

# Family Handbook

## Merced College Child Development Center Program Policies, Terms & Conditions

3600 M St Merced, CA  
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**2023-2024**

Preschool LIC# 240406698

Infant LIC# 240406699



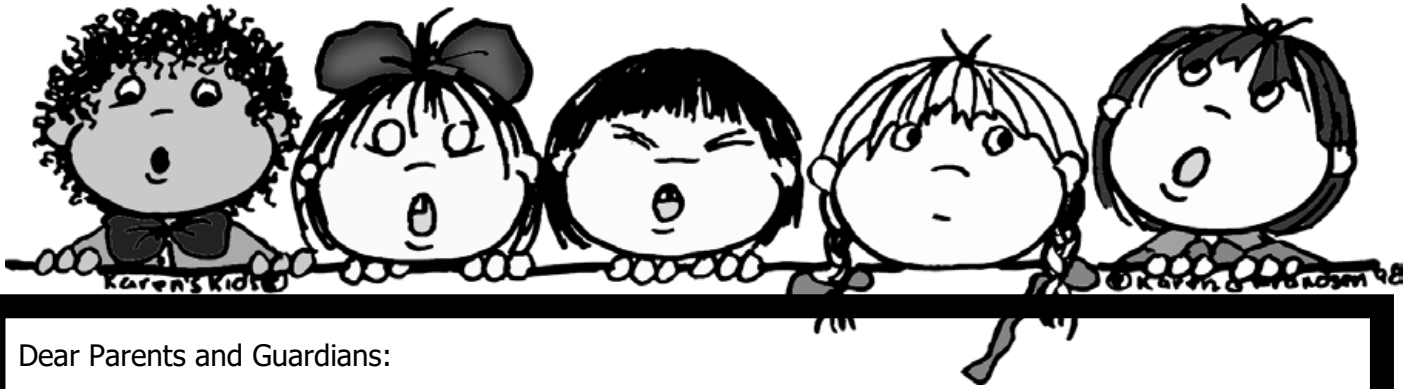
**MERCED**  
**COLLEGE**

**CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

The Merced College Child Development Center is a public education program funded by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services

<https://www.mccd.edu/student-support/support-programs/childcare/>





Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to the Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC)!

For more than 30 years, Merced College Child Development Center has been an integral part of the Merced College Child Development Department. The MCCDC is designed to be a training facility for college students who are interested in working with children and families in various professions. MCCDC is a laboratory childcare facility. In the fall of 1998, the Child Development Center (CDC) expanded to include two new portable classrooms. The program moved to the new CDC building in January of 2002 which expanded our program to six classrooms. All classrooms may be utilized as a lab or an observation site for Merced College students. In keeping with the institutional motto, MCCDC recognizes "*Students are our focus and we are known by their success.*"

MCCDC is a dynamic model for teaching and learning. Merced College students come to work with the children as part of their course work. As a field-based teaching site, MCCDC blends curriculum development and professional outreach to support the changing needs of the community, administrators, teachers, and learners it serves. Course work includes observing children, developing activities and lesson plans, learning to supervise children, and discussing observations and experiences with the children in a laboratory classroom setting. All of the classrooms are used as an adult learning facility and adult training is an ongoing component to the program.

MCCDC demonstrates a commitment to excellence, respect for diversity, and dedication to creating a community of life-long learners. Additionally, MCCDC provides a safe, caring, nurturing, and educational environment for your child. We are committed to providing children with the best experience possible through a developmentally appropriate based approach to learning. Our program is age and individually appropriate based on the social, emotional, physical, cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of every child and student learner.

The MCCDC adheres to the guidelines set forth by the California Department of Education Title 5 Regulations, the California Department of Social Services Licensing Division Title 22 and General Child Care Program Funding Terms and Conditions.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year. We encourage you to continue to support your child by volunteering and visiting our program.

Sincerely,  
Merced College Child Development Center  
Program Director

## Table of Contents

Program Calendar	3
Center Staff Contacts	4
Hours of Operation	4
<u>Our Program</u>	4
Head Start Partnership	4
Mission	5
Philosophy	5
Infant/Toddler Caregiving Practices	6
Goals and Purpose	7
Diversity including Inclusion of Children with Special Needs	7
Open Door Policy	7
<u>Admission Policies</u>	8
Wait/Eligibility List	8
Priority Enrollment	8
How to Qualify for the Program	8
Eligibility- Who is eligible?	8
Family Size	8
Need	9
Enrollment Process	9
Fee Determination	10
Fee Payment	10
Delinquent Fees	10
Repayment Plans	10
How to Continue in the Program	10
<u>Center Policies</u>	11
Communication	11
Arrival/Pick-up Procedures	11
Late Pick-up	11
Emergency Contact Information	12
Attendance	12
Excused Absences	12
Abandonment of Care	13
Termination Policies	13
Confidentiality	13
Photos, Videos, and Social Media	13
No Cell Phone Zone	14
Parking	14
California Child Passenger Seat Law	14
Mandated Reporter Policy	15
Smoking on Campus	15
Emergency Preparedness	15
<u>Health &amp; Social Services</u>	16

Health Check	16
When to Keep Your Child Home	16
When to Send Your Child Back to School	16
Administration of Medication and Asthma	17
Immunization, TB, Physician's Report	17
Aggressive Behavior	17
Health and Developmental Screening Program	18
Megan's Law	18
Shaken Baby Syndrome	18
<u>Education Program</u>	18
Your Child's Classroom	18
Curriculum	19
Free from Religious Instruction	19
Discipline	19
Infant and Toddler Classrooms	19
Preschool and Pre-k Classrooms	20
Field Trips	20
Personal Belongings	20
Clothing	21
Diapers and Toilet Training	21
Bottles	21
Child Assessments: Desired Results Developmental Profile and Learning Genie	22
Conferences	22
Program Evaluations	22
<u>Parent Involvement</u>	23
Family Partnerships	23
Parent Advisory Council	23
Parent Café Workshops	24
<u>Nutrition</u>	24
Menus	24
Mealtime	24
Infant Feeding	25
Food Allergies and Special Dietary Considerations	25
Birthdays, Holiday and Celebrations	25
<u>Parent Rights</u>	25
Nondiscrimination Statement	25
Parent Request for a Hearing Procedures	26
Appeal Procedure for California Department of Education	27
Appeal Procedure for California Department of Social Services	27
Reporting Health and Safety Concerns	28
Complaints Regarding Child and Adult Care Food Program	28

## Merced College CDC 2023-2024 Calendar

**August 2023**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

14 days

**September 2023**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

20 days

**October 2023**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

22 days

**November 2023**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

19 days

**December 2023**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

11 days

**January 2024**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

12 days

**February 2024**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

19 days

**March 2024**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

19 days

**April 2024**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

17 days

**May 2024**

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

18 days

**Legend**

August 14 – First day of Fall semester  
 September 4 – Labor Day  
 November 10 – Veteran’s Day  
 November 23-24 – Thanksgiving Holiday  
 December 15 – Last Day of Fall semester

January 16 – First day of Spring semester  
 February 16 – Lincoln’s Birthday  
 February 19 – President’s Day  
 March 29-April 7 – Spring Break  
 May 24 – Last day of Spring semester

## Center Staff Contacts

Name	Position	Location	Phone
Michelle Joseph	Program Director	Merced	209-386-6633
Lydia Padron	Site Supervisor	Merced	
Misty Mendoza	Site Supervisor	Los Banos	
Courtney West	Admin. Assistant	Merced	209-384-6245

**Hours of Operation:** The MCCDC operates in conjunction with the Merced College Academic Calendar. Hours of operation are 7:30AM to 5:00PM Monday through Thursday (4:30PM-5:00PM are reserved extended hours for Merced College students in late courses ONLY) and 7:30AM to 2:00 PM on Friday. The MCCDC does not operate a Summer Program.

### **Our Program:**

The California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, licenses the Merced College Child Development Center (CDC) programs. MCCDC offers childcare programs serving children 3 months through 5 years of age. We serve Merced College student-parents by providing high-quality comprehensive childcare services while the parent attains a postsecondary educational degree, certificate, and/or training. Additionally, we provide services to students attending other educational programs and people who are employed, seeking housing, seeking employment, receiving Child Protective Services, etc.

Our primary funding source is the California Department of Social Services General Child Care (CCTR) and California State Preschool Programs (CSPP) grants. These grants fund subsidized care for low-income families who have a qualifying need (education, employment, vocational training, etc.) for services.

The facilities, staff, and programs meet the State guidelines as determined by Title 22 and Title 5 regulations. The program follows the Funding Terms & Conditions and Program Requirements for General Child Care and California State Preschool Programs as mandated by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services.

