no cell phone policy. Please refrain from using your phone while on our site.

Palomar College Policies

Palomar College is a smoke-free, alcohol-free, and drug-free campus. Please refer to the complete [Code of Conduct](#) on the Palomar College website for further details.

All of the Board Policies and Administrative Policies are on the Governing Board [website](#) such as:

- Harassment policies ([BP 3430](#) [AP 3430](#) [AP 3435](#))
- Sexual harassment ([BP 3433](#) [AP 3433](#) [AP 3434](#))
- Weapons policy ([BP 3530](#) [AP 3530](#))
- Drug policy ([BP 3550](#) [AP 3550](#) [AP 3560](#))

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a school or campus emergency, we will be utilizing an automated emergency contact system. This system will deliver a message via text and email. The cell phone must permit SMS (allow text messages). When your child is out of your care, you should always retrieve your texts and messages right away. If there is an emergency, there needs to be someone available to pick up your child in 30 minutes or less. Parents should have a plan in place to have an authorized person (someone listed on the Enrollment Form) pick up their child in case they are unable to pick up their child within 30 minutes. It will be the parent's responsibility to arrive within 30 minutes or send an authorized person to pick up their child.

If both parents will be out of town, they can fill out a form to designate another person or persons to receive automated emergency information for a specified amount of time. In the event of an emergency, the designated person will be contacted via the automated system for the designated time period. The original automated emergency contacts (usually the parents) will not be altered, so they will still receive the automated message(s).

The ECELS prepares for emergencies by practicing disaster drills at least once a month. If a major emergency occurs that requires the children and staff to evacuate the school buildings, the staff and children will be either on an ECELS playground, at the evacuation assembly area in our ECE parking lot, the soccer field next to our site (San Marcos campus only), or at a safe site of which you will be informed.

Parent Responsibilities to the ECELS

You are required to keep all information current on the Enrollment Forms. Please notify the ECELS leadership team of any personal changes, such as an address, phone number, class and/or child schedule changes, changes in custody, changes to the authorized pick-up list, etc. **immediately**. Temporary or one-time-only changes must be noted in writing and given to the ECELS leadership team. Enrollment information must be updated at least annually. Parents are responsible to provide diapers and wipes for their children ([EC 8254](#)). It is assumed that any information we give to one parent in the family will be shared with the other parent.

All family members are expected to communicate respectfully with all ECELS staff and engage in collaborative communication. Family members are expected to refrain from any profanity, discrimination, harassment, or any other activity or behavior that could present risk or harm to any individuals related to the ECELS.

Soliciting Staff for Babysitting or Childcare

Soliciting our staff or family members of our staff for babysitting or childcare in a private setting **is strictly prohibited**. Because it could impair the effectiveness in working with children in our program, babysitting of any kind for current families is NOT ALLOWED by ECELS employees or their family members. Families are able to contact the [Child Development Department](#) about posting potential student job opportunities.

Termination/Withdrawal of Services

Reasons for Termination of Services Initiated by ECELS:

- Fees are not current.
- Three (3) Policy Violation Notices.
- A child exhibits excessive out-of-control behavior, i.e. the child is causing harm to themselves, other children, and/or staff members.
- A child's behavior indicates they are not adjusting to the program or significantly disrupts the program for other children.
- Activity or behavior from either the child and/or the child's family that presents a risk or harm to any child, parent, childcare provider, CHDV student, visitor, or staff member, representative, or the facility (example: using profanity, making threats, harassing the individual, endangering the safety or life of the individual, destroying property, or any other activity or behavior that violates personal rights).
- Failure to comply with any of the ECELS Policies and Procedures.
- The family no longer qualifies for services.

Palomar College Students

The Palomar College ECELS is also a learning facility for Palomar College students. Each semester, you will see **observation students** in the classrooms and yards. During the semester, you may also see **student teachers** from the Child Development Department participate in the school classrooms. These student teachers have completed all of their coursework and will be completing either an AS degree and/or a Child Development Certificate. The Master Teacher and student-teacher work together to plan activities, change the environment, and plan the class schedules. Over the course of the semester, the student teachers are given more responsibility, and are always under the supervision of the ECELS staff. All visitors, observation students, and student teachers are required to wear an identification badge provided by the ECELS office.

The safety of the children at the ECELS is of utmost importance. Student observers and student teachers are always under the direct supervision of an ECELS teacher, never left alone with children, and do not assist with diapering or taking children to the restroom. Student teachers and observation students do not count in the teacher-to-student ratios. Their role is to observe the children and interact with the children (as assigned), without disrupting the daily routine.

Parent/Community Involvement

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit the school anytime during the day. Families are welcome to share special skills, talents, or interests with the children. Please coordinate classroom activities with your child's Master Teacher. Parent-Teacher conferences are offered to all families in the fall and spring to review the child's progress and share any questions or concerns. Informal and formal parent conferences may be arranged at any time with the Master Teacher, Site Supervisor, and Coordinator. We also share classroom and program news with families regularly via the ECELS newsletter and program updates.

Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is a support service for parents, as well as a vital part of the ECELS. The PAC assists in planning events throughout the school year, such as a Parent Appreciation Breakfast, family concerts, Family Fun Night, etc. At some extra-curricular events, a reasonable fee may be charged to help offset the cost of the event. The PAC raises money to help the school purchase supplies and materials not covered in the general budget. The PAC presents informational meetings on issues of interest to parents. Topics of these meetings have included: child abuse, parenting classes, school readiness, stress reduction, developmentally appropriate activities, and positive guidance strategies for discipline. Please suggest topics of interest to you.

Attendance is open to all parents who have children at the ECELS. The Coordinator/Site Supervisors of the ECELS will provide guidance and feedback for the PAC. The PAC can choose their own meeting schedule, however, it is recommended they meet 3-4 times each year. Notices of meetings are distributed via email, announced in the newsletter, and signs are also posted. If childcare is provided for enrolled and/or non-enrolled children for a parent meeting or other ECELS activity, the parent(s) must remain on site.

Community Involvement

The ECELS solicits support from both the on-campus and off-campus communities. Being with Palomar College provides a rich and diverse community from which to enhance our program. We work closely with various departments to bring interesting and unique opportunities to the children – including, but not limited to:

- Collaborating with the Child Development Department, Dance Department, Campus Police, Sciences Department, Math Department, Nursing and Dental Departments, etc.
- Solicitation of donated goods and services (art project supplies, paper, etc.)

The ECELS provides information to the community regarding the services available through our website, printed material, newsletters, etc.

Program Excellence – Feedback, Suggestions, Parent Surveys

We strive for excellence and welcome feedback regarding our program. Families will be invited to provide feedback at least once a year by completing a Parent Survey. We will also send out a survey about 45 days after enrolling for parents to let us know what they think about our program. In addition, when a family exits our program, we will invite them to complete an exit survey. We will use these responses to improve our program.

Parent Concerns

If an employee, parent/guardian, or student has an issue or suggestion regarding health, safety, or other concerns, they may contact the ECELS staff in the following order:

1. Master Teacher
2. Site Supervisor
3. Coordinator

If there is no resolution of the situation at the ECELS level, the parent may contact the College Administrative Members in the following order.

1. Dean of Social & Behavioral Sciences
2. Assistant Superintendent/Vice President, Instruction
3. Superintendent/President of the College
4. Palomar College Governing Board

If there is a problem with unclean or unsafe facilities that is not resolved in the steps above, the employee, parent/guardian, or student may contact: Community Care Licensing

For the San Marcos site:

San Diego Regional Office
7575 Metropolitan Dr., Suite 110, MS 29-20
San Diego, CA 92108-4421
Phone: (619) 767-2200
Fax: (619) 767-2203

For the Escondido site:

Riverside South East Regional Office
3737 Main Street, Suite 700, MS 29-858
Riverside, CA 92501
Phone: (951) 782-4200
Fax: (951) 782-4985

Complaints Alleging Discrimination related to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

A complaint is a written or verbal statement alleging discrimination based on one or more of the six protected bases in the CACFP: race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Anonymous complaints are also acceptable as long as there is sufficient information provided to proceed with an investigation.

Any staff, parent, or guardian of a participant or potential participant in our program may file a complaint in writing or verbally to the ECELS Civil Rights Coordinator – René Robelin – Site Supervisor, at 760-744-1150 Ext. 3375 or rrobelin@palomar.edu. A complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action. The Civil Rights Coordinator will complete and file the Program Discrimination Complaint Form with the U.S. Department of Agriculture according to the instructions on the USDA website. For staff complaints regarding discrimination outside of the CACFP, please see Title IX section in the employee operation manual.

