

2026-2027

FAMILY HANDBOOK

MERCED COLLEGE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER PROGRAM POLICIES, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS

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(209) 384-6245

Preschool License #240406698
Infant License #240406699

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/>



**MERCED
COLLEGE**

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC)! We are honored that you have chosen our program to be part of your child's early learning journey.

For more than 30 years, the Merced College Child Development Center has served as both a high-quality early childhood education program for children and families and a laboratory school for the Merced College Child Development Department. Our unique setting provides children with a nurturing, engaging learning environment while preparing the next generation of early childhood educators and professionals who will serve children and families throughout our community.

As a laboratory school, MCCDC partners with Merced College faculty and students to provide meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. Throughout the academic year, college students may observe classrooms, participate in learning activities, assist under the direct supervision of qualified teaching staff, and complete coursework related to child development and early childhood education.

At MCCDC, we believe every child deserves a safe, caring, inclusive, and stimulating environment where they feel valued and supported. Our curriculum is grounded in developmentally appropriate practices and is designed to nurture each child's cognitive, social-emotional, physical, language, and creative development. We recognize and celebrate the unique strengths, interests, cultures, languages, and abilities of every child and family we serve.

We value strong partnerships with families and believe that children thrive when educators and families work together. We encourage family participation through classroom visits, special events, volunteer opportunities, and ongoing communication with teaching staff. Your involvement is an important part of your child's success.

The Merced College Child Development Center operates in accordance with all applicable California regulations, including the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division (Title 22), the California Department of Education (Title 5) program requirements, and the General Child Care and Development Program Funding Terms and Conditions.

We look forward to partnering with you and your child throughout the year. Together, we will create a positive, engaging, and memorable early learning experience.

Warmly,
Program Director

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Merced College Child Development Center Calendar 2026-2027

August 2026

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					

15 days

September 2026

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			

21 days

October 2026

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 2026

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					

18 days

December 2026

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		

9 days

January 2027

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

February 2027

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						

18 days

March 2027

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

April 2027

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	

22 days

May 2027

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					

10 days

Legend

August 10 – First day of school
 August 20 – Professional Dev. Day
 September 7 – Labor Day
 November 11 – Veteran's Day
 November 26-27 – Thanksgiving Holiday
 December 11 – Last Day of Fall semester

January 11 – First day of Spring semester
 January 18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
 February 12 – Lincoln's Birthday
 February 15 – Washington Day
 March 26 – Good Friday
 May 14 – Last day of school

Mission

At the Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC), we build meaningful relationships to create an environment where every child, family, student, and staff member can learn, grow, and thrive.

Philosophy

At MCCDC, we believe that the early childhood years are the most crucial window for growth. Every individual deserves the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. To honor this, our program is guided by the following core principles of human development:

1. We believe everyone has an unlimited capacity to teach, learn, express themselves, and develop deep empathy for others. While we celebrate what makes each person unique, we also emphasize that we are part of a greater whole. We work together to create a nurturing environment that balances gentle support with meaningful growth and discovery.
2. True learning thrives within relationships. We intentionally build connections rooted in personal respect, deep caring, and responsive communication.
3. Parents are an essential part of our laboratory school community. Your active participation deeply enriches the experience for our college students and, most importantly, your children.
4. We plan our classrooms and curriculum as a team. Every staff member contributes to our daily plans based on careful observations of how the children play, explore, and interact.
5. We design spaces and experiences that spark curiosity, making children naturally excited and motivated to learn.

Program Goals and Objectives

The Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) aims to maintain a model early childhood program through integrated college and community partnerships. Working closely with the academic Child Development Department, we provide professional, high-quality care rooted in the latest early childhood research.

MCCDC operates with three core objectives:

1. To provide an observation and practical lab school environment for Merced College students.

2. To offer comprehensive care and education for young children while their parents pursue higher education.
3. To serve as a model resource facility for childcare programs throughout the local community.

Commitment to Diversity and Special Needs Inclusion

True early childhood inclusion means welcoming, valuing, and accepting every child and family, regardless of their background or unique abilities. We firmly advocate for the rights of all individuals. Our goal is to create a deep, authentic sense of belonging where every child can fully and actively participate in all of our activities, experiences, and environments.