**Head Start Partnership:** In our Infant/Toddler program, we currently have a partnership with the Merced County Early Head Start Program. This partnership enhances the services provided in our Infant/Toddler (3 months-2 years) program. Although most of the programs are the same, the Early Head Start Partnership allows families enrolled in this program access to additional supportive services in health, nutrition, disability and mental health. Additionally, the Family Support Services Provider will work with each family to complete a Family Partnership Agreement, set goals, and will offer support and resources to help the parent meet their goals.

This educational opportunity extends beyond the classroom. The families enrolled in this program receive in-home support and activities for their child. Home Visits will be conducted twice a year by your child's primary care giver. Before the school year begins, your child's caregiver will visit your home to complete paperwork and gain an understanding of how to meet your family's needs and goals. At the conclusion of the school year, your child's caregiver will visit you and your child in your home for one final visit to ensure you have the services you need through the summer months.

**Mission:**

The Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) provides an environment, which encourages the growth and development of each child, family, student, and staff member through valued relationships.

**Philosophy:**

MCCDC's educational philosophy derives from our belief that the years of early childhood are the most crucial years and all individuals have the right to develop to their fullest potential. Therefore, we observe the following principles of human development:

1. We believe each person has the unlimited potential to teach and to learn; to develop self-control and self-expression; to realize a sense of self and a compassion for others. While we are all unique individuals, we are also a part of a greater whole. We are here to create, nurture, and maintain an environment of growth and challenge.
2. We believe learning happens in relationships; and it happens best in relationships which are characterized by personal respect and caring responsiveness.
3. We believe parents must be an integral part of the laboratory school so that students and children are positively impacted by their active participation.
4. We promote a team approach to classroom and curriculum planning in that each member of the team provides input based upon daily observations of children's play.
5. We believe people learn in an environment that motivates them to want to learn.

**Infant/Toddler Caregiving Practices:**

Good infant/toddler care is neither baby-sitting nor preschool. Infant/Toddler care is special and resembles no other care.

Our infant/toddler caregiving approach equates good care with trained infant/toddler care teachers who are preparing themselves and the environment so that infants/toddlers can learn. For care to be good, it must explore ways to help infant/toddler care teachers get "in tune" with each infant/toddler they serve and learn from the individual infant/toddler what they need, think, and feel.

We believe infant/toddler care should be based on relationship planning- not lesson planning – and should emphasize child-directed learning over adult-directed learning. Rather than detailing specific lessons for infant/toddler care teachers to conduct with infants/toddlers, our approach shows infant/toddler care teachers ways of helping infants/toddlers learn the lessons that every infant/toddler comes into the world eager to learn through active exploration.

Our approach also sees the setting for care as critical. Therefore, it helps infant/toddler care teachers design environments that ensure safety, offer infants/toddlers appropriate developmental challenges, and promote optimum health for children. An equally important program component is the strengthening of the child's developing family and cultural identity by making meaningful connections between childcare and the child's family and culture.

Six program practices anchor our work in our infant/toddler program: primary care, small groups, continuity, individualized care, cultural responsiveness, and inclusion of children with special needs.

These practices create a climate for care that reinforces our responsive, relationship-based approach. They allow relationships to develop and deepen over time between infant/toddler care teachers and the children as



well as between infant/toddler care teachers and the children's families.

- **Primary Caregiving:** Primary Caregiving is the cornerstone to building trusting relationships with children and families. We assign one or two teachers to no more than four infant/toddlers. These primary care teachers meet the individual needs of the children in their primary care group including routines such as meals, nap, and toileting. The goal is to help primary care teachers recognize the crucial importance of giving tender, loving care, and assisting in the infants' intellectual development through an attentive reading of each child's cues. The foundation of infant/toddler care includes the teacher's careful attention to infants in their care, ability to reflect on and record information about the children's interests and skills, and search for ways to set the stage for the child's next learning encounters. Family partnerships and two-way communication are an integral part of the process.
- **Individualized Care:** Individualized care starts with our family intake process where families explain the needs of their child. We complete observations, documentation, and plan learning experiences for each child in order to meet their unique individual interests and needs.
- **Small Groups:** We create intimate settings in each classroom to facilitate relationship building and to enhance the learning environment.
- **Continuity of Care:** To maintain relationships and facilitate trust, groups remain together with their teachers, when possible, as they progress through the infant and toddler classrooms.
- **Inclusion of Children with Special Needs:** Inclusion means making the benefits of high-quality care available to all infants/toddlers through appropriate accommodation and support in order for the child to have full active program participation.
- **Culture and Families:** We value each child's and family's uniqueness and work to establish ties with families leading to a clear partnership that is respectful of the children's home culture and language.

### **Goals and Purpose:**

Our goal is to create a model Child Development program through college and community partnerships. We work in collaboration with the Child Development Department to provide best practice opportunities for students and keep current in the early childhood field. We will serve the children with a professional and quality program.

The MCCDC has three purposes:

- Serve as an observation and participation lab school for Merced College students.
- Provide for the care and education of young children while their parents attend school.
- Provide a model childcare center for other community childcare facilities to use as a resource.

### **Diversity including Inclusion of Children with Special Needs**

We welcome every opportunity to expand the child's view of the world as a place rich in many cultures, races, religions and customs. MCCDC is open to all families, regardless of ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. We will work with families to provide an inclusive environment for all children. Diversity extends to the family structure as well, and we are committed to the philosophy of treating all family situations equally and without bias.

Furthermore, MCCDC includes children with disabilities in our early childhood programs with their peers without disabilities to the extent possible. We hold high expectations and intentionally promote participation in all learning and social activities facilitated by individualized accommodations using evidence-based services and support. We

foster all children's development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional), friendships with peers, and sense of belonging (Policy Statement on Inclusion of Child with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs; US Department of Health and Human Services, 09/14/15, p.3).

## **Open Door Policy**

Your child and the MCCDC benefit when you become an active participant. We welcome your participation at whatever level you are comfortable giving. We have an open-door policy, which means that you are always welcome to visit, observe or be involved in any of the day-to-day activities at the MCCDC. If you have an interest in music, art, cooking, woodworking or have another hobby or talent that you would like to share with us, or would simply enjoy helping teachers with activities or projects, please let your child's teacher know.

## **Admission Policies**

### **Wait/Eligibility List**

Parents or guardians must fill out a Waitlist Application Form for their child(ren) and submit the form to the Child Development Center. We continuously accept applications for our subsidized waitlist. Please call or stop by our office to drop off your application, or visit our website at <https://www.mccd.edu/student-support/support-programs/childcare/apply/>

Each family will remain on the waitlist until their child(ren) ages out of our program or the family expresses a request to be removed from the waitlist. The parent or guardian must notify the MCCDC of any change in telephone number or address.

Enrollment in the program is ongoing throughout the year as space is available.

### **Priority Enrollment**

Priority enrollment is as follows:

1. Low-income student-parents attending Merced College.
2. Student families with children who have a referral from Child Protective Services and/or identified as At-Risk of Abuse or Neglect, or Homeless.
3. Community members with age-eligible children who meet the eligibility and need requirements.

### **How to Qualify for the Program**

MCCDC offers a childcare subsidy program that assists with childcare costs. All families applying for childcare must go through a formal intake and certification process to determine and document the **eligibility** and **need** of the family and establish a complete family data file as required by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services. The MCCDC is required to verify information provided by the family and it is the family's obligation to provide the information necessary for such verification before children are certified and enrolled.

### **Eligibility - Who is Eligible?** (Not listed in specific or priority order).

- Children who have a written referral from Child Protective Services (written referral required).
- Children identified as At-Risk through Social Services (written referral required)
- Children whose family is experiencing homelessness.
- Children whose family is receiving benefits from certain governmental programs.
- Children whose family is income eligible (lowest income families first). Infant/toddler income eligibility is identified as 85% State Medium Income (SMI). Preschool income eligibility is identified as 100% of SMI.

- Children with exceptional needs (for preschool programs only).

Families with a child already attending the MCCDC and enrolling a sibling have priority over families who would be new to the MCCDC.

Income and family size determine a family's placement on the waitlist.

### **Family Size (Required Documentation)**

The parent(s) or guardian(s) provide supporting documentation, regarding the number of children and parents/guardians in the family, including at least one of the following:

- Certified birth certificate for **all** children included in the family size.
- Child custody court orders, adoption documents, foster care placement records.
- School or medical records.
- County welfare department records.
- Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent(s) or guardian(s).