San Marcos General Information

Parking Lot Safety/Parking

Safety is one of our utmost concerns. It is vitally important that each family **use extreme caution when entering and exiting our site**. The stop signs in front are exactly that – stop signs. Please come to a complete stop and wait for any pedestrians to cross. If you are a pedestrian, please use the crosswalk signal as an additional way of making your presence more visible, and always hold your child's hand. When entering our parking lot in front of our site, please use the sidewalk around the perimeter of the parking lot; **do not walk through the parking lot as this poses an additional danger**. We have requested that Campus Police monitor and enforce the law where safety is concerned, so you may see them in front of our site.

Please plan to allow additional time for the first weeks of each semester so that you can give proper attention to these safety guidelines.

There are several options for parking near the ECELS that do not require a parking permit. **Please be considerate of others when choosing where to park.**

- **30-Minute Drop-Off/Pick-Up** – These spots are intended for quick drop-offs/pick-ups and no permit is required. Limit parking in these spots to 30 minutes or fewer. If you would like to make a phone call or do other activities not related to picking up, please use the spaces in lot 9 to free up space for other parents.
- **Special Parking** – As stated on the special parking space signs in front of the school in lot 9, the spaces are reserved **for drop-off and pick-up only, from 7-9 AM and 3-6 PM**. The spaces are not to be used for general parking (requiring a permit) until 9:00 AM.

The spaces that require a parking permit are listed below.

- **Student Families:** Many of our families are from the community and do not have a parking permit to park in the general parking spaces. Out of consideration for our community families, ***please park in the student spaces near the ECELS in lot 9***. The special parking spaces are reserved for *drop-off and pick-up only before 9:00 AM and between 3-6 PM*. If you park in the special parking spaces, ***once you have dropped off your child, please find a designated student spot to park in***. The special parking spots need to be available to other families dropping off or picking up. Students parking in the special parking spaces during drop-off and pick-up time (and not dropping off or picking up), ***will be cited by Campus Police***, whether or not they are present in the car.
- **Faculty/Staff Families:** We have over 20 staff members with staff parking permits and only 14 staff spots. Your consideration for our staff members when parking would be greatly appreciated. If the special parking spaces for drop-off and pick-up are all being used, staff and faculty permits allow parking in student spots, so you may park in open student spaces. ***Please leave the staff spots in Lot 9 for ECELS staff.***

Parking for family events at the ECELS – If there is a scheduled family event, we make agreements with Campus Police to use lot 9 without requiring a permit. Please do not park in the 30-minute spots directly in front of our site if you are staying for an event. We continue to work closely with Campus Police to ensure that the parking spaces are being used appropriately. We appreciate your cooperation as we seek to improve the drop-off/pick-up process.

Waiting List Process

Applications and waitlist are prioritized in the following order according to the month they are submitted. Families with approved funding through an alternate funding source (CDA, YMCA, CalWORKs, etc.) will receive priority for enrollment under each of the following categories:

1. Children of currently enrolled Palomar College students.
2. Children of Palomar College employees.
3. Children from the community (anyone who is not affiliated with Palomar College).

For Currently Enrolled Families: Returning children get first priority, then siblings (in the family) that need space. If you would like to place a sibling on the waitlist, please let the leadership team know. If a parent needs 5 full days, and only 2 or 3 days are available, the ECELS leadership team will call or email the parent to ask if they will accept the space available. This will put any additional time needed by this child on our internal priority list.

For New Families: A wait list application may be completed online [here](#). To receive priority enrollment, students must be enrolled for the semester they're seeking services.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the ECELS of any changes to their contact information and to respond promptly to any offers of enrollment. Families can decline space one time and maintain the original waitlist application date. If offered space a second time and declined, the original application date will be replaced with the second declined date, so the waitlist application will drop in priority for future space. If we do not hear from you within 7 days, the application will be removed from our system.

The ECELS enrolls year-round as space becomes available. For the **Infant Program**, infants must be at least six months old and mobile (scooting, crawling, etc.). For the **Toddler Program**, toddlers must be at least eighteen months old; they may begin on or after the day they turn 18 months, provided there is space in the classroom. Children are enrolled mid-year on a case-by-case basis.

Enrollment

Once a family has paid the non-refundable registration fee, the spot is secured with the expectation that their child will begin within the next 2 weeks. A child's enrollment can begin at the ECELS after the contract has been signed and all paperwork has been returned and processed.

Classroom placement is based on several factors, including space availability and the age/developmental readiness of the child. It is our policy to place siblings in different classrooms. Exceptions require the Coordinator's approval.

We have found that it is very beneficial for new students to visit our program with their parent(s) and become familiar with the environment and staff before beginning school. Please schedule a time with the ECELS leadership team to visit your child's classroom prior to their first day of enrollment. Families will be provided orientation information before their child's start date.

Enrollment Schedules

Children may enroll for a full five-day-a-week schedule or a part-week schedule, with a minimum of two days per week. The following are approved schedules:

- 5 days a week: Mon-Fri
- 4 days a week: Mon-Thurs or Tues-Fri
- 3 days a week: M/W/F or T/Th/F
- 2 days a week: M/W, M/F, W/F, or T/Th

Requests for a schedule other than those listed above will be handled on a case-by-case basis. While we will do our best to accommodate families, consideration must also be given to our program goal of full enrollment. Schedules other than those pre-approved schedules listed, like T/W/Th or M/W/Th, will continue to be granted as long as it does not prevent another family with an approved schedule from enrolling on the "odd" day. If this happens, a two-week notice will be given, alerting the family with an "odd" schedule; the family will be informed of the schedule options available and will need to switch in the given timeframe. If you need to adjust your child's schedule for a certain day or days, you must receive prior approval. Please contact the ECELS leadership team with requests.

Absences

Absences are to be reported as early as possible via email to ecels@palomar.edu. If your child is absent due to an illness and the illness is contagious, please share that with us so that we can alert parents to possible exposure. No credit is given for illnesses or other absences. **Contract days cannot be traded.**

Adding/Dropping Enrollment Days

A two-week notice is required for dropping days; however, children must remain enrolled a minimum of two days per week. Families can request to add days or hours of enrollment and the change can be made as soon as there is space available in the classroom to add the days or hours. If there are no immediate openings, the child will be given priority on the internal waiting list for space according to the date the change was requested.

Fees (non-CSPP families)

Fees are charged monthly. The total fees for the year are distributed between the 12 months. The monthly fees are calculated by taking the fees for our total number of days of enrollment, including holidays and professional development days for the year, and dividing by 12. The two weeks we are closed for winter break and the week for spring break were not counted as days that fees would be incurred. The monthly fees remain the same for every month unless there is a change in schedule (removing days, adding days, or withdrawing services), in which case fees will be prorated.

Please refer to the current [Rate Chart](#) online or your current Contract. The ECELS contract with families is a legally binding agreement. Families will be bound to abide by the terms of the contract. Exceptions will not be made.

Fees will be incurred on enrollment days regardless of absences, holidays, or emergency closure of the school. We value our teachers and feel that it is important to pay our teachers for holidays, professional development days, and emergency closures, therefore, you do pay for these days that occur on your enrollment days. Please refer to the current ECELS calendar to view the planned annual closures. Emergency closures include, but are not limited to, natural disasters (fire, flood, earthquakes, etc.), pandemics, or other safety issues deemed necessary for closure by Palomar College or County Office of Health. Temporary emergency closures are defined as closures of 14 consecutive calendar days or fewer. Extended emergency closures are defined as closures longer than 14 consecutive calendar days. Neither refunds nor credits will be issued for temporary emergency closures. For extended emergency closures, fees will not be charged after the first 14 consecutive calendar days until services resume. Since we know emergency closures may be difficult for families, we created a grant for our ECELS families that are experiencing financial hardship due to any emergency closure. The grant application is a quick and easy in-house application. Families who are awarded a grant will have future tuition fees credited accordingly.

Fees are due and payable on the first of every month in advance of providing services. A \$25.00 late charge will be assessed per child after the 7th of the month if fees have not been received. Payments sent in the mail and postmarked by the 7th of the month will be considered on time. Our goal is to pay our teachers a worthy wage with benefits and to ensure we have resources for an exemplary program; therefore, enrollment fees and registration/material fees will increase by approximately 2-5% annually.