At MCCDC, we pride ourselves on fostering a compassionate, judgment-free learning environment. We support full participation by thoughtfully adapting our curriculum and classroom environments to fit your child's needs. To ensure a cohesive, personalized experience, our team proudly collaborates with families, college students, and community specialists to connect you with any necessary supportive services. Our dedicated staff continually trains on the latest inclusive strategies and policies, ensuring we always provide a high-quality environment where everyone can thrive.

Staff Contacts

Name	Position	Location	Phone
Lydia Padron	Program Director	Merced	209-386-6633
Courtney West	Site Supervisor	Merced	209-384-6245
Misty Mendoza	Site Supervisor	Los Banos	209-386-6694
Vacant	Administrative Assistant	Merced	209-384-6245
Alondra Sotelo Valencia	Student Support Coordinator	Merced	209-381-6530

Hours of Operation

- Monday – Thursday: 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM
- Friday: 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM

Please note: MCCDC follows all college holiday and seasonal closures, and we do not operate a summer program.

Transportation

Transportation to and from the facility is the responsibility of the family; MCCDC does not provide transportation services.

Our Program

The Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) is fully licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. We offer high-quality, comprehensive childcare programs for children from 3 months through 5 years of age.

Our primary mission is to support Merced College student-parents by providing excellent care while you pursue your postsecondary degree, certificate, or vocational training. We also proudly extend our services to families who have other needs for services.

To keep our care affordable, our primary funding comes from the State of California's General Child Care (CCTR) and California State Preschool Program (CSPP) grants. These grants provide subsidized childcare for income-eligible families who demonstrate a qualifying need (such as education, job training, or employment).

Because we receive this state funding, all of our facilities, staff members, and educational programs strictly meet the rigorous guidelines mandated by California Title 5 and Title 22 regulations. We fully operate in alignment with the official Funding Terms & Conditions set by the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services.

Early Head Start Partnership Services

MCCDC's Infant/Toddler program (serving children from 3 months to 2 years of age) maintains a collaborative partnership with the Merced County Early Head Start Program. This partnership enhances our standard curriculum by granting enrolled families access to additional supportive services in health, nutrition, disability accommodations, and mental health.

As part of this program, a Family Support Services Provider collaborates with each family to establish a Family Partnership Agreement, set individualized benchmarks, and provide resources to support parent success.

Learning opportunities extend beyond the classroom through tailored in-home support and child-focused activities. Primary caregivers facilitate this connection through mandatory Home Visits:

- Before the school year begins: Conducted before the school year begins, this initial visit allows the caregiver to complete required documentation and learn how to best meet the family's needs and goals.
- After the school year ends: Conducted at the conclusion of the school year, this final visit ensures families are successfully connected to necessary supportive services through the summer months.

Childcare Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)

The CCAMPIS grant, which is funded by the United States Department of Education (USDE), provides subsidized childcare for 24 preschool-aged children (2 to 5 years old) per semester.

Student-parents participating in this program must meet specific requirements mandated by the USDE. These obligations are fully outlined in the CCAMPIS contract executed at enrollment.

Beyond childcare assistance, the CCAMPIS grant funds a Student Support Coordinator to assist student-parents throughout their educational and personal journeys. The coordinator collaborates with each participant to establish a formalized CCAMPIS Agreement, define personal objectives, and deliver targeted resources to foster student success.

Infant/Toddler Caregiving Practices

Infant and toddler care is a specialized field that resembles no other form of early education. Our caregiving philosophy relies on highly trained educators who deliberately prepare themselves and the learning environment to optimize child development.

We believe care must be responsive, relationship-based, and centered on child-directed exploration rather than rigid, adult-led lesson planning. Our educators focus on reading each child's cues to understand their physical, emotional, and cognitive needs. Furthermore, we intentionally structure our spaces to protect child safety, promote optimum health, and honor the child's developing family and cultural identity.

The Six Pillars of Our Program

Six core operational practices reinforce our relationship-centered environment, allowing deep connections to develop over time between staff, children, and families:

1. **Primary Caregiving:** To foster secure attachments, we assign primary teachers to distinct groups with a maximum 1:4 ratio. The primary teacher facilitates the child's daily care routines, including meals, rest, and toileting. Teachers observe, document, and analyze individual cues to guide intellectual development and maintain strong, two-way communication with families.
2. **Individualized Care:** Beginning with the initial family intake, our staff utilizes observations and developmental records to customize learning experiences that align with each child's unique interests and needs.
3. **Small Groups:** We establish intimate group sizes within each classroom to support focused interactions and enhance the overall learning environment.
4. **Continuity of Care:** To support healthy emotional development and stability, children and their primary educators remain together as a cohort, whenever possible, as they transition through the program.