### **Need Criteria (Required Documentation)**

The parent/guardian establishes and provides proof of a need for childcare. The MCCDC must document that each parent/guardian in the family meets a need criterion that precludes the provision of care and supervision of the family's child for some part of the day. We consider every family's need on a case-by-case basis. The following need criterion is set forth by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services: (Not listed in specific or priority order)

- The child is receiving child protective services.
- The child is being neglected, abused, or exploited, or at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation.
- The parent is employed and/or seeking employment
- The parent is engaged in vocational training and/or an educational program for English language learners or to attain a high school diploma/GED.
- The parent is seeking permanent housing for family stability.
- The family is experiencing homelessness.
- The parent is incapacitated.
- The parent is required to participate in Welfare to Work Activities (CalWORKs programs).

Failure to provide certification information or providing fraudulent information can result in either:

1) Denial of certification of your child for enrollment into the program or 2) termination of services for the family.

### **Enrollment Process**

As openings become available within our programs, we will contact you by phone to pick up an enrollment packet and schedule an intake appointment to certify your eligibility and need for childcare services.

During the intake appointment, you provide proof of **all** family income, birth records for all children, immunization records, verification of California residency, proof of need criterion, and other documentation as necessary. At the time of your appointment, you complete and sign an Application for Service with administration. We issue a Notice of Action to the parent for Approval or Denial of childcare services. A Notice of Action completes the certification process. The Notice of Action includes the parents "right to appeal."

Upon establishing initial eligibility for services, a family meets all eligibility and need requirements for those services for NOT less than 24 months or until the child gets too old for the program. During the 24-month certification period, the family shall NOT report changes to income, except in the event the family income

equals/exceeds 85 percent of the State Medium Income (SMI) for Infants and Toddlers or equals/exceeds 100 percent of the State Medium Income (SMI), or other changes for at least 24 months. The family shall, within thirty (30) calendar days, report changes to ongoing income that causes their adjusted monthly income, adjusted for family size to exceed ongoing income eligibility.

### Schedule of Income Ceilings

#### Infant and Toddler Programs: State Fiscal Year 2023-24 Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent of SMI)

Family Size	Family Monthly Income	Family Annual Income
1-2	\$6,128	\$73,536
3	\$6,931	\$83,172
4	\$8,025	\$96,300
5	\$9,309	\$111,708
6	\$10,593	\$127,116
7	\$10,834	\$130,008
8	\$11,074	\$132,888
9	\$11,315	\$135,780
10	\$11,556	\$138,672
11	\$11,797	\$141,564
12	\$12,037	\$144,444

Source: 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample File

#### Preschool Programs: State Fiscal Year 2023-24 Schedule of Income Ceilings

Family	Family Yearly Income Ceiling (100% of SMI)	Family Monthly Income Ceiling (100% of SMI)	Maximum Monthly Income for 15% above Income Eligibility Threshold
1-2	\$86,514	\$7,209	\$8,291
3	\$97,843	\$8,154	\$9,377
4	\$113,292	\$9,441	\$10,857
5	\$131,419	\$10,952	\$12,594
6	\$149,546	\$12,462	\$14,331
7	\$152,944	\$12,745	\$14,657
8	\$156,343	\$13,029	\$14,983
9	\$159,742	\$13,312	\$15,309
10	\$163,141	\$13,595	\$15,634
11	\$166,539	\$13,878	\$15,960
12	\$169,938	\$14,162	\$16,286

Source: 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample File

A parent may voluntarily request a 1) reduction to their family fee, 2) increase/reduction in childcare hours,

and/or 3) disenrollment from the program due to no longer needing services. The parent must submit a Request to Change Services form and provide the supporting documentation to prove eligibility for the request. Other changes to the family's service agreement will NOT be made using the documentation.

**Fee Determination – \*NOTE: For the 2023-2024 school year, family fees will be waived for the months of August and September ONLY.** Families receiving subsidized childcare services may be required to pay a fee based on a sliding scale prepared by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services. (Fee scale is available upon request.) Family size and adjusted monthly income (earned and unearned) are used to determine the applicable fee rate. The family fee is based upon the certified childcare schedule of the child whose certified need is the longest period- of-time per day/month. Full-day families are assessed either a flat monthly full-time fee or part-time fee. Families with a certified **need** of less than 130 hours per month will be assessed a part-time fee while families with a certified **need** of 130 hours or more per month will be assessed a full-time fee.

**Fee Payment – \*NOTE: For the 2023-2024 school year, family fees will be waived for the months of August and September ONLY.** Fees are due and payable **in advance of services**. Family fees are due on or before the last working day of the month for the following month (e.g. by the last working day in August for September childcare). Payments may be made by check or money order, Visa, or Debit, at Student Fees located on the Merced College Campus. Students may pay fees via the mccd.edu portal. The Merced College CDC will make every effort to send a Family Fee Invoice fifteen (15) days prior to the due date. However, it is ultimately the parent's responsibility to meet the payment schedule. **Fees are considered delinquent after seven (7) calendar days from the date the fees are due.** No adjustment (refunds) to Family Fees will be made for reason at any time.

**Delinquent Fees – \*NOTE: For the 2023-2024 school year, family fees will be waived for the months of August and September ONLY.** If fees are not paid-in-full and in advance, and are delinquent on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the family is subject to termination. A Notice of Action (NOA) will be sent to the family with notification of "non-payment or insufficient payment of fees" and termination from the program will follow unless 1) fees are paid within nineteen (19) days from the mailing of the notice, or 2) fees are paid within 14 days if NOA is delivered to the parent on site. Families who receive three (3) Notices of Action in a twelve (12) month period of "delinquent or non-payment in full of family fees" will be terminated regardless of payment prior to the termination date. If services are terminated due to nonpayment or less than payment in full, the family will be ineligible for childcare services until all outstanding fees are paid.

**Repayment Plans – \*NOTE: For the 2023-2024 school year, family fees will be waived for the months of August and September ONLY.** We establish repayment plans on a case-by-case basis. We will accept a reasonable plan from the parent(s) for the payment of delinquent fees. The plan will be negotiated between MCCDC Director and the parent. Repayment plans will only be allowed for families who have contacted the office prior to the effective date of termination. Merced College CDC will continue to provide services to the child provided the current family fee is paid in full by the due date and the parent complies with provisions of the repayment plan. Failure to comply with the repayment plan and/or continued delinquency will result in termination of services.

### **How to Continue in the Program**

Families must be recertified for services no later than 50 calendar days following the last day of the 24-month certification period. MCCDC will notify a family in writing in the final 30 days of the 24-month recertification period of the upcoming appointment scheduled for the recertification process to be completed.

During the recertification process, families are required to provide proof of qualification of the eligibility and need for continued services. Families who have received services for vocational training and/or educational programs must show adequate progress (i.e. gpa  $\geq$  2.0 or completion (unit bearing program) of 50% of program hours (non-unit bearing program) to continue services.

## **Center Policies**

MCCDC abides by the California Department of Education Title 5 and Community Care Licensing Title 22 Regulations, and Head Start Program Standards for the protection of all children enrolled in our program.

### **Communication**

It is important for parents to take an active role in their child's care. Parents must engage in daily verbal communication with the teacher about the child's well-being. This includes how the child slept, is feeling, any family changes, or anything that may change the child's behavior for the day. Further, parent should inform the teacher of changes in pick up instructions, doctors' appointments, or other special reminders that might change the child's regular daily routine.

Phone communication will be our primary form of communication with families during operating hours. Make sure all phone numbers are current and in working order. The MCCDC maintains an active Website to share current Center information at <https://www.mccd.edu/student-support/support-programs/childcare/apply/>

It is the responsibility of the parent to check for communication messages **from** the MCCDC daily. MCCDC utilizes a web-based program called Learning Genie to transmit information about children to parents. The parent can download the Learning Genie app onto a smartphone for access to messages/information. Ask your child's teacher for your access code.

### **Arrival/Pick-up Procedures**

Upon arrival, all children go through a "Health Check" (see pg. 16) to prevent the spread of children's diseases/illnesses. After the child has been determined to be in good health, the parent/legal guardian signs the child in each day with the exact arrival time. Prior to leaving the classroom with the child, the parent/legal guardian must sign the child out each day with the exact departure time. The parent/legal guardian's full signature is required in ink daily. If a mistake is made, line through the mistake, initial, and sign again. Sign-in/out sheets are located in the child's classroom.

Parents must designate in writing on the emergency card any other person authorized to pick up their child from MCCDC. **This person must be 18 years or older, and must show a photo id. After identification is verified, the person may sign the child out for the day.**

If a parent or any other person is prohibited from contact with the child by a restraining order or has limitations identified by a custody arrangement, a copy of all legal documents **must be** on file at MCCDC office. In the absence of a court order, the MCCDC will provide non-custodial parents with access to academic records and other MCCDC-related information regarding the enrolled child.

No child will be released to an individual who is intoxicated or impaired in any way that would make this person unable to care for the child safely.