Change of Fee Category: The fees for currently enrolled infants will change to the lower fees (18 months to 3 years old) the month after they turn 18 months-old and transition to the Toddler Option Program. The month after a child turns three-years-old and meets our definition of potty trained, or when a child that is over three-years-old meets the definition, the monthly tuition fees for the child will be changed to the lower rate as defined on the current fee schedule for the year.

Potty Trained Defined: The child wears underwear all day (no diapers or pull-ups) and expresses the need to use the restroom and does so for both urinating and bowel movements on a daily basis consistently for at least 2 weeks.

Non-Sufficient Funds: Any family with a returned payment for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF)/bounced check will be responsible to pay the fees due from the original payment plus a late fee of \$25 (if received after the 7th). Additionally, the

District charges a \$20 fee for personal checks returned for insufficient funds, which will be collected at the ECELS and forwarded to the Cashier's Office (AP 5030). Payment for NSF will be limited to cash, cashier's check, or money order **only**. A family with NSF may be limited to the above payment options for future payments at the discretion of the ECELS leadership team.

Withdrawal of Services Initiated by the Family: One month's written notice must be given to the ECELS leadership team when children are withdrawn. Without exception, families are responsible for fees incurred up until the end date of the one month's notice.

Past Due Fees: If fees are not paid by the 20th, the ECELS may issue a warning for termination of services notice. In order to halt the termination of services, arrangements must be made to pay the fees in full. Families with an overdue balance will be ineligible for services until the balance is paid and the account is current.

Failure to Sign-In/Out Fee: Due to the Department of Social Services Licensing requirements, ***all parents must sign in/out with the exact time of arrival/departure and full legal signature (first and last name) or digital sign-in/out each time. Initials are not allowed*** unless documentation is submitted to prove that initials are consistent with the legal signature. This sign-in document provides a record of the children's actual attendance. It would also be used in case of an emergency to verify the number of children in attendance, so it is vital that you remember to sign in and out.

Failure to sign your child(ren) in or out will result in a \$10.00 charge per child per occurrence.

Late Pick-Up Fees: Families must leave the site by 5:30 PM; the doors will be locked at that time. The ECELS does not have the budget for overtime wages for the ECELS staff, therefore, it is important to pick-up your child on-time so our staff can end their shifts. Any parent remaining in the building past 5:30 PM will be charged a late fee, regardless of the time that the child is signed out or when the parent arrived. Late pick-up fees apply to the part-day program, where pick-up is 12:15 PM, and the full-day program at closing at 5:30 PM and are per child. Please note: Hours are subject to change and late fees will apply after program hours.

Fees are \$1.00 for every minute past 12:15pm (part-day) and 5:30pm (full-day).

Every late pick-up after the third offense in one program year, a \$20 fee will be charged in addition to the \$1.00 per minute fee per child.

Extra Day Enrollment

If space is available, you can request to enroll your child for an extra day. There is a \$10 (non-refundable) fee per day in addition to the daily fee for this service. Please request at least one week in advance. Once requested and approved, we order food and make staffing arrangements per your request. Therefore, at least one business days' notice is required to change or cancel without being charged the daily fee (the \$10 extra day fee will still be charged). If the request to cancel has not been received at least one business day before the approved extra day, or the child is otherwise absent, the daily fee plus the \$10 fee will still be assessed.

Vacation Credit

Vacation credit is offered exclusively with continuous enrollment and 12 full months of paid fees for the entire school year (children must be enrolled July 1 – June 30 and fees paid for all 12 months). Written notification must be submitted at least a week prior to the vacation time planned, and the child must be absent from the program on the dates the credit is requested. The credit will be applied to the account in June (the last month of the contract), and the maximum amount credited is equivalent to the fees for a one-week enrollment period. Vacation credit is valid for days of actual attendance only; not available during school closures. Vacation credit must be used by the end of the school year (June 30) and does not transfer from year to year. If there are changes in the fees throughout the year, the credit will be applied at the rate

that was charged for the majority of the year. If vacation credit is applied to the account and the full contract period is not fulfilled, the credit will be canceled if not yet issued or charged back to the account if already issued.

How to Make a Payment

Payments can be made by choosing one of these options:

- Credit Card
- Personal check
- Cashier check
- Money order
- You may also choose to set up monthly payments with your bank or credit union using the bill pay feature.

Please make checks payable to: **Palomar College ECELS**

(If you would like to leave the “pay to the order” area blank, we have a stamp in the office and we will stamp it.)

Payments should be dropped off at the ECELS Office or mailed to:

Palomar College ECELS
Attention: ECELS Leadership
1140 W. Mission Road
San Marcos, CA 92069

Alternate Funding Agencies/ Alternative Payment Programs

The ECELS works in conjunction with several alternative funding agencies such as YMCA, CDA, CalWORKs, TANF, and CCAA. This section applies only to families that have been approved by alternative funding agencies. Families with approved services with these programs will be responsible to comply with the funding agency’s requirements. The family is required to sign-in and out digitally through Care Connect every day. It is the family’s responsibility to review and sign the monthly attendance report and ensure it is accurate; a digital signature will be required.

Fees for the first month will be prorated if the start date does not coincide with the beginning of the month. The fees for the prorated period will be calculated at the daily rate multiplied by the number of enrolled days (including holidays and staff development days, if applicable) and that amount will be billed to the funding agency. The following months will be charged to the funding agency at the monthly rate. The funding agency will reimburse according to your approved schedule with them, attendance, documented reimbursement rate, and their billing policies. Any fees not covered by the funding agency will be the responsibility of the family to pay. Please refer to the [current fee schedule](#) and enrollment information and compare it with the funding agency reimbursement rate. Once a Notice of Action is issued by the funding agency with the reimbursement rate, an ECELS Leadership member can assist in calculating the estimated difference (if any) that will be your family’s responsibility. The monthly tuition is the same every month, even when the ECELS is closed (for example, during the winter and spring breaks), which may affect your family portion due. Each month your family will be informed of any amount that the funding source did not cover, and you will be responsible to pay any amount not covered. Fees will be due within 2 weeks of the notice of your portion as indicated in the email or paper notification that is sent. If the payment is not received by the due date, services will be terminated. In order to halt the termination of services, payment of the fees in full must be received. Families with an overdue balance will be ineligible for services until the balance is paid and the account is current.

Although your funding source reimbursement may be received a month or longer after being submitted, you will still be responsible for any portion of fees even after withdrawing or exiting the program according to the terms of your legally binding contract with the ECELS.

California State Preschool Program (CSPP)

Palomar College is able to provide funded services for qualifying families through a contract with the California Department of Education (CDE). Families must qualify according to the eligibility requirements listed below. The income guidelines change year to year but can be found on the CDE website [here](#) in the Management Bulletin for the current school year. Depending on the family size and income, reduced family fees may apply for full-day CSPP services.

For Palomar College students and community families who seek **full-day** subsidized services, the parent(s) must meet the “need” requirements for services. For example, the parent(s) must be in school and/or working and there is no other parent or adult legal guardian at home who could take care of the child.

Requirements for funded services are based on California Code Regulations (CCR) Title 5, the California Department of Education Program Requirements for California State Preschool Programs (CSPP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). While every attempt has been made to align our policies with the most current requirements from those sources if there is a discrepancy, CCR 5, CDE Program (CSPP), and CACFP regulations supersede the information provided here. CSPP Program requirements can be found [here](#).

Please note that we do not have funded services available to children who do not qualify as a CSPP three-year-old or four-year-old (see definitions below). If your child is too young to receive services under these requirements, we suggest applying for alternate funding through the [Central Eligibility List](#). Our San Marcos site accepts alternate funding resources that help families pay tuition fees (CDA, YMCA, TANF, etc.). See the [Alternate Funding Agencies/Alternative Payment Programs](#) section for more information. **To ensure that we can best serve your family when space becomes available, please let us know if you are approved for funding through one of those agencies.** Children may only attend the ECELS after your application and certification documents are finalized.

Family Selection Process/Waitlist

Families requesting funded services must first fill out a waitlist application for services on our website [here](#). Parents seeking funding will need to provide their accurate **gross monthly income** and family size. The Student ID number is requested to verify enrollment in classes at Palomar College. Applications are prioritized based on a ranking number, which is determined by the parent’s gross monthly income and family size as prescribed by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division. See the [admission priorities](#) section for more information on priorities.

How to Qualify for the Funded Program

To qualify for CSPP **part-day** services, families shall meet the eligibility criteria. Families receiving **full-day** services shall meet both the eligibility *and* need criteria. Families must document that each parent in the family meets a need criterion, as specified in the Education Code.