5. **Special Needs Inclusion:** We ensure the benefits of high-quality early care are available to all infants and toddlers by implementing accommodation and support structures necessary for full, active participation.
6. **Cultural Responsiveness:** We value the diverse identity of each household and build respectful parent partnerships that actively preserve and celebrate the child's home culture and language.

Open Door Policy

Both your child and MCCDC benefit immensely when you become an active participant in our program! We welcome your involvement at whatever level you feel most comfortable giving. We maintain a true open-door policy, which means you are always welcome to visit, observe, or join in any of our day-to-day center activities.

How You Can Get Involved:

If you have an interest in music, art, cooking, woodworking, or any other hobby or talent you would like to share, or if you would simply enjoy helping our teachers with classroom activities and projects, please let your child's teacher know!

Volunteer Health Requirements:

To ensure the safety of all children, California law requires that any parent participating in the classroom for 15 minutes or more, or assisting with any meal service, must provide the office with:

- Proof of required immunizations.
- Documented proof of a negative tuberculosis (TB) test or clearance.

Admissions Policies

Immigration Status and Safety Protections (AB 495)

The determination of eligibility for childcare and development services shall be conducted without regard to the immigration status of the child or the child's parent(s), unless the individual is under a final order of deportation from the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Waiting and Eligibility List

Enrollment at MCCDC is ongoing throughout the year as spaces become available. Because demand is high, we maintain a subsidized waitlist.

- **How to Apply:** Parents or guardians must complete a Waitlist Application online via our Hubbe portal: <https://merced.sishubbe.com/Parents/MCCDC>. You can also find this link on the Merced College website.
- **Annual Renewal:** To remain active on the waitlist, you must submit a new application every school year.

- **Keep Us Updated:** It is your responsibility to promptly notify MCCDC of any changes to your phone number, email, or home address so we can reach you when a spot opens.

Priority Enrollment

When openings occur, spots are filled according to the following state-mandated priority guidelines:

1. Merced College Student-Parents who meet income eligibility requirements.
2. Student Families with children who have a referral from Child Protective Services (CPS), are identified as at-risk of abuse or neglect, or are experiencing homelessness.
3. Community Members with age-eligible children who meet all state eligibility and need requirements.

Note: A family's exact placement on the waitlist is determined by total family size and gross monthly income.

How to Qualify for the Program

MCCDC offers a childcare subsidy program to assist families with the cost of childcare. All applying families must complete a formal intake and certification process. This process documents your family's state-defined Eligibility and Need to establish your file as required by the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services.

MCCDC is legally required to verify all documentation. Families must provide all necessary verification paperwork before a child can be officially certified and enrolled.

1. Verifying Eligibility (Who Qualifies?)

To be eligible for subsidized care, your family must meet at least one of the following criteria (not listed in order of priority):

- **CPS Referral:** Children with a written referral from Child Protective Services.
- **At-Risk Status:** Children identified as at-risk through Social Services (written referral required).
- **Housing Status:** Families currently experiencing homelessness.
- **Public Assistance:** Families receiving benefits from qualifying government assistance programs.
- **Income Eligibility:** Families whose gross income falls within state guidelines (lowest income families are served first).
 - *Infant/Toddler Program:* Income must be at or below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).
 - *Preschool Program:* Income must be at or below 100% of the State Median Income (SMI).
- **Exceptional Needs:** Children with exceptional needs (applicable to preschool programs only).

2. Documenting Family Size (Required Paperwork)

You must establish your official family size by providing at least one of the following supporting documents for the parents/guardians and children living in your household:

- Certified birth certificates for all children included in the family count.
- Court-ordered child custody agreements, adoption documents, or foster care placement records.
- Official school or medical records.
- County welfare department documentation.
- Other reliable, legal documentation verifying the relationship of the child to the parent or guardian.