### **Late Pick-up**

MCCDC closes **promptly** at 4:30 PM Monday-Thursday and at 2:00 PM on Friday unless otherwise contracted. Please allow time to check in with your child's teacher, gather their belongings and pick up all your children before closing. Parents who are more than 15 minutes late to pick up their child(ren) after their **scheduled** pick up time will receive a "Notice Of Late Pick Up". Families who received three (3) notices in a 12-month period will have a reduction of childcare hours. If a family receives a fourth "Notice of Late Pick Up," termination of services from the MCCDC may result.

Merced College Child Development Center has the right to contact the local Child Welfare Services and/or

Campus Police in the event that a parent/legal guardian is more than 30 minutes late and an emergency contact pick-up person cannot be available to pick-up your child.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Every child in the program must have a current Emergency Procedure Card on file in the front office and classroom. In case of an emergency, the MCCDC staff contacts the parent/guardian or designated person by phone. If information for anyone listed on the child's emergency card changes, please inform the MCCDC and update the child's emergency information immediately. Anybody listed on the emergency card must be at least 18 years of age and available to pick up the child.

In the event we need to contact you (i.e., child ill, injured, etc.), we must be able to reach you or one of your emergency contacts. **You must have voice mail set up on your cell phone.** We will call your cell phone first. If you cannot be reached by phone and you are a Merced College student, security will be called to find you on campus. If you cannot be located, the staff will then call the emergency numbers listed on your emergency card. If those telephone numbers are not current or the people contacted are not available, your child will be kept in isolation until you arrive. You will be required to meet with the Director before your child is admitted back into the program. A clear and defined plan for emergencies will be established with the Director at that time.

### **Attendance**

The California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services reimburses MCCDC for children's attendance and for valid excused absences. It is the parent's responsibility to bring your child to the program according to the certified schedule and/or to notify MCCDC when your child is absent. Parents must notify MCCDC before 8:30a.m. of their child's absence.

### **Excused Absences**

Under the Funding Terms and Conditions and Program's Requirements "Excused Absences" are defined as follows:

1. **Child/Parent is ill/Quarantined:** the child receiving services and/or the parent is ill/quarantined, has a health or social services appointment, needs to be hospitalized, suffered a serious injury, and/or the child has a communicable disease (e.g. head lice, pink eye).

**If your child is experiencing symptoms of illness for five (5) consecutive enrollment days (not including days of required quarantine), you must bring a Doctor's note or your child will not be admitted into the program.**

2. **Family Emergency sudden and unexpected:** an immediate family member is ill (e.g. sibling(s), grandparents, aunts, or uncles), domestic violence, court order, left city/state/country due to family emergency, any pandemic related concerns/exposure, death in the immediate family, and lack of transportation.
3. **Court Ordered Visitations:** A current copy of the Court Order must be on file.
4. **In the Best Interest of the child:** family vacation, religious/cultural activities, or day to be with parent/family member not specified in a court order. **Limited to ten (10) days per contract year.**

If your child was absent and the MCCDC was not notified, you must complete an Absence Verification Form. Absence Verification Forms will be available in the front office and your child's classroom. You must specify a specific reason for your child's absence (i.e., flu, fever, out of town) and sign each individual verification.

### **Abandonment of Care:**

When a family has not been in communication with the MCCDC for seven (7) consecutive calendar days and has not notified the MCCDC of the reason the family is not using services, the MCCDC will attempt to contact the parent through a variety of communication methods (e.g. phone, text, email, Learning Genie, etc.). MCCDC will keep documentation of all communication attempts in the family file. The family will be informed that failure to communicate with the MCCDC will result in termination of services.

The MCCDC will issue a Notice of Action (NOA) to disenroll the family on the basis of abandonment of care when there is no communication for a total of 30 consecutive calendar days.

### **Termination Policies**

Either parents or the MCCDC may terminate enrollment by providing a two-week notice in writing. The MCCDC may terminate enrollment with a two-week written notice for the following violations:

- ❖ Failure to provide necessary documentation when requested, falsification of documents or incomplete documents including child attendance sheets.
- ❖ Delinquent or outstanding family fees.
- ❖ Repeated attempt to leave an ill child in care.
- ❖ Late pickup after closing hours (See Late Pick-Up Policy)
- ❖ Aggressive adult behaviors toward MCCDC staff including but not limited to harassment.
- ❖ Parents choose to violate MCCDC policies and procedures.

### **Confidentiality**

The MCCDC "shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program administration, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect)." Adopted from the NAEYC Position Statement Code of Ethical Conduct [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011\\_09202013update.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Ethics%20Position%20Statement2011_09202013update.pdf)

The Administrative Assistant holds responsibility for maintaining the confidentiality of children and family personal records, which includes but is not limited to all referrals, services received, individual education plans, consultant recommendations and notes. Confidential records of children will not be accessible outside of family members, program staff, and the MCCDC consultants without familial consent in writing.

Program staff and laboratory faculty members view children's developmental profiles and goals/objectives set forth by Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to ensure a high-quality individual program that meets the needs of each child upon consent from the parent.

### **Photos, Videos, and Social Media**

Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) is a laboratory childcare facility. Merced College students will work with the children attending MCCDC as part of their coursework. They will be conducting observations, developing activities and lesson plans, learning to supervise children and discussing observations and experiences with the children, in a college classroom setting. In consideration of this, students will also be taking photographs or video recordings of the child they have been observing in accordance with their class requirements. All laboratory students sign an oath of confidentiality and agree not to share any information, photographs or video recordings outside of their laboratory classroom.

The MCCDC utilizes photographs or video recordings taken by staff for child portfolios, social stories, classroom posters, bulletin boards and learning opportunities for children. All staff sign an oath of confidentiality and agrees not to share information, photographs or video recordings outside of the MCCDC. Only Center staff and lab students (during the course of classroom assignment completion) are allowed to take photos or video recordings



of children at the MCCDC.

**The MCCDC supports and safeguards the confidentiality of your child, beyond that we are not responsible for photos or video recordings that go beyond the MCCDC. This policy does not govern any social events outside the normal operating hours of the MCCDC.**

### **No Cell Phone Zone**

The MCCDC is a "No Cell Phone Zone." We ask that you complete your phone calls prior to entering the building and refrain from answering your phone while you are picking up or dropping off your child. We ask that you use this time to connect with your child and teachers regarding your child's day.

### **Parking**

Parents dropping off or picking up children may park in the twenty-minute parking spaces located in the front of MCCDC. Security does enforce parking and you will be ticketed if you are parked illegally (i.e., staff parking, handicapped parking, no parking pass) or stay longer than twenty-minutes in the twenty-minute parking spaces.

**California Child Passenger Safety Law** (<https://www.chp.ca.gov/Programs-Services/Programs/Child-Safety-Seats>)

### **Current California Law:**

- Children under 2 years of age shall ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds OR is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the car seat. (California Vehicle Code Section 27360.)
- Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.
- Children who are 8 years of age OR have reached 4'9" in height may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be secured by a safety belt. (California Vehicle Code Section 27363.)
- Passengers who are 16 years of age and over are subject to California's Mandatory Seat Belt law.

### **When can a child graduate to a booster seat?**

California law does not address graduation time from a five (5) point harness to a booster seat. In the interest of safety, do not rush to move a child into a booster seat before they are ready. Each time you "graduate" your child to the next seat, there is a reduction in the level of protection for your child. Keep your child in each stage for as long as possible.

A child is ready for a booster seat when they have outgrown the weight or height limit of their forward-facing harnesses, which is typically between 40 and 65 pounds. Read the forward-facing car seat's owner's manual to determine height and weight limits, and keep your child in a harnessed seat for as long as possible.

Children at this stage are not yet ready for adult safety belts and should use belt-positioning booster seats until they are at least 4'9" and between 8 and 12 years old. Safety belts are designed for 165-pound male adults, so it's no wonder that research shows poorly fitting adult belts can injure children.

As a state licensed childcare center, we are obligated to report any persons not following state law with regards to the Child Passenger Safety Law. Center policy states, "if you leave the MCCDC with your child not secured per code, or if you leave a child unattended in a vehicle, we are required to report you to campus security." Remember to protect your child, it is not only the law – it is your responsibility.

## **Mandated Reporter Policy**

The California Penal Code Section 11165.7 states that “all staff members in licensed childcare centers are mandated reporters. All persons who are mandated reporters are required, by law, to report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. It is not the job of the mandated reporter to determine whether the allegations are valid. If child abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected or if a pupil shares information with a mandated reporter leading him/her to believe abuse or neglect has taken place, the report must be made. No supervisor or administrator can impede or inhibit a report or subject the reporting person to any sanction” (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/ap/childabusereportingguide.asp>).