To receive CSPP services, children shall be three or four years old (according to the [State definitions](#) below), live in the state of California (unless identified as homeless), and meet eligibility criteria.

- CSPP-eligible **three-year-old** children are defined as children who have their third birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year* they are being served. Children who have their third birthday on or after December 2 of the fiscal year*, may be enrolled in CSPP on or after their third birthday.
- CSPP-eligible **four-year-old** children are defined as children who have their fourth birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year* they are being served *or* a child whose fifth birthday occurs after September 1 of the fiscal year* in which they are enrolled.
- Kindergarten-age eligible children who were receiving **full-day services** as a CSPP-eligible four-year-old **on or before June 30**, may remain in a CSPP program until they start kindergarten, or September 30, whichever is sooner, at which point they must be disenrolled.

*Fiscal year runs from July 1- June 30. The ECELS follows the fiscal calendar.

Enrollment and Certification Process

The ECELS enrolls children continuously throughout the year as space becomes available. Once a space is available, an ECELS leadership team member will send an email to the next family on the waitlist per ranking order (see [admission priorities](#) section for more information on priorities). When a family receives an enrollment email, it is the family's responsibility to reply in a timely manner. If after approximately one week, we do not receive a response, the ECELS will move on to the next family on the waitlist.

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and the child's family shall be restricted by the ECELS to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program or otherwise permitted by law. The ECELS shall permit the review of the family data file by the child's parent(s) or parent's authorized representative, upon request and at reasonable times and places.

Enrollment Process

When a family accepts the space being offered, the enrollment process will begin. The ECELS leadership team member will ask for the following documentation during the enrollment process:

- Proof of eligibility (see [eligibility](#) section)
- Proof of need (see [need eligibility](#) section) – for full-day services only
- Proof of residency – Proof of an address or post office address in California will be sufficient to establish residency
- Birth certificate(s) for all children under the age of 18 that are counted in the family size. If a birth certificate is not available, one of the following will be acceptable:
 - Court orders regarding child custody;
 - Adoption documents;
 - Records of Foster Care placements;
 - School or medical records;
 - County welfare department records; *or*
 - Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent.
- [Physician's Report](#)
- Court Orders/Separation/Divorce Papers (if applicable)
- Child support information/income (if applicable)
- Additional information may be requested based on individual situations
- All Title 22 (Community Care Licensing) required documents

Certification Process

To begin the certification process, a member of the ECELS leadership team will review all the documents that have been submitted during enrollment. This will include, but is not limited to:

- Verifying eligibility
 - To verify employment, a release of authorization to contact the parent's employer will be gathered
- Verifying need for full-day services
- Assessing family fees as applicable (see [fees](#) section)
- Completing the Application for Services – the application shall contain the following information:
 - Parent's information: full name(s), address(es), phone number(s), and email(s)
 - Names and birth dates of all children under the age of 18 counted in the family size
 - Eligibility status
 - The number of hours per day services are needed for each child
 - The reason for needing full-day services (if applicable)
 - For full-day services, employment, vocational training, and/or education program information shall be included on the application

- Family size and adjusted monthly income
- The parent’s preference of receiving official communication from the ECELS by mail or electronic means
- The parent’s signature and date – signed under the penalty of perjury
- The signature of the ECELS leadership team member certifying that the family and/or child meets the criteria for services.

Once the Application for Services has been signed, the ECELS leadership team member will issue a Notice of Action approving or denying services (see [Notice of Action](#) section).

Dual Language Learners (DLL)

The ECELS must determine dual language learner status for every child enrolled in CSPP by conducting the Family Language Instrument. The purpose of this instrument is to identify and understand each child’s language background in order to support and strengthen their language development. When adults understand children’s past experiences with language(s), they are able to build upon those experiences and better support children’s development, by affirming and fostering the child’s home language and culture to support them in becoming multilingual and multi-literate in both English and their home language(s).

This information will be used to inform and plan program curriculum, develop strategies used in the learning setting, create professional development opportunities, and to strengthen family partnerships to improve support for dual language learner (DLL) children.

The Family Language Instrument is a four-question survey that will be included in the enrollment packet during the enrollment process. The Family Language Instrument must be completed for each child even if there are multiple children from the same family. Once completed, an ECELS leadership member will review the document and determine if your child will be designated as a Dual Language Learner.

All children who have been identified as a DLL under the processes described above will complete the Family Language and Interest Interview which will be conducted by your child's teacher in collaboration with the child's family. The Family Language and Interest Interview must be completed for each child identified as DLL even if there are multiple children from the same family.

Identification of your child as a dual language learner in CSPP means that your child will benefit from additional support from the program in order to develop their home language and English language skills. This identification will serve them only in preschool and is different from any identification process or program supports a child might later receive as an English learner in TK or kindergarten.

The purpose of this interview is to support relationship building with families with children who are identified as dual language learners and learn more about each child’s experiences with language. Information from interviews with families will be used to inform program curriculum, strategies used in the learning setting, professional development, and to strengthen family partnerships to improve support for dual language learner (DLL) children.

Eligibility

Eligibility is required for both part-day *and* full-day CSPP services and is based on documentation and verification of at least one of the following:

- **Income** – Refer to 5 CCR definitions of countable and non-countable income for the complete list. Income documentation is for the month preceding certification or recertification. Current and on-going income documentation may be requested. Total countable income means all income of the individuals counted in the family size, for example:
 - Income from Employment – Gross wages or salaries, overtime, or tips
 - Income from Self-Employment

- Cash aid
- Child support payment received
- A portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes
- Provide self-certification of any income for which no documentation is possible
- **Current Aid Recipient** – EC 8263(a)(I) requires that the parent provide documentation of public cash assistance.
- **Homelessness** – (5CCR 18090) Requires a written referral from an emergency shelter or other legal, medical, or social service agency; or a written parental declaration that the family is homeless and a statement describing the family's current living situation.
- **Child Protective Services (CPS)** – EC 8263(a)(1)(A) and (a)(1)(B) Requires a statement from the local county welfare department, child protective services unit is required, certifying that the child is receiving child protective services and the childcare and development services are a necessary component of the child protective services plan.
- **At-Risk of Abuse, Neglect, and/or Exploitation** – (5 CCR 18081) Requires a written referral from a legally qualified professional certifying that the child is identified as being abused, neglected, exploited, or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and that the family needs childcare and development services.
- **Exceptional Need** – only the child(ren) in the family with an exceptional need may be enrolled under this category. The child must have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP).
- **Certified for a Means Tested Governmental Program** – Families who have a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from a designated means-tested government program, as determined by the department, will be categorically eligible. Some programs include:
 - Medi-Cal
 - CalFresh
 - The California Food Assistance Program
 - The California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
 - The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
 - Head Start/Early Head Start
 - CalWORKs

Family Size Documentation – The parent must provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family. Supporting documentation for the number of children shall be at least one of the following: Birth certificate; Child custody court order; Adoption documents; Foster Care placement records; School or medical records; County welfare department records; or other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent.

If only one parent has signed an application for enrollment in childcare services, and the information provided on the application indicates that there is a second parent who has not signed the application, the parent who has signed the application shall self-certify the presence or absence of the second parent under penalty of perjury. The parent who has signed the application shall not be required to submit additional information documenting the presence or absence of the second parent.