3. Documenting Your "Need Criteria" (Required Paperwork)

State regulations require us to document that every parent or guardian in the household has a qualifying "need" that prevents them from providing care and supervision during the time the child is at the center. We review every family's situation on a case-by-case basis. Qualifying needs include:

- The child is receiving Child Protective Services or is at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation.
- The parent is employed or actively seeking employment.
- The parent is enrolled in vocational training, an educational program, English Language Learner (ELL) classes, or a high school diploma/GED program.
- The parent is required to participate in CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work activities.
- The family is experiencing homelessness or seeking permanent housing for family stability.
- The parent is legally incapacitated.

Providing fraudulent information or failing to provide the required certification paperwork will result in the immediate denial of your enrollment application or the termination of your family's childcare services.

Enrollment

Waitlist Placement and Intake Appointments

When program vacancies occur, administration will contact families via the telephone number provided in the Hubbe database. Upon a verbal commitment to enroll, the family will receive an enrollment packet and an intake appointment date.

Applicants must bring the completed enrollment packet and all primary supporting documentation to their scheduled appointment to establish state eligibility and need criteria.

Mandatory Verification Documentation

Enrollment cannot be finalized without the submission of the following verifications:

- Comprehensive proof of all household income.
- Official birth records for all children within the family unit.
- Current child immunization records.
- Documentation verifying California residency. *Note: Families experiencing homelessness are exempt from providing standard utility bills or lease agreements and may submit a "Declaration of Intent to Reside in California" to prevent enrollment delays.*
- Verifiable documentation confirming a state-approved need criterion.

Mandatory California Licensing (LIC) Forms

During the intake appointment, parents/guardians will execute an official *Application for Service* and submit the following mandated California Department of Social Services forms:

1. LIC 700 – Identification and Emergency Information
2. LIC 627 – Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
3. LIC 995 – Notification of Parents' Rights
4. LIC 613A – Personal Rights
5. LIC 702 – Child's Preadmission Health History – Parent's Report
6. LIC 701 – Physician's Report (Including medical assessment and TB screening if indicated by the physician)
7. LIC 9227 – Infant Sleep Plan (*Infant classrooms only*)
8. Needs and Services Plan (*Required for infants and children with exceptional needs*)

The certification process concludes when MCCDC issues an official Notice of Action (NOA) indicating approval or denial of services. The Notice of Action explicitly details the parent's regulatory right to appeal.

The 24-Month Certification Window

Upon establishing initial eligibility, families are certified to receive services for a minimum duration of 24 months, or until the child reaches the maximum age limit for program participation.

During this 24-month period, families are protected from reporting routine income or schedule changes. However, the parent/guardian must report to the center within thirty (30) calendar days if their adjusted monthly gross income increases to equal or exceed the following maximum thresholds:

- Infant/Toddler Classrooms: 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).
- Preschool Classrooms: 100% of the State Median Income (SMI).

Schedule of Income Ceilings

Preschool Programs: State Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Schedule of Income Ceilings

State Fiscal Year 2026–27 Schedule of Income Ceilings

Family Size	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	\$100,510	\$8,376	\$9,632
3	\$113,708	\$9,476	\$10,897
4	\$136,044	\$11,337	\$13,038
5	\$157,811	\$13,151	\$15,124
6	\$179,578	\$14,965	\$17,210
7	\$183,659	\$15,305	\$17,601
8	\$187,741	\$15,645	\$17,992
9	\$191,822	\$15,985	\$18,383
10	\$195,903	\$16,325	\$18,774
11	\$199,985	\$16,665	\$19,165
12+	\$204,066	\$17,006	\$19,556

Source: 2024 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample File

Infant and Toddler Programs: State Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent of SMI)

Family Size	Family Monthly Income	Family Annual Income
1-2	\$7,119	\$85,433
3	\$8,054	\$96,651
4	\$9,636	\$115,637
5	\$11,178	\$134,139
6	\$12,720	\$152,641
7	\$13,009	\$156,110
8	\$13,298	\$159,579
9	\$13,587	\$163,048
10	\$13,876	\$166,517
11	\$14,166	\$169,987
12	\$14,455	\$173,456

Source: 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample File

Family Fee Assessment

Enrolled families receiving subsidized childcare services may be assessed a monthly family fee in accordance with the sliding fee scale established by the California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services. Fee rates are determined by verified family size and adjusted monthly gross income (inclusive of earned and unearned revenue sources).