The MCCDC is not obligated to notify parents when a report is made.

## **Merced College Board Policy 3570: Smoking on Campus:**

It shall be the policy of the Board of Trustees to prohibit smoking, the use of tobacco products, and/or the use of unregulated nicotine products (e.g. e-cigarettes) by students, staff and visitors on any owned, rented, or leased Merced Community College District property.

The Tobacco-Free Policy applies to all district facilities, property, and vehicles, owned or leased, regardless of location. Smoking and the use of tobacco products shall not be permitted in any enclosed place, including, but not limited to, all offices, classrooms, hallways, waiting rooms, restrooms, meeting rooms, community areas, and performance venues. Smoking and the use of tobacco products shall also be prohibited outdoors on all District property, including, but not limited to, parking lots, paths, fields, sports/recreational areas, and athletics facilities. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, and other persons on campus, regardless of the purpose for their visit. Tobacco products shall not be commercially sold or distributed in any manner on any district site. This includes free samples distributed by vendors. Advertising and sponsorship of events by tobacco companies is also prohibited.

The central purpose of this policy is in recognition of the evidence that cites involuntary inhalation of smoke as a hazard to the health of the general public.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Children’s safety is of the greatest importance. As part of the MCCDC safety program, emergency evacuation drills and an evacuation plan has been established.

- **Emergency evacuation drills:** The MCCDC practices emergency evacuation drills with the children and staff each month. The alarms are set off by the campus police and each classroom evacuates to their assigned location. In addition to the monthly emergency evacuation drills, the MCCDC has emergency drills for bad weather, earthquakes, and violent incidents on campus throughout the year.
- **Emergency Evacuation:** In the event of an emergency it is usually safest to stay inside the MCCDC buildings or to evacuate to locations just outside the facilities. If the MCCDC buildings are determined to be immediately unsafe, the fire alarm will be pulled and the children and staff will be evacuated to the predetermined evacuation sites that are practiced monthly during the emergency evacuation drills. As part of the emergency evacuation, teachers and MCCDC administration take the daily sign-in/out sheets and parent emergency contact binders that contain contact phone numbers for parents. If the MCCDC requires full evacuation, the secondary campus evacuation site will be the gymnasium. Children and staff will walk and infants will be transported via evacuation cribs or buggies.
- **Emergency Contact and Reunification Plan:** After the children and staff are safely secured, emergency contacts to parents will be made. Emergency information may be sent out by Learning Genie App and through phone calls/text messages. Parents who call the MCCDC office number may not get through if the building is evacuated. Emergency information will tell parents specifically where to pick up their children. Parents or an identified emergency contact who picks up a child must have photo ID and must sign their child out before they can be released.

## **Health & Social Services**

Throughout the year, children participate in a variety of required health and developmental screenings, which may vary depending on the specific program in which the child attends. Screenings may include vision, hearing, speech and language, dental and social-emotional. At the time of registration, parents/guardians must provide written consent for their child to participate in screenings provided by the MCCDC.

### **Health Check**

In order to help everyone stay healthy, teachers conduct a health check when your child arrives in the classroom. **No child shall be accepted without parent participation in the daily health check with the teacher.** If the health check reveals signs of illness, infection, or head lice, the child's parent/guardian will be required to take the child home. If the child becomes ill while at school, the MCCDC calls the child's parent/guardian to pick-up the child immediately.

For a healthy center each child and parent are required to wash hands before participating in the classroom. After your child's morning health check, please assist your child in washing hands and diapering/toileting before leaving.

### **When to Keep Your Child Home**

Illness prevents children from participating comfortably in school activities. At times, illness results in a greater need for care than the school staff can provide. For the welfare of all children enrolled at MCCDC, parents/guardians should follow recommended guidelines of when to keep their child at home. When an illness or contagious disease has occurred in the classroom during the day, parents will be notified to pick-up his/her child immediately. A child should stay home when he/she has any of the following conditions or signs of possible illness:

- ✓ Fever with or without behavior change or other signs of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, etc. Fever is defined as having a temperature of **100.0° or higher axillary** (under the arm).
- ✓ Symptoms and signs of **possible** severe illness such as unusual tiredness, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, continuous crying, difficulty breathing or green discharge from the nose.
- ✓ Diarrhea – runny, watery or bloody stools
- ✓ Vomiting – including dry-heaving
- ✓ Body rash with or without fever or itching.
- ✓ Sore throat and swollen glands or mouth sore with drooling.
- ✓ Eye discharge - thick mucus or pus draining from the eye. (Viral conjunctivitis usually has a clear, watery discharge and may not require medication or exclusion).
- ✓ Head lice and/or nits.
- ✓ Child is irritable or requires more attention and care than the MCCDC can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in our care.

**\*Note: MCCDC staff have the right to refuse services to any child/parent deemed "not in good health" for the day. In the event the child's doctor can provide written clearance of the child's health and well-being, the child will be accepted into the program.**

### **When to Send Your Child Back to School**

The child is "symptom-free", for a full **24 hours without medication**, of illness listed above and/or has a doctor's note stating the date the child can return safely to school or is no longer contagious.

**Lice:** Pediculosis (head lice) infestation is a significant problem that impacts a child's ability to attend school, and therefore, make adequate developmental, social and academic progress. Head lice are common and easily spread. Prevention and treatment are important and the ultimate responsibility for such is that of the parents/guardians. When head lice are detected, the child will be sent home. Parents of all children in the classroom will be notified of the infestation.

## The MCCDC's No Lice Policy

- ✓ The child should be treated with a pediculicide or other approved non-toxic solutions.
- ✓ Removal of lice and nits is the most effective method of eradication.
- ✓ The student can return the next school day (after treatment and removal of **all** nits dead or alive).
- ✓ Upon return to school, the student must be cleared by a staff member.
- ✓ As a last resort, for chronic outbreaks, the MCCDC reserves the right to request proof of treatment from parents.

**For chronic/recurrent cases (i.e., child has had three (3) or more occurrences or missed more than 14 days in a three (3) month period), designated staff from the MCCDC may initiate a referral to Child Welfare Services.**

## Administration of Medication and Asthma

Only Classified staff may dispense **medication** to a child. The parent must fill out the proper forms providing information about the medication, symptoms of illness, time and amount of dosage, and side-effects to be aware of. Some forms may require a signature from the licensed prescribing physician. All medication shall be provided in the original packaging with dispensing instructions. All information on the forms must follow the prescription information and/or packaging instructions. Parental permission must be signed and training of site staff must occur before any prescribed medication is administered or stored. **Medication including over the counter meds should never be stored in a child's backpack or cubby. All medication and forms must be handed directly to the appropriate site staff to be placed in a locked cabinet.**

If a child has been diagnosed with asthma, a Nebulizer Care Consent/Verification form must be completed by the parent along with following above-mentioned procedure. The child with Asthma must have Quick Relief Medication and a Spacer prescribed for the MCCDC.

The MCCDC is an "Asthma Friendly" program. As such, we request you respect children who may have asthma or respiratory conditions by keeping colognes, scented soaps, etc. to a minimum on your child. Additionally, MCCDC follows the Air Quality flag program. This is a multicolored flagging system that acts as a daily indicator of outdoor air quality in our community. The system includes four colors and is based on the Air Quality Index (AQI) of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (<http://www.valleyair.org/Home.htm>). Each day a flag is raised on our school's flagpole, (located at the north drive exit) that corresponds to the color of the AQI. The color of the flag (green/yellow/orange/red) determines the recommended schedule of outdoor activities for that day.

## Immunization, TB, Physicians Report

Healthy children learn better. Parents/guardians are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's health care. To reach this goal, children enrolled in MCCDC program must be fully immunized with proof of immunizations upon enrollment. Failure to present current immunization will exclude your child from school. A completed Physician's Report with proof of current TB test must be submitted within 30 days of enrollment or the child will be excluded from school.

## Aggressive behavior

Aggressive child behavior evokes strong emotions in parents; however, some aggressive child behavior is a typical developmental occurrence. Most aggressive child behavior can be short lived or last longer in some children. If long-term aggression occurs, it will be addressed through a Behavioral Action Plan. A Behavioral Action Plan is created by the parents in conjunction with the teachers and administration. The following steps will be taken when a child is exhibiting aggressive behaviors.

First week of consistent pattern of unprovoked aggressive behavior: Teacher will meet with parent to discuss any possible changes in child's routine or family. The teacher will provide any appropriate documentation to the parent addressing strategies to manage the aggressive behavior.

Second week of consistent pattern of unprovoked aggressive behavior: The Teacher will forward a Child and Family Concern Form to the Program Director and begin utilizing the Interval Data Sheet or Behavior Observation Report form for two weeks of tracking. Daily contact will be made between the staff and parent providing positive feedback about the child's progress.