Need Eligibility – Full-day CSPP Program Only

For full-day California State Preschool Program (CSPP) services, families must also qualify under the criteria – need for services. Service limits apply to some need criteria categories. Information provided may be independently verified by ECELS staff as deemed necessary. Need for services is based on documentation and verification of at least one of the following as defined in the sections in parenthesis:

- **Child Protective Services** – (5 CCR Section 17773) A statement from the local county welfare department and child protective services unit is required, certifying that the child is receiving child protective services and that childcare and development services are a necessary component of the child protective services plan.
- **At-Risk** – (5 CCR Section 17773) Requires a written referral from a legally qualified professional certifying that the child is identified as being abused, neglected, exploited, or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and that the family needs childcare and development services.
- **Employment/Self-Employment** – (EC 8208 and 5 CCR 17764) The parent's hours and days of employment shall be documented. An ECELS Leadership member shall determine the days and hours of service needed per week based on the parent's employment schedule and travel time (as applicable).
- **Educational Programs: ELL Courses, GED/HSE Certificate, or High School Diploma** – (5 CCR Section 17767) The parent shall provide documentation of enrollment in English language learner (ELL) classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, classes to obtain a high school diploma, a General Education Development (GED) program, or a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate program. The parent must also provide documentation of the days and hours in which they are enrolled in the educational program to include (as applicable): the name of the institution and the current class schedule. An ECELS leadership member shall determine the days and hours of service needed per week based on the documentation provided. Continuation of services based on enrollment in an educational program is contingent upon making adequate progress. At the time of recertification, the parent shall submit documentation to show adequate progress from the last enrolled quarter, semester, or training period (See policy on Grades for more information).
- **Training toward Vocational Goal** – (5 CCR 17768) Vocational training must be training leading to a recognized trade, para-profession, or profession. The parent shall provide documentation of the parent's vocational goal; a current class schedule (electronic print-out) from the training institution which indicates the dates that the semester begins and ends; and the anticipated completion date of all required training activities to meet the vocational goal. An ECELS leadership member shall determine the days and hours of service needed per week based on the documentation provided. Continuation of services based on enrollment in an educational program is contingent upon making adequate progress. At the time of recertification, the parent shall submit documentation to show adequate progress from the last enrolled quarter, semester, or training period (See policy on Grades for more information). Service limitations apply.
- **Seeking Employment** – (5 CCR Section 17766) Service limitations apply. The parent is required to provide documentation of seeking employment.
- **Family Experiencing Homelessness** – (5 CCR 17771) The parent shall provide documentation of homelessness to include: a written referral from an emergency shelter; other legal, medical, or social service agency for children and youth experiencing homelessness; head start program; or a parental declaration, signed under penalty of perjury, that the family is experiencing homelessness.
- **Seeking Permanent Housing** – (5 CCR Section 17772) Service limitations apply. The parent is required to provide documentation of seeking permanent housing.
- **Parental Incapacity** – (5 CCR Section 17769) Service limitations apply. Requires a Statement from a legally qualified health professional establishing that the parent is incapacitated.

Admission Priorities: Full-Day (Need-Based) Program

1. The first priority for services shall be given to three-year old or four-year-old children who are recipients of child protective services or who are at risk of being neglected or abused, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency, without regard to income. If the ECELS is unable to enroll a child in the first priority category, the family shall be referred to local resource and referral services to locate services for the child.
2. The second priority for services shall be given to all three- and four-year-old children with disabilities, regardless of income up to the set-aside percentage. After the set-aside is met, children with disabilities will be enrolled in income ranking order (lowest first).

3. The third priority for services shall be given to eligible three- and four-year-old children who are not enrolled in a state-funded transitional kindergarten (TK) program. Children shall be enrolled in the following order:
 - a. Eligible children with the lowest income according to the income ranking on the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table shall be enrolled first.
 - b. If two or more families have the same income ranking according to the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table, the child that has a primary home language other than English shall be enrolled first.
 - c. If there are no families with a child that has a primary home language other than English, the child that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.
4. The fourth priority, after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, shall be children from families whose income is no more than 15% above the eligibility income threshold. Children from families enrolled under this exception may not exceed 10% of the ECELS' total contract enrollment. Within this priority category, priority shall be given to three- and four-year-old children with disabilities interested in enrolling beyond those already enrolled in the percent of funded enrollment set aside pursuant to Section 8208, then to four-year-old children before three-year-old children without disabilities.

After all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled in the first through fourth priority categories, the ECELS may enroll the children in the following order:

5. The contractor may enroll three- and four-year-old children from families that meet eligibility criteria without having a need for services. Within this priority, contractors shall enroll families in income ranking order, lowest to highest, and within income ranking order, enroll four-year-old children before three-year-old children.
6. A California preschool program site operating within the attendance boundaries of a qualified free and reduced priced meals school, in accordance with Section 8217, may enroll any three- and four-year-old children whose families reside within the attendance boundary of the qualified elementary school. These children shall, to the extent possible, be enrolled by lowest to highest income.

After all families have been enrolled in the priorities above, the ECELS shall enroll children with disabilities that are not income eligible and have not been enrolled pursuant to any of the priorities above.

Admission Priorities: Part-Day Program

1. The first priority for services shall be given to three-year old or four-year-old children who are recipients of child protective services or who are at risk of being neglected or abused, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency, without regard to income. If the ECELS is unable to enroll a child in the first priority category, the family shall be referred to local resource and referral services to locate services for the child.
2. The second priority for services shall be given to all three- and four-year-old children with disabilities, regardless of income up to the set-aside percentage. After the set-aside is met, children with disabilities will be enrolled in income ranking order (lowest first).
3. The third priority for services shall be given to eligible three- and four-year-old children who are not enrolled in a state-funded transitional kindergarten (TK) program. Children shall be enrolled in the following order:
 - a. Eligible children with the lowest income according to the income ranking on the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table shall be enrolled first.
 - b. If two or more families have the same income ranking according to the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table, the child that has a primary home language other than English shall be enrolled first.
 - c. If there are no families with a child that has a primary home language other than English, the child that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.
4. The fourth priority, after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, shall be children from families whose income is no more than 15% above the eligibility income threshold. Children from families enrolled under this

exception may not exceed 10% of the ECELS' total contract enrollment. Within this priority category, priority shall be given to three- and four-year-old children with disabilities interested in enrolling beyond those already enrolled in the percent of funded enrollment set aside pursuant to Section 8208, then to four-year-old children before three-year-old children without disabilities.

After all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled in the first through fourth priority categories, the ECELS may enroll the children in the following order:

5. A California preschool program site operating within the attendance boundaries of a qualified free and reduced priced meals school, in accordance with Section 8217, may enroll any *three*- and four-year-old children whose families reside within the attendance boundary of the qualified elementary school. These children shall, to the extent possible, be enrolled by lowest to highest income.
6. Children enrolling in the California State Preschool Program to provide expanded learning and care to transitional kindergarten or kindergarten pupils, pursuant to EC Section 48000(l).

After all families have been enrolled in the priorities above, the ECELS shall enroll children with disabilities that are not income eligible and have not been enrolled pursuant to any of the priorities above.

Continued Services

Because our program is year-round and depends on continued enrollment to meet our funding contract with the state, families who continue with funded services during breaks in need (for example, breaks between semesters), will maintain their child's enrollment spot in our program. Families who choose to terminate services during breaks in service will go back to the waiting list for future services, and the enrollment spot will be offered to a waitlist family.

24-Month Eligibility – Full-Day (Need-based) Program

As of July 1, 2022, contractors operating **full-day CSPP** must initially certify or recertify all families for 24-months. In the event that the eligibility period ends before the end of a program year, eligibility shall be extended until the end of the program year, as long as applicable age-eligibility requirements are met. While the program year operates from July through June, the *California Code of Regulations*, Title 5 (5 CCR) section 17749(c) allows children that were enrolled in full-day CSPP prior to June 30, to remain enrolled in CSPP for the summer immediately preceding their enrollment into kindergarten until September 30 or the start of kindergarten, whichever is sooner.

If the child is age-eligible for CSPP for any additional program years beyond the initial 24-month eligibility, the contractor will recertify the family within 50 days of the end of their 24-month eligibility pursuant to 5 CCR 17753.

All contractors are required to follow all current regulations including, but not limited to:

- The family's requirement to report when income exceeds the statutory threshold if the family is eligible based on income (5 CCR 17755)
- The contractor's requirement to assess, and collect (when applicable), family fees for full-day CSPP (5 CCR 17734)
- The family's right to voluntarily request changes (5 CCR 17756)
- The 50-day recertification timeline for full-day CSPP (5 CCR 17753)

24-Month Eligibility – Part-Day Program

Beginning July 1, 2022, contractors operating **part-day CSPP** must certify a family eligible for the remainder of the current program year and the following program year when enrolling children, provided the child continues to meet age eligibility requirements. Note that contractors can begin enrolling families 120 days prior to the beginning of a new program year, and in those cases the child will be enrolled for two full program years.

If the child is age-eligible for CSPP for any additional program years beyond the initial enrollment for the current program year and following program year, the contractor will complete an initial certification for the family at that time before the new program year.

Recertification

After initial certification and enrollment, families shall be recertified for services by the ECELS no later than 50 calendar days following the last day of the 24-month certification period, which starts with the day the ECELS' leadership member signed the last application for services.

In order to recertify families, an ECELS leadership member shall notify the parent in writing in the final 30 days of the 24-month certification period, which starts with the day the ECELS' leadership member signed the last application for services.