The family fee is calculated based on the certified childcare schedule of the child requiring the longest operational duration per day or month.

- Part-Time Tier: Certified needs totaling less than 130 hours per month are assessed a flat, part-time monthly fee.
- Full-Time Tier: Certified needs totaling 130 hours or more per month are assessed a flat, full-time monthly fee.

The official state-approved fee schedule is available upon request. No adjustments, credits, or refunds to family fees will be issued for any reason.

Payment Collection

All family fees are due and payable in advance of services. Fees must be submitted on or before the final operational business day of the month prior to the month of service (e.g., payment for September care must be received by the final working day of August).

While MCCDC attempts to issue a Family Fee Invoice fifteen (15) days prior to the deadline, timely payment remains the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

- Payment Methods: Transactions may be processed via check, money order, credit card, or debit card at the Student Fees Office on the Merced College campus.
- Online Payments: Student-parents may execute payments electronically via the mccd.edu campus portal.

Delinquent Balances and Termination

Fees are classified as legally delinquent seven (7) calendar days past the initial due date. Continued non-payment or insufficient payment will result in program termination via the following regulatory process:

1. Issuance of a Notice of Action (NOA): An official NOA for non-payment will be generated.
2. Cure Period: Termination will be executed unless all outstanding fees are settled within 14 days (if the NOA is delivered directly to the parent on-site) or 19 days (if the NOA is delivered via postal mail).
3. The Repeat Delinquency Clause: Families who receive three (3) Notices of Action for delinquent or incomplete family fees within any rolling 12-month period will face automatic program termination, regardless of whether the balance is paid prior to the effective termination date.
4. Ineligibility: Families terminated for non-payment are entirely ineligible for future enrollment or services until all historical debts are liquidated.

Repayment Agreements

Satisfactory repayment schedules may be established on a case-by-case basis through an agreement negotiated between the parent/guardian and the MCCDC Director.

Repayment agreements are exclusively available to families who formally petition the office prior to the effective date of termination. MCCDC will sustain active childcare services provided that the family pays the current month's fee in full by its respective deadline and continuously adheres to the provisions of the signed repayment contract. Breach of the repayment agreement or subsequent payment delinquencies will result in immediate termination of services.

How to Continue in the Program (Recertification)

Enrolled families must be recertified for subsidized services no later than 30 calendar days following the expiration of their 24-month certification period. MCCDC will issue a written notice to the family during the final 30 days of their current certification cycle detailing their scheduled recertification appointment.

During the recertification intake, families are required to submit current verification data confirming ongoing eligibility and need criteria.

Academic Progress Requirements

Student-parents utilizing vocational training or postsecondary educational programs as their certified need criterion must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress. At the point of recertification, the parent/guardian must submit official transcripts or institutional records verifying:

1. Graded Educational Programs: Completion of the most recent academic period with a minimum 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA).
2. Non-Graded Educational Programs: Success benchmarks indicating the student passed a minimum of 50% of attempted coursework or otherwise satisfied the training institution's definition of adequate progress.

Center Policies

To protect every child enrolled in our program, MCCDC strictly abides by the California Department of Education Title 5 Regulations, Community Care Licensing Title 22 Regulations, and Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Active Communication

Partnering with you is vital to your child's care. We ask that all families follow our daily communication guidelines:

- **Daily Check-Ins:** Please share daily, verbal updates with your child's teacher regarding their well-being. Let us know how they slept, how they are feeling, any family changes, or anything that might impact their behavior.
- **Schedule Changes:** Always inform the teacher about changes in pick-up instructions, doctor appointments, or exceptions to their normal routine.
- **Primary Contact Method:** Telephone calls are our primary way to reach you during operating hours. You must maintain an active, working phone number and keep an active voicemail box set up on your phone.
- **Digital Portals:** It is the parent's responsibility to check for center updates daily.
 - Hubbe Portal: Utilized for family-specific administrative notices, contracts, and regulatory documentation.
 - Learning Genie App: Utilized for daily classroom updates, child observations, and general event distribution.
 - Our active public webpage is available at mccd.edu/childcare