Continued unprovoked aggressive behavior: The parent, Program Director and Teacher will meet to discuss strategies being used in the classroom and/or at home. A Behavior Action Plan will be developed by the parent, Program Director and Teacher. This may include mandatory parent participation in the classroom to help his/her child through the aggressive stage. Weekly follow-up discussions between the parent, teacher and Program Director will occur to see how behavior is changing through the process.

After the 30-day process, the parent, teacher, and Program Director will meet to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and make any necessary adjustments to the Behavior Action Plan. At this time, it will be determined whether a referral to community services need to be made.

### **Health and Developmental Screening Program**

This program provides support for the whole family and direct services for the children of the MCCDC. The main focus of this project is to provide early detection screenings for children enrolled to identify not-so-obvious health problems and to address the concern before they become significant health issues.

Children with physical and mental challenges to learning need early detection to prevent the child from falling too far behind in development. Parents and children need to have access to good preventative care and treatment services, including regular immunizations, dental, and hearing, vision and speech screenings. The benefits of early health screenings and intervention services include improved emotional and cognitive development, educational performance and healthier self-esteem. Through early detection and follow-up services, children can be healthy and school ready.

To accomplish this goal, health screenings are offered to all children attending the MCCDC free of charge. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the child is present for all screenings, even if the screenings occur on a day the child is not usually scheduled to attend. Families have the right to opt out for this service.

### **Megan's Law**

All registered sex offenders in California can be found on the following website: [www.meganslaw.ca.gov](http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov). If you would like to know more about sex offenders or search for registered offenders in your area, please refer to the website.

### **Shaken Baby Syndrome**

Twenty to thirty percent of all shaken infants die and many more than that have some form of permanent damage caused by shaking. For more information and support for when you are frustrated with a crying infant <http://www.Dontshake.org/index.php> or talk to the Director immediately.

### **Education Program**

#### **Your Child's Classroom**

The MCCDC adheres to the following age groupings as closely as possible. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

- Three months up to 24 months
- 18 months up to 36 months
- 24 months to three years
- Three years – Four years

The educational environment provides maximum opportunities for individualization as children are free to choose tasks and are encouraged to complete them. Materials are easily accessible providing tasks that are creative, responsive, and educational. Developmentally selected materials encourage experimentation and self-discovery as well as practice in fundamental skills. The environment outdoors promotes a combination of small and large muscle development.

### **Curriculum**

The Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) utilizes a multi-faceted approach based upon theories of development in young children. All curriculum is developmentally appropriate practices created through observation and assessment of the child's individual needs, interests, and ideas. Our approach encompasses a combination of curriculum including:

- Relationship based
- Play based
- Project based
- Emergent and inclusive
- Creative

The curriculum includes learning concepts/projects that are individualized, small group, and/or large group learning opportunities as a way of meeting the developmental needs of each child. The curriculum is planned and developed by each classroom teaching team, including lab students and faculty, and provides interactive and developmentally appropriate activities. Weekly learning activities integrate opportunities for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), cultural awareness, health and safety, socio-emotional growth, and nutrition. Teachers plan experiences with children in order to encourage growth and learning in a large group, small group, and individually on a daily basis. Activity plans and daily schedules are posted in all classrooms.

### **Free from Religious Instruction**

**The Merced College Child Development Center refrains from any religious instruction or worship.**

### **Discipline**

Staff members are required to provide all children with a safe, healthy, and comfortable learning environment. Constructive methods for maintaining group discipline and handling individual behaviors are always employed. Staff encourages children to use their words to express their feelings (for example, "I'm mad." "I don't like..." "You're hurting my feelings,") instead of using other unacceptable forms of expression such as hitting or biting. When children forget to use words to express their feelings, they are reminded and redirected to practice more positive actions. Staff strives to help children develop self-control and self-regulation. Expectations for all children are clearly explained to children and to parents/guardians. Corporal punishment, humiliation, or frightening techniques will not be used.

The MCCDC staff use Time-in strategies as a way to help children control his/her behavior. Time-in is a technique in which a child spends time with an adult as a means to help the child calm, discuss appropriate behaviors and words, and keep all children safe. Follow-up will occur with the Program Director, child's Lead Teacher, and parents of the child.

Additionally, each classroom includes a Safe Place for children who are in distress. The Safe Place is a soft, cushiony, quiet space for children to escape the fast-paced classroom. The Safe Place is a self-selected area of the classroom where children can look at books, pictures, and/or discuss their feelings until he/she feels comfortable returning to the activities of the classroom.

### **Infant and Toddler Classrooms**

MCCDC has five infant and toddler classrooms with children ranging in age from three months to 3 years of age.

The Water (three months up to 18 months) and Earth Rooms (18 months up to 36 months) is heavily rooted in the Infant/Toddler Caregiving Practices outlined on p. 6. The infant/toddler curriculum is strongly rooted in building quality relationships through routines and the adult-child interactions. Routines such as mealtime, nap, and toileting are critical times for the infants/toddlers to bond with the caregiver and build a foundation of trust.

The Wind, Star, and Nova Rooms (2 to 3 years) create curriculum focused on project exploration. Similar to the Infant classrooms, we believe children learn through exploration and play with the guidance and support of the caregiving staff. The play environment is the core of the curriculum. Interesting materials and toys are available for children to explore freely. The staff observe the child and enhance learning opportunities based on the child's interests (projects). In addition, social/emotional growth is a strong emphasis. Children learn to relate to other children and learn to problem solve as it relates to others. The young child learns about feelings, building trusting relationships, and successful interactions with others.

### **Preschool Classrooms**

MCCDC has two preschool classrooms. The Sun Room and Moon Room serve children three to four years of age. Both classrooms engage in The Project Approach curriculum. The curriculum starts with a strong emphasis on routines and caring for the play environment. Children freely explore the use of new and interesting materials that fosters curiosity and problem solving. Over the course of the year, project-based learning begins with "in-depth investigations both child- and teacher- initiated, research focused on finding answers to children's questions. Direction follows children's interests (Helm and Katz, *Young Investigators: The project approach in the early years*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University; New York). Ideas and explorations driven by the children's interests are added as the project grows to include basic math, literacy, science, and social studies concepts.

Our program is a scientifically based instructional program that intentionally addresses intellectual goals. Through this project-based learning, children gain knowledge by way of finding answers to questions or investigations. Children are involved in determining the activities and the events as well as how to find the answers to their questions. Resources are brought in by children, families, students, teachers and experts who visit the classroom. The Project Approach focuses on the development of oral language and vocabulary skills; alphabetic knowledge; phonological processing; print awareness and emergent writing skills, as well as promotes parental involvement in early reading and language development of their children.

MCCDC believes children's learning environments are critical in expanding the child's learning. Our rich classroom environments provide concrete learning opportunities in the Art, Blocks, Dramatics Play, Library, Music, Science and Outdoor areas. In an effort to better prepare your child for entering elementary school, it is highly encouraged that you have your child present and on time to receive the full benefit of this program.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips mostly consist of walks on campus, including the Ag Farm, Quad Area, Amphitheatre, etc. Parents will be notified of any trips away from the campus grounds. Parents will complete a General Release at time of enrollment giving permission for children to participate in supervised field trips.

### **Personal Belongings**

MCCDC encourages children and families to leave personal belongings (toys, jewelry, money, electronics, etc.) at home. Children **may bring** the following: items that provide comfort if the child becomes upset. Comfort items may be a blanket (small), pillow, pacifier, stuffed animal, or another item a child uses when upset. MCCDC and staff are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Each child will be assigned a small bin to store their belongings. Personal items will be stored in the child's cubby and s/he can have access to the belongings when requested.

Teachers may request certain items be brought that relate specifically to the project study. Teachers may request certain items/objects not be brought into the program if it is determined the object will be disruptive

or harmful. **No toy weapons are allowed in the program at any time. No toys or children's devices that take videos and/or pictures are allowed in the program.**

**All personal belongings including clothing (below) should be labeled with the child's first and last name.**

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in clean comfortable clothes. It is encouraged that children dress in "play clothes" that can get dirty since many activities at school can be messy. Children are encouraged to play in sand, water, with paint, and other materials that may stain the clothing. Also provide shoes that allow children to move and climb without slipping or falling. Rubber soles are often the best for physical play. Open toe shoes are allowed at the MCCDC only when they have a strap on the back of the shoe – absolutely no flipflops or slippers will be allowed.

Two extra sets of change of clothes must be kept in your child's cubby at all times. Clothing should also be appropriate for the current weather. A parent may be contacted during their hours scheduled to bring extra clothing or pick up their child when no extra clothing has been provided for their child who needs clean clothes. A child may be turned away if there are no extra clothes in their cubby. Any child missing a day of attendance due to no extra clothes will be considered an "Unexcused Absence."