The ECELS shall inform families of all of the following:

1. The requirement that the family must be recertified in order to continue receiving services;
2. The date that the recertification must be completed by;
3. The recertification appointment date, which can be no earlier than one day following the last day of the 24-month certification period;
4. Information about the recertification process;
5. Information/documentation needed for the recertification appointment; and
6. A telephone contact number and an optional email address in the event the parent may have any questions regarding the recertification process.

The ECELS shall recertify or deny each family's/child's eligibility and need after reviewing the completed application and documentation contained in the family data file and issue a Notice of Action to recertify eligibility for services or disenroll the family.

When a family is recertified as income eligible, the ECELS shall at the same time provide notice to the family of the requirement to report if their income exceeds the income threshold.

Notice of Action (NOA)

The contractor's decision to approve, deny, change, or terminate services shall be communicated to the applicant through a written or digital statement referred to as a Notice of Action (NOA). If upon recertification, an ECELS leadership member determines that the need or eligibility requirements are no longer being met, or the parent makes a voluntary request to make changes to services, and the fee or amount of service needs to be modified, the ECELS leadership team member shall notify the family through a written or digital NOA. The NOA shall be completed according to state guidelines. A copy of the initialed or sent NOA will be maintained in the child's file. As detailed on the back of the NOA, families may appeal decisions communicated through an NOA (See [Right to Appeal](#) section below or the back of the Notice of Action form).

Parent's Right to Voluntarily Report Changes

A family may, at any time, voluntarily request to reduce a family fee or increase their certified schedule, and shall provide applicable supporting documentation for the requested change. The ECELS may request applicable documentation to substantiate the request for changes. When a family requests to reduce their family fee or increase services, the ECELS will issue a NOA within 10 business days. If the family's request is to reduce their certified schedule, the family must acknowledge, in writing, that they understand that they may retain their current certified schedule.

Right to Appeal

Parent(s) Request for a Hearing and Procedures (5 CCR 17784)

If the parent disagrees with an action taken by the ECELS in a NOA, the parent(s) may file a request for a hearing with the ECELS within 14 calendar days of the date the NOA was received. The ECELS shall document the method of delivery and date the NOA was sent to the parent.

Upon the filing of a request for hearing, the intended action shall be suspended until the administrative appeal process has been completed, except in the instance of a suspension or expulsion pursuant to EC 8489.1. The review process is complete when the appeal process has been exhausted or when the parent(s) abandons the appeal process.

Within 10 calendar days following the receipt of the request for a hearing, the ECELS shall notify the parent(s) of the time and place of the hearing. The time and place of the hearing shall, to the extent possible, be convenient for the parent(s).

The hearing shall be conducted by an ECELS leadership member who shall be referred to as "the hearing officer." The hearing officer shall be at a staff level higher in authority than the staff person who made the contested decision and should not have participated in making the decision being contested.

The parent(s) or parent's authorized representative is required to attend the hearing. If the parent or the parent's authorized representative fails to appear at the hearing, the parent will be deemed to have abandoned his or her appeal unless the parent can demonstrate to the contractor that they had good cause for their failure to appear, in which case the hearing shall be rescheduled. Only persons directly affected by the hearing shall be allowed to attend.

The ECELS shall arrange for the presence of an interpreter at the hearing, if one is requested by the parent(s), at no cost to the parent.

The hearing officer shall explain to the parent(s) the legal, regulatory, or policy basis for the intended action.

During the hearing, the parent(s) shall have an opportunity to explain the reason(s) they believe the ECELS' decision was incorrect. The ECELS' staff shall present any material facts omitted by the parent(s) and the parent(s) shall have the right to respond.

The hearing officer shall mail or deliver to the parent(s) a written decision within 10 calendar days after the hearing. The written decision shall contain procedures for submitting an appeal to the CDE.

Appeal Procedure for the California Department of Education (CDE) Review (5 CCR 17785)

If the parent(s) disagree(s) with the written decision from the ECELS, the parent has 14 calendar days in which to appeal to the CDE. The ECELS shall document the method of delivery and the date the decision was sent to the parent.

The appeal must be received within 14 calendar days of the date on the contractor's written decision. If the parent(s) do(es) not submit an appeal request to the CDE within 14 calendar days, the parents' appeal process shall be deemed abandoned, and the ECELS may implement the intended action.

The parent(s) shall specify in the appeal request the reason(s) why they believe the ECELS' decision was incorrect. A copy of the ECELS' notice of intended action and written decision shall be submitted by the parent(s) with the appeal request.

Upon receipt of an appeal request, the CDE may request copies of the family's data file and other relevant materials from the ECELS and may request additional information from the parent(s). The CDE may also conduct any investigations, interviews or mediation necessary to resolve the appeal. Any mediation of the appeal shall be conducted with the consent of both the parent(s) and the ECELS.

The decision of the CDE shall be mailed or delivered to the parent(s) and to the ECELS within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal request. The CDE shall send the appeal decision in the delivery method preferred by the parent.

Parent Orientation

The parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to attend an orientation meeting or read/review the orientation information that includes topics such as program philosophy, program goals and objectives, program activities, eligibility criteria and priorities for enrollment, fee requirements, and due process procedures. Families are encouraged to ask questions about the program at any time.

Drop-off/Pick-up Times

Child Drop-off and pick-up times must be consistent with the approved schedule as indicated on the Notice of Action.

Fees

No family fees are charged to families receiving **only part-day CSPP** services (Late pick-up fees, as listed below, still apply) or when CPS or at-risk referrals include a statement to waive fees (limited to 12 months). Families approved for **full-day CSPP** services may have a monthly family fee. Fees will be assessed in accordance with current California State Law. The amount of the family fee is assessed using the most current California Family Fee Schedule and is based on family income, family size, and the number of certified hours. Children certified for more than 130 hours of care a month will be charged full-time fees. Children certified for fewer than 130 hours a month will be charged part-time fees. Monthly fees are assessed at certification, recertification, or a voluntary update from the family based on changes to income, certified need, and family size. No adjustments are made for absences. At initial certification and when there is a change in fees, a Notice of Action will be issued documenting the change and the effective date, if applicable.

Fees are due and payable on the first of every month in advance of providing services. Payment will be considered late if not paid by the 7th of the month.

Past Due Fees: Fees are delinquent seven (7) calendar days after the due date. An NOA will be issued to you with a pending termination date for services. To halt the NOA of termination you may either pay the delinquent fee or agree to a reasonable repayment plan for the delinquent fees. Upon termination for delinquent fees, the family shall be ineligible for childcare until all fees are paid.

If fees are delinquent:

- **Termination of Enrollment:** A Notice of Action (NOA) to terminate services shall be mailed or given to the parent, which will also explain the rights of appeals. The NOA shall state the total amount of unpaid fees, the fee rate, the period of delinquency, and state that services shall be terminated 14 days from the date of the NOA unless all delinquent fees are paid before that date or a repayment plan is established.

A reasonable payment plan may be established and approved by the ECELS program. This approval is dependent upon past payment history and the amount of delinquent fees owed. In addition to the delinquent fee payment, current tuition fees **MUST** be paid on time. Preschool services shall continue, provided current fees are paid when due, and there is compliance with the provisions of the repayment plan.

Late Pick-Up Fees: Apply to all families, including CSPP families. For full-day CSPP, families must leave the site by 5:30 PM; the doors will be locked at that time. Any parent remaining in the building past 5:30 PM will be charged a late fee, regardless of the time that the child is signed out or when the parent arrived. For part-day CSPP, late pick-up fees apply once your child's part-day program ends. Please note: Hours are subject to change and late fees will apply after program hours.

Fees are \$1.00 for every minute past 12:00pm (AM part-day), 4:30pm (PM part-day) and 5:30pm (full-day).

Every late pick-up after the third offense in one program year, a \$20 fee will be charged in addition to the \$1.00 per minute fee per child. After the third offense in one year, the family may be issued a warning for termination of services.

How to Make a Payment

Payments can be made by choosing one of these options:

- Credit Card
- Personal check
- Cashier check
- Money order
- You may also choose to set up monthly payments with your bank or credit union using the bill pay feature

Please make checks payable to: **Palomar College ECELS**

(If you would like to leave the “pay to the order” area blank, we have a stamp in the office and will stamp it.)

Payments should be dropped off at the ECELS Office or mailed to:

Palomar College ECELS
Attention: ECELS Leadership
1140 W. Mission Road
San Marcos, CA 92069

Absences

Although there will be days when your child will need to be absent from school, it is important for children to attend class in order to be ready for kindergarten. Absence days are closely monitored. It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the school of absences.