Please do not bring children in pajamas (for children less than 18 months, speak individually with your child's teacher). Make sure that your child's clothes are labeled with first and last name. Labeling your child's clothes helps to prevent lost articles of clothing.

### **Diapers and Toilet Training**

It is expected that children enter into the program with a clean diaper and be dressed appropriately for school. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure his/her child enters the program with a clean diaper so the child does not have prolonged exposure to urine or feces. Upon arrival, all parents will take their child to the changing table in the classroom. The parent will make sure the child has a clean diaper. If the child does not have a clean, dry diaper, the parent will follow the "Steps for Diapering" posted in the diapering area. All parents will make certain they are washing the child's hands as well as their own hands after a diaper check.

At the time of the child's departure, the teacher will check to ensure the child has a clean diaper. Regular diaper changes occur throughout the day. Children have a diaper check a minimum of every two hours at school. Parents may provide diaper ointment to be applied to your child when diaper change occurs. Appropriate documentation for the use of the ointment must be signed by the parents (see Administration of Medication, p18).

When your child is ready to be toilet trained, talk to the master teacher and s/he will work with you to develop an appropriate toilet training plan that is consistent for your child. Pull-ups with tabs are permissible.

**\*Note: Unless specifically diagnosed as a condition of disability, children must be fully toilet trained to participate in the Moon Room.**

### **Bottles**

The MCCDC provides only one style of bottle (Gerber 9-ounce Baby Bottle) for children 6 to 12 months. If your child requires a style different than the one provided, we ask that you provide four bottles, nipples and disposable bags if applicable of your choice. All bottles will be sterilized daily in a dishwasher. Please check with your Master Teacher.

Parents of infants who bring bottles prepared at home may store the bottles in the classroom refrigerator; however, these bottles will not be served to the children while at MCCDC. Beverages from home may not be served to children while at MCCDC.



Additionally, the MCCDC follows the recommendations from The American Dental Association stating that children over 12 months will be provided only water in bottles during naptime (applies to Water Room only).

### **Child Assessments: Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and Learning Genie**

Child developmental assessments are the key component to curriculum development. The goal of the Merced College Child Development Center is to ensure that all children are making progress in the domains of Approaches to Self-Regulation, Social and Emotional, Language and Literacy, Cognitive including Math and Science, and Physical. The MCCDC uses the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), a tool developed by the California Department of Education to assess the development of children. Children are observed engaging in play independently and with others throughout the environment. The observational notes, photos, videos, and information are stored in a web-based program called Learning Genie. Children's development is rated within 60 days of enrollment and every six months thereafter (Children enrolled in the Head Start Partnership program will receive three assessments per year). Parents' input is a necessary component of this assessment.

Learning Genie is a web-based program that stores children's developmental data. This web-based program offers an app for parents to "receive instant updates on your child's day at school: pictures/videos, activities, mood, books, songs, school reminders and daily routines (diaper, meal, and nap for infant/toddlers). Never miss a moment." Download the app on your smartphone today and contact your child's teacher or administrator for a parent access code.

### **Conferences:**

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year following the rating of your child's development (three times per year for families enrolled in our Head Start Partnership program). During the parent-teacher conference, the child's progress is discussed and goals are set with the parent. Parents may request additional conferences at any time.

### **Program Evaluations**

#### **Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale**

The MCCDC is required to assess each classroom using the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) tool at least once each school year. The ERS are assessment tools that allow professionals to evaluate the quality of the childcare environment, materials, and overall program. The goal is for each classroom to meet the State requirements and work toward continuous improvement. After the rating of the classroom is complete, staff and administration work to create program goals and objectives for improvement. The information obtained from this assessment is also used to help teachers design and purchase materials each school year to enhance their classroom environments for optimal learning. This tool and classroom scores are available for parents to review upon request.

### **Parent Surveys**

At the end of each parent-teacher conference, parents must complete a parent survey about our program. The information from the parent surveys are compiled to determine where improvements can be made to better serve families. Program administration and staff create goals and objectives to meet the families' needs. Parents' input is a key component of the success of the Merced College Child Development Center program.

### **Head Start Partnership Site Support Review**

Each year, the Head Start Administration team visits our site to conduct a review. The Head Start assesses our program for Health and Safety, Special Services including Special Needs of Children, Health, Nutrition, Fiscal and Family Services, as well as the Education Program being offered. After the review, findings are presented to the Program Director. Goals and objectives for improvement are created between the partners.

### **Staff Development Program**

MCCDC is committed to quality early childhood education. We hire qualified staff. All classified staff hold the

appropriate credential/permit required by the State of California. New employees are provided an orientation to guide them to understand how Center policies relate to their respective job description. We support continuous staff growth by assessing the needs of staff and providing professional development opportunities to enhance their growth. All staff members are supported and evaluated regularly.

### **Parent Involvement (Requested- one hour per month):**

Per Title 22 Regulations, all parent, students, employees, and volunteers must have on file a current TB Skin Test (last 12 months), Influenza (waiver allowed), Pertussis, and Measles vaccinations before participating in the classroom. In the event proof of immunization is not attainable, parent participation is limited to Parent Education and Parent Café workshops, and at-home classroom preparation activities.

### **Family Partnerships:**

"Every family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, ethnic, or cultural background. Consequently, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children" (Moles and D'Angelo (1993). Building School-Family Partnerships for Learning, U.S. Department of Education).

Parents/guardians are critical to every child's success. Family involvement is support and participation 1) at home, 2) at the school site, and 3) in the community. Involvement directly and positively affects the educational performance of all children. Family involvement is most successful when it is viewed, practiced, and promoted as a partnership between the home and school.

Within the program, there are many opportunities for parents/guardians to be involved in their child's education to fulfill the **requested one hour per month of involvement**. Opportunities include not only direct participation in the classroom, but also information and experiences designed for parents'/guardians' growth and development as well as family strengthening. Get involved!

You can support your child's success by:

- ✓ Read to your child every day or encourage your child to "read" independently.
- ✓ Speak to your child's teacher or write a note when you have a question, compliment, or concern.
- ✓ Visit your child's classroom. Volunteer your time. You are always welcome!
- ✓ Participate in parent-teacher conferences and home visits (see below).
- ✓ Get involved in the Parent Advisory Council (see below), Parent Café, and/or Parent Education Workshops.

### **Parent Advisory Council**

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is a group of parent representatives that meet once per month throughout the year with members of the MCCDC administration. There are two parent representatives from each classroom who provide feedback and advisement to the administration on services and procedures of the MCCDC, share Center information back to parents and support fundraising events. PAC is a wonderful way to ensure you are advocating for your child and his/her future. The MCCDC staff and parents establish a PAC calendar that is distributed to all families. The calendar includes educational workshops, trainings, guest speakers, etc. decided upon by the parents through a survey completed at enrollment.

Due to additional Head Start Standards, the PAC Board Members are parents receiving services in the Head Start Partnership. These parents attend/conduct additional Head Start meetings outside of MCCDC.

Each parent holds equal value/placement to the PAC regardless of frequency of meeting attendance, number of years receiving service, or any other circumstance.

## Parent Café Workshops

Parent Cafés engage parents in meaningful conversations about what matters most – their family and how to strengthen the family by building protective factors. Our Parent Cafés are focused on building the five-research based protective factors that mitigate the negative impacts of trauma. Parent Cafes are an adaptation of the [World Café](#) process (an internationally recognized small group conversation technology developed for strategic planning and community consensus building). Parent Café Workshops are offered at least once per month.

Through Parent Café, we support parents leading the way to create a different society that values family and supports parents in raising healthy children. We assist all families in strengthening themselves by building protective factors that research says keep families strong and reduces risk factors that threaten their success. We envision a world of “parenting communities” where everyone living in a community invests in the safety and strength of its families.

**\*Note: For parent involvement activities at home, please see your child’s teacher or the Program Director.**

## Nutrition

The Merced College Child Development Center is a participant of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funded through the California Department of Education, Nutrition and Fiscal Services Division. This federally funded program allows MCCDC to provide all meals and snacks that meet the required nutritional guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the CACFP. All families are encouraged to participate in the food program (refer to Parent Rights on Page 28). Therefore, **outside food is not permitted on the premises unless otherwise stated by the Program Director** (Children may not enter their classroom with partially finished food items. Parents may sit with their child outside their child’s classroom as the child finishes their food item).

## Menus

The MCCDC menu meets the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The menus are evaluated by a registered dietician regularly. The MCCDC operates from a five-week cycle menu. Menus are posted on the parent boards in the main building and in front of the portables. Meal substitutions will be noted on menus as necessary.

## Mealtime

Meals are served in a “family style manner” for the toddler and preschool children (except during a pandemic and prohibited by Merced County Public Health Department). Children and staff sit down together to enjoy a nutritious meal. Conversations at the table between children and adults provide many opportunities for learning. Children are encouraged to help set the table, serve themselves and pass the food to others sitting at the table, and eat at the table with other children and adults. Children clean their area when finished eating.

Parents are encouraged to bring their children in before mealtime begins or after mealtime is finished. (See schedule below.) **Meals will not be held for children arriving late.** If parents arrive during mealtime, they may join their child at the table until the child is finished eating his/her meal. The MCCDC is **not allowed** to send children home with food that was served during mealtime or snack time.

Infant/Toddler	Pre-School
Breakfast – 8:15 AM	Breakfast - 8:30 AM
Lunch – 11:15 AM	Lunch – 11:30 AM
PM Snack – 1:45 PM	PM Snack - 2:00 PM

## **Infant Feeding**

Infants are held while being fed to establish a sense of security, improve digestion and to protect developing teeth. Infants are fed on demand and personalized eating schedules are developed for infants under one year of age. MCCDC highly recommends nursing mothers to feed the infant on site or express breast milk for feeding. We offer a quiet, comfortable room for nursing mothers. Mothers may come at any time to breast feed their infants or toddlers. Iron-fortified infant formula is provided for infants 12 months and younger. The brand of formula is up to the discretion of MCCDC.

Additionally, table food will begin being offered to each infant **as developmentally appropriate and at the discretion of the family**. When a family wishes to transition their infant to table food, the family will meet with the teaching staff to determine and discuss the appropriate for textures and components for the infant.

## **Food Allergies and Special Dietary Considerations**

Alternate meals are served to children who have identified and documented food restrictions for health reasons, for personal reasons, or religious reasons. Parents/Guardians with children requiring food substitutions for medical and/or personal reasons must complete the necessary forms to be completed by the parent, physician and staff. The MCCDC will try to accommodate food substitutions; however, in the event requests are beyond the MCCDC's ability, parents may be required to provide substitutions. All substitutions, whether Center or parent provided must meet the required nutritional guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

## **Birthdays, Holiday and Celebrations:**

Holidays and Center Celebrations: The MCCDC participates in celebrations throughout the school year. As in mealtimes, it is important that children be offered healthy food choices during classroom celebrations; therefore, **the MCCDC maintains a no sugar policy**. The Health Department requires that all food that is brought into the MCCDC must be purchased from a store and in its original package. Classroom Celebration Notices will be sent home a week in advance describing the event and outlining how parents may contribute items and/or participate in the classroom. In the event due to personal reasons you would like your child to refrain from celebrations, please inform your child's teacher in advance. \*Note-Only Halloween celebrations may have an expanded food menu as the children will be trick-or-treating on campus and may receive multiple sweet items.

Birthday Celebrations: Classrooms have the option of either celebrating individual birthdays or have a birthday celebration once per month to acknowledge all children whose birthdays are in that month. Parents may collaborate with their child's teacher if they would like to contribute to the birthday month celebration for their child. Check with your child's teacher.

## **Parent Rights**

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

## **Nondiscrimination Statement:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille,

large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or 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 discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S.

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

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

## **Questions and Concerns**

Any questions or concerns you may have regarding your child and/or the MCCDC may be directed to the Program Director in office or by calling (209) 386-6633.

## **Parent(s) Request for a Hearing and Procedures**

If the parent disagrees with an action: The parent(s) may file a request for a hearing with the Program Director within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date the Notice of Action was received. Refer to the back of the Notice of Action for appeal process procedures. Upon the filing of a request for hearings, the intended action shall be suspended until the review process has been completed. The review process is complete when the appeal process has been exhausted or when the parent(s) abandons the appeal process.

To file an appeal, contact:

Michelle Joseph, Program Director  
Merced College Child Development Center  
3600 M St.  
Merced, CA 95348  
209-386-6633

Within ten (10) calendar days following the receipt of the request for a hearing, the Program Director will 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 the Program Director 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. In the event the decision was made by the Program Director, contact the Vice President of Administrative Services, Merced College, 3600 M Street, Merced CA 95348 or call 209-384-6108.

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. Only persons directly affected by the hearing shall be allowed to attend.

MCCDC shall arrange for the presence of an interpreter at the hearing, if one is requested by the parents. 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 program's decision was incorrect. The program staff shall present any material facts omitted by the parent(s). The hearing officer shall mail or deliver to the parent(s) a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the hearing. The written decision shall contain procedures for submitting an appeal to the California Department of Education

(CDE).

**Appeal Procedure for California Department of Education (CDE) Review – For families of preschool aged children (Sun and Moon Rooms)**

If the parent(s) disagree(s) with the written decision from MCCDC, the parent has fourteen (14) calendar days in which to appeal to the CDE. If the parent(s) do(es) not submit an appeal request within fourteen (14) calendar days, the parents' appeal process shall be deemed abandoned and MCCDC may implement the intended action. The parent(s) shall specify in the appeal request the reason(s) why he/she believes MCCDC's decision was incorrect. A copy of MCCDC's notice of intended action and written decision shall be submitted by the parent(s) with the appeal request. Mail appeal to the following address:

California Department of Education  
Early Education and Support Division  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
1430 N Street, Suite 3410  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-322-6233  
Fax: 916-323-6853

Upon receipt of an appeal request, the California Department of Education (CDE) may request copies of the family data file and other relevant materials from MCCDC. The CDE may also conduct any investigations, interviews or mediation necessary to resolve the appeal.

The decision of the CDE shall be mailed or delivered to the parent(s) and to MCCDC within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal request.

**Appeal Procedure for California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Review – For families of preschool aged children (Water, Earth, Star, and Wind Rooms)**

If the parent(s) disagree(s) with the written decision from MCCDC, the parent has fourteen (14) calendar days in which to appeal to the CDSS. If the parent(s) do(es) not submit an appeal request within fourteen (14) calendar days, the parents' appeal process shall be deemed abandoned and MCCDC may implement the intended action.

The parent(s) shall specify in the appeal request the reason(s) why he/she believes MCCDC's decision was incorrect. A copy of MCCDC's notice of intended action and written decision shall be submitted by the parent(s) with the appeal request. Mail appeal to the following address:

California Department of Social Services  
Child Care and Development Division  
Attn: Appeals Coordinator  
744 P Street, MS 9-8-351  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 1-833-559-2417  
Fax: 916-654-1048  
Email: [CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov)

Upon receipt of an appeal request, the California Department of Social Service (CDSS) may request copies of the family data file and other relevant materials from MCCDC. The CDE may also conduct any investigations, interviews or mediation necessary to resolve the appeal.

The decision of the CDSS shall be mailed or delivered to the parent(s) and to MCCDC within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal request.

## **Compliance with the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services Decisions**

MCCDC shall comply with the decision of the CDE and CDSS immediately upon receipt thereof. If MCCDC's determination that a family is ineligible is upheld by the CDE or CDSS, services to the family shall cease upon receipt of the decision by the contractor.

### **Reporting Health and Safety Concerns:**

Health and Safety Concern forms are available at the front desk for any concerns parents might have. Please return completed forms to the front desk at the main CDC building. The Health and Safety Concern forms will be forwarded to MCCDC administration for review and follow-up.

In the event that you are not satisfied with the resolution of your reported concern, further complaints can be made at:

FRESNO REGIONAL OFFICE  
Community Care Licensing  
1310 East Shaw Avenue, MS 29-01  
Fresno, CA 93710  
(559) 243-4588  
FAX (559) 243-8070

**Complaints Regarding Child and Adult Care Food Program:** If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Child Nutrition Program at the Merced College Child Development Center, you may contact the Program Director at (209) 386-6633 or contact:

Child Nutrition Programs  
Civil Rights and Program Complaint Coordinator  
California Department of Education  
Nutrition and Fiscal Services Division  
1430 N Street, Room 4503  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2342  
916-651-5400 or 800-952-5609

All program complaints filed with the NSD are resolved at the state level. The NSD Complaint Coordinator logs the complaint, refers it first to the district for handling and if not resolved, then to the appropriate program or Field Services Unit, and tracks it through resolution. The NSD reserves the right to conduct unannounced site visits to determine the validity of all allegations.

NOTE: The only protected classes covered under the Child Nutrition Programs are race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. – U.S. Department of Agriculture Letter, May 24, 2013.



The Merced College Child Development Center is a center-based childcare facility that serves children from three months to five years of age. MCCDC has been serving the community for over thirty years and reaches a wide number of families throughout Merced County.