Process for Reporting Absences

1. Please email the ECELS Leadership Team at ecels@palomar.edu to report the absence **and the reason for the absence** as soon as you know your child will not be in attendance. If your child is absent multiple days, please email daily and provide the reason.
2. When your child returns to school, please **record the date(s) of the absence(s), the reason for the absence, and your signature** on the absence log.
3. **When recording an illness on the absence log, specify the person who was ill – ex: parent sick, or (Child’s name) sick.** For absences due to illness (either parent or child) that extend to 3 consecutive days or more, a doctor’s note will be required.

Excused Absences:

- For illness or medical appointment of the enrolled child, or the parent/legal guardian. After 3 consecutive enrollment days absent, a doctor’s note will be required to document the reason.
- For Court-ordered visitation (court order must be on file)
- For a Family Emergency – which is defined as the death or life-threatening illness or accident in the family (any person closely related by blood, marriage, or domestic partnership) or quarantine. After 3 consecutive enrollment days absent, proof of the emergency will be required to document the reason.
- Transportation Emergency – which is defined as any transportation problem (i.e. car breaks down, flat tire, lack of public transportation, etc.) that prevents you from bringing your child to school (excludes weather-related events). A maximum of 2 consecutive days may be recorded for each incident. More than 3 transportation emergencies in a year will require documentation.
- Best Interest Days – Best Interest Days are for a family day, vacation, going out of town, or transportation problems (beyond transportation emergency defined above). There is a limit of 10 Best Interest days per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) per child. When 8 Best Interest Days have been recorded, the parent must meet with a leadership member to review absences and will receive written notification of the remaining Best Interest Days. **After all Best Interest Days have been exhausted, absences will be recorded as Unexcused (see below).**

Unexcused Absences: Unexcused absences are absences for any other reason not listed above or when Best Interest Days have been exhausted. If seven (7) consecutive calendar days have passed with absences and with no communication from the family, the abandonment of care policy will be enforced.

Emergency Closures/Pandemics

In the event of an emergency school closure, including but not limited to, natural disasters (fire, flood, earthquakes, etc.), pandemics, or other safety issues deemed necessary for closure by Palomar College or the County Office of Health, the

ECELS will follow the guidance of the California Department of Education regarding family fees and recording absences. Once the ECELS has re-opened for services, it will be up to the family to determine if they would like to continue services with their previously approved schedule, change their child's schedule (documentation will be required), or terminate services.

Abandonment Clause

In the event that your child has stopped attending school and there has been no communication from the family for seven (7) consecutive calendar days, the ECELS will make multiple attempts to reach you via phone, email, and hard-copy mail. If no response is received within 30 consecutive calendar days, a Notice of Action to discontinue services due to the abandonment of care will be issued.

Responsibility to Report Changes

One month's written notice is requested when children are withdrawn from service. To remain in good standing, families shall notify the ECELS leadership team within 5 days of any changes in address, contact information, etc.

Reasons for Termination of Services

Reasons that childcare services may be terminated include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An income-eligible family's adjusted monthly income exceeds 115% of the State Median Income (SMI) (the family is no longer income-eligible)
- At the end of the fiscal year in which the vocational training service limit has been reached (6 years, or 24-semester units (or its equivalent) after the attainment of a bachelor's Degree, whichever expires first)
- Failing to make adequate progress once a parent is placed on academic probation
- Failure to complete recertification and provide a completed application for services along with verifiable documentation to determine that the family/child meets the eligibility and need criteria for ongoing subsidized child development services
- Overdue fees
- Conspiring to, attempting to, or committing fraudulent acts. Including, but not limited to, altering or misrepresenting information on attendance/absence records (i.e. listing a child as ill when actually on vacation)
- Knowingly providing fraudulent, false, or misleading information regarding employment, self-employment, seeking employment, enrollment in an educational or vocational training program, parental incapacitation, income, family size, or any other information related to need and/or eligibility
- Activity or behavior from either the child and/or the child's family that presents a risk or harm to any child, parent, childcare provider, CHDV student, visitor, or staff member, representative, or the facility (example: using profanity, making threats, harassing the individual, endangering the safety or life of the individual, destroying property, or any other activity or behavior that violates personal rights).
- Contract funding is reduced, ends, or for any other reason as directed or required by the State of California

Staff Development

The ECELS shall develop and implement a staff development program that includes the following:

- Identification of training needs of staff or service providers;
- Written job descriptions;
- An orientation plan for new employees;
- An annual written performance evaluation procedure unless a different frequency of performance evaluations is specified in a contractor's collective bargaining agreement with their employees;
- Staff development opportunities that include topics related to the functions specified in each employee's job description and those training needs identified by the ECELS according to Title 5 regulations.
- An internal communication system that provides each staff member with the information necessary to carry out his or her assigned duties.

Program Self-Evaluation

The ECELS will complete an environment rating scale assessment each program year (for example CLASS environment and ECERS). The information will be used to measure program quality and complete the program self-evaluation. As part of the Program Self-Evaluation Process, parents will be asked to complete a Desired Results Parent Survey. Results from the survey and other evaluation tools will assist in ensuring that program standards are being met. The ECELS shall modify the program to address any areas identified during the self-evaluation as needing improvement.

Funded Adult Student Family Policies

The term student in this policy refers to the parent(s) who are receiving services for educational purposes. Service hours will be based on your college class schedule. At the time of your child's enrollment, verification of your education registration will be reviewed. **Children's arrival and pick-up times must be consistent with your certified enrollment hours.**

For student families to qualify for subsidized services, the following criteria must be met:

- You must follow your approved schedule for funded services as stated on your Notice of Action. Hours are based on your class schedule and pre-approved study and travel time. If you attend Palomar College, you must remain on campus at all times while your child is attending the ECELS for the parent's educational purposes.
- Parents must provide a statement of their vocational goals and education plan which must coincide with making progress toward their vocational goal.

Grades:

Ongoing eligibility for services based on educational programs or vocational training is contingent upon making adequate progress. At recertification, the parent shall provide documentation of adequate progress from the most recently completed quarter, semester, or training period. To make adequate progress the parent shall obtain, in the college classes, technical school, or apprenticeship for which subsidized care is provided: In a graded program, earn a 2.0-grade point average; or in a non-graded program, pass the program's requirements in at least 50 percent of the classes or meet the training institution's standard for making adequate progress.

The first time the parent does not meet the conditions above for grades, the parent may be recertified and continue to receive ongoing services for another 24 months. At the conclusion of this eligibility period, the parent shall have made adequate progress in order to be recertified for services based on vocational training. If the parent has not made adequate progress, the family shall be: dis-enrolled; and services based on vocational training are only available to the parent, to the extent provided on the basis of need, after six (6) months from the date of dis-enrollment.

Weekly View Schedule/Emergency Form

This form is used to contact you in case of an emergency at the school. Student parents must submit a copy of the weekly view schedule from their educational institution with their class schedule and study time location according to the times pre-approved by the ECELS leadership team. Student parents receiving services for education/training must be either in class or at a designated study location on campus at all times while their child is at the ECELS. This requirement to remain on campus does not apply to part-day CSPP approved days. You must inform the ECELS leadership team immediately of any changes to ensure emergency information is current.

Disclosures

The ECELS is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, giving equal treatment and access to services, without regard to race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, or ancestry.

The ECELS policy states, "Program services and activities for enrolled families shall refrain from religious instruction, worship or practices".

The use, or disclosure of financial, or personal information, concerning enrolled children and their families, will be limited to the leadership team of the ECELS, except in reporting child abuse. All staff are mandated by law, to report any suspected child abuse.

The ECELS adheres to the California Child Development/education statutes and regulations. This includes civil rights guarantees such as discrimination regarding actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ethnic group, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disabilities, or a person's association with persons with one or more of these characteristics.

In compliance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#), the Palomar College ECELS welcomes the enrollment of children with disabilities and will provide reasonable accommodation whenever possible to aid access to and participation in services, programs, facilities, and activities.

California Department of Education (CDE)

To file a complaint with CDE for unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, please follow the [Uniform Complaint Procedures](#) listed on their website.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination regarding the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), please contact: René Robelin, ECELS Site Supervisor, at 760-744-1150 Ext. 3375 or rrobelin@palomar.edu. Then complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online [here](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Palomar College Early Childhood Education Lab School Family Handbook: Statement of Receipt

Child's Name: _____

I acknowledge that I am responsible to read and comply with the guidelines and policies outlined in the Family Handbook. I understand that if our family does not comply with the ECELS guidelines and policies outlined in the Family Handbook, the consequences stated in the handbook will apply.

This handbook is also available on the ECELS website or I may request a printed copy from the ECELS leadership team. Additionally, I am responsible to comply with updates to the Family Handbook, which will be sent via email, posted on the website, and/or available as a printed copy upon request.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A: Home/School Agreement for Toilet Learning/Independent Toileting



Palomar College ECE Lab School

Home/School Agreement for Toilet Learning/Independent Toileting

We feel toilet learning should be a positive experience for children. It is important for adults to pay attention to children's cues and readiness. We want to help families understand that timing for toilet learning is as individual as learning to walk. There is no right age by which all children should start toilet learning or be finished with it.

Signs of Readiness:

Physical signs

- Is coordinated enough to walk, and even run, steadily.
- Urinates a fair amount at one time.
- Has regular, well-formed bowel movements at relatively predictable times.
- Has "dry" periods of at least two hours or during naps, which shows that their bladder muscles are developed enough to hold urine.

Behavioral signs

- Can sit down quietly in one position for two to five minutes.
- Can pull their pants up and down.
- Dislikes the feeling of wearing a wet or dirty diaper.
- Shows interest in others' bathroom habits (wants to watch you go to the bathroom or wear underwear).
- Gives a physical or verbal sign when they are having a bowel movement such as grunting, squatting, or telling you.
- Demonstrates a desire for independence.
- Takes pride in their accomplishments.
- Isn't resistant to learning to use the toilet.
- Is in a generally cooperative stage, not a negative or contrary one.

Cognitive signs

- Understands the physical signals that mean they have to go and can tell you before it happens or even hold it until they have time to get to the potty.
- Can follow simple instructions, such as "go get the toy."
- Understands the value of putting things where they belong.
- Has words for urine and bowel movements.

First, it is important that your child wears panties/underwear the **weekend** prior to beginning toilet learning at the Lab School, and continue to use underwear at all times outside of the Lab School (home, car, babysitter, etc). We will partner with you and your child to begin the toilet training process. After several days, if your child shows no interest, too many fears, or too many accidents, we will reassess the toilet learning process to determine if your child is ready to continue.

ECE Lab School Staff will agree to:

- Encourage, support, and praise successes that your child achieves during their potty training experience.
- We will expect accidents and treat them as teachable moments.
- We will watch for and identify signals that may help us make it on time next time as well as encourage children to be independent in changing their own clothes.
- We will take children to the bathroom at regularly scheduled times during each day and on-demand when necessary.
- Communicate with parents daily regarding our bathroom experiences.

Families will agree to:

- Provide at least 5 pairs of labeled underwear daily
- Provide at least 5 pairs of labeled pull-on pants with elastic waistbands (sweat pants are perfect) No clothes with buttons, zippers, belts, overalls, onesies, or stockings. These are counterproductive to the process.
- With a positive tone, warn your child 5 minutes before toileting time and say, “It’s time to go potty”.
- Continue positive reinforcement at home, including bringing the child to school in **underwear** and only using a diaper for nap/night time if necessary.
- Keep the teachers updated on any changes at home, or if the child is not feeling well.

Child’s Full Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B: Palomar College ECELS Plan of Operation – Incidental Medical Services

This Plan of Operation outlines specific information for the administration of Incidental Medical Services of an Epi-Pen, Metered-Dose Inhalers, and Nebulizer treatments.

All Incidental Medical Services listed above will have the following requirements:

- Parents are required to provide a completed Parent Consent for Administration of Medications and Medication Chart (LIC9221).
- Medication must be in original packaging with prescription (to include dosage, frequency, and specific directions of how to administer medication).
- Staff will record each dose administered with date, time, and staff signature on the LIC9221 form.
- All medication will be stored out of the reach of children in a designated area (labeled with medical signage).
 - Only non-refrigerated medications will be stored and administered.
- Staff will be trained to administer the above-mentioned medications in accordance with dosage and directions provided by the child's physician (prescription labeling). Training will be provided by the parent, Coordinator, Site Supervisor, and/or administrative support staff. Training will include:
 - Medication administration
 - Safety practices (use of gloves and washing of hands before and after medication is administered)
 - Disposal of used disposable administration devices.
 - Cleaning and sanitization of used administration devices
 - Storage requirements for medications.
 - Disposal of empty medication containers.
 - Documentation of medication administration.
- Staff will be trained to recognize the signs of the following medical events and to administer the above-mentioned medications in the event of a medical emergency. This will include (but not be limited to):
 - Asthma attacks
 - Allergic reactions
- The ECELS will plan for at least one staff member to be present at all times who is trained to administer the above-mentioned Incidental Medical Services. In the unlikely event that trained staff is not available, the parent will be contacted to provide additional training or administer the medication themselves.
- In the event of a disaster or emergency, the teacher or teaching support staff will be responsible for retrieving the medication. These medications will remain in the possession of the teacher or teaching

support staff in an emergency/disaster situation. If the teacher or teaching support staff becomes unable to maintain possession of these, a trained staff member will maintain possession.

- If a child requires administration of the above-mentioned Incidental Medication Services, the following procedures will be followed:
 - If the administration is unscheduled, the child's parent or authorized representative will be notified by telephone immediately following the treatment.
 - Upon request, the parent will be provided with a copy of LIC9221, which shows the date, time, and staff member information completed at the time of administration. Completed copies will be kept in the child's file in the office.
 - An Ouch/Incident/Other report will be completed for the child with the description of the medical event that triggered the need for the administration of the medication. The date, time, and details of the administration will be recorded. A copy of this form will be provided to the parent at the time of pick up on the day of the incident. The parent will sign, and one copy will be given to the parent, and the other will go in the child's file.
- If any child requires medical care after the administration of the above medications, the ECELS will call the Department of Social Services within 24 hours of notification from the parent that additional medical care was provided. A LIC624 form will be completed and submitted to the Department of Social Services within 7 days.
- Any changes made to this Plan of Operation will be submitted to the Department of Social Services in a timely manner.
- Any chamber, mask, nebulizer machine, nebulizer tubing, or other pediatric devices needed for the administration of an inhaler or nebulizer treatment will be stored out of the reach of children in a designated location.
- Used Epi-Pens will be returned to their original case and packaging, placed in a sealed plastic bag, and returned to the medication location. When the parent arrives for pick up, staff will return the used Epi-Pen to the child's parent.

As needed, the nebulizer tubing, nebulizer masks, inhaler chambers, and inhaler masks will be returned to the parent after use for sanitization and cleaning. The parent will then be required to return the clean devices to the ECELS on the child's next day of attendance

Appendix C: Countable Soymilk List

Fluid Milk Substitutions in the Child Nutrition Programs

Non-Dairy Beverages Meeting United States Department of Agriculture Substitution Criteria per Eight Fluid Ounces

Nutrients	USDA Criteria per 8 Fluid Ounces	<i>8th Continent</i> Original Soymilk 	<i>8th Continent</i> Vanilla Soymilk 	<i>Pacific</i> All Natural Ultra Soy Original 	<i>Pacific</i> All Natural Ultra Soy Vanilla 	<i>Walmart</i> Great Value Original Soymilk 	<i>Kirkland</i> Signature Organic Soymilk Plain 	<i>Silk</i> Original Soymilk 
Calcium	276 mg	300	300	300	300	300	300	450
Protein	8 g	8	8	10	10	8	8	8
Vitamin A	500 IU	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
Vitamin D	100 IU	100	100	100	100	120	120	120
Magnesium	24 mg	24	24	60	60	40	40	60
Phosphorus	222 mg	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Potassium	349 mg	360	460	460	460	360	360	370
Riboflavin	0.44 mg	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51
Vitamin B12	1.1 mcg	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.5	3	3	3
Packaging		64 fl. oz. carton	64 fl. oz. carton	64 fl. oz. carton	64 fl. oz. carton	64 fl. oz. carton	32 fl. oz. carton	64 fl. oz. carton

The ECELS has compared the nutrition facts label of the products above with the amounts in the Nutrients column above to determine that the products above are acceptable fluid milk substitutes. **Before purchasing, please double-check the label to make sure it still meets the requirements in the column on the left. The ECELS staff will check the labels of new products as well and if the requirements are not met, the product will be returned to the family and they will need to purchase a countable product.**