Daily Arrival and Pick-Up Procedures

- **Daily Health Check:** Upon arrival, all children must complete a health check to prevent the spread of childhood illnesses.
- **iPad Sign-In/Sign-Out:** Once cleared, a parent or guardian must sign the child in using the classroom iPad. You must also sign your child out on the iPad before leaving at the end of the day. Daily signatures are a mandatory state requirement.
- **Unique PIN Security:** Every authorized adult must establish and use their own unique PIN. For safety reasons, never share your PIN with anyone else.
- **Authorized Adults:** Anyone picking up your child must be at least 18 years old, listed on your emergency contacts in Hubbe, and prepared to show a photo ID. Once verified, they will use their own unique PIN to sign the child out.
- **Legal & Custody Documents:** If a person is legally restricted from contacting your child via a restraining order or custody agreement, an official copy of the court document must be kept on file in our office. Without a court order, MCCDC is legally required to grant non-custodial parents access to records and center information.
- **Safety Release Exception:** To safeguard your child, we will never release a child to any individual who appears intoxicated, under the influence, or impaired in any way.

Late Pick-Up Policy

MCCDC closes promptly at 4:30 PM Monday through Thursday, and at 2:00 PM on Fridays (unless otherwise contracted). Please allow enough time to check in with the teacher, gather your child's belongings, and leave the building before closing time.

- **1st to 3rd Notices:** Parents who are more than 15 minutes late past their scheduled pick-up time will receive an official "Notice of Late Pick Up." Accruing three (3) notices within a 12-month period will result in a reduction of your contracted childcare hours.
- **4th Notice:** If a family receives a fourth notice, the program is legally required to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) to file a report.
- **Emergency Enforcement:** MCCDC reserves the right to contact local Child Welfare Services or Campus Police if a parent is repeatedly late and no authorized emergency contact person can be reached.

Emergency Contacts and Family Preparedness

If your child becomes ill or injured, we must be able to reach a responsible adult immediately. If we cannot reach you on your cell phone, staff will immediately call the alternative numbers on your emergency card. If your contacts are unavailable or disconnected, we will contact Child Protective Services (CPS), and you will be required to meet with administration to review your contacts.

1. Maintaining Current Emergency Contacts

To comply with the California Family Preparedness Plan Act (AB 495), every family must maintain an active, accurate Emergency Procedure Card on file.

- Families are required to review this information monthly and update it at least annually, or immediately whenever a phone number changes.
- Log into your Hubbe portal and make changes directly on the *Emergency Contact* tab.
- You may list as many alternative contacts as you wish, but all individuals must be at least 18 years of age and authorized to pick up your child. This information is kept strictly confidential.

2. Procedures if a Parent is Unavailable

If the center becomes aware that a parent or guardian is unexpectedly unavailable to care for a child (including situations involving immigration enforcement actions), we are legally mandated to execute the following safety protocol:

1. **Prioritize Parental Instructions:** We will immediately consult your emergency file and execute any specific directives you have outlined for your child's care.
2. **Exhaust the Contact List:** Staff will call every single alternative person designated on your emergency card until an authorized, safe adult is successfully reached to assume care.
3. **CPS as a Last Resort:** The center will only contact Child Protective Services (CPS) if we exhaust your entire contact list, cannot locate a valid *Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit*, or are entirely unsuccessful in reaching an approved adult.

3. Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit (Voluntary)

Parents have the option to complete a *Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit*. This is a voluntary, legal document that permits an adult with whom your child is currently living to make educational and certain medical decisions on the child's behalf if you are temporarily unavailable.

- This affidavit is strictly for enrollment and medical care; it does **not** grant or alter permanent legal custody.
- By California law, California State Preschool Programs (CSPP), medical doctors, and dentists are required to accept this affidavit.

Access to Immigration Protection Policies

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and families regardless of citizenship or immigration status. You may access the California Attorney General's Model Policies regarding immigration enforcement protections at our front office or online at oag.ca.gov/ab495

Confidentiality and Privacy Rights

Your family's privacy is deeply important to us. MCCDC strictly maintains confidentiality and respects your right to privacy, refraining from the disclosure of personal information.

- **Records Restrictions:** In accordance with the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, children's files, including referrals, services received, IEP/IFSP plans, and specialist notes, are strictly confidential. Our Administrative Assistant is responsible for safeguarding these files. They will not be shared with anyone outside of immediate family members, center administration, and authorized consultants without your explicit written consent (except in legal cases of suspected abuse or neglect).
- **Educational Review:** With your permission, center educators and laboratory faculty may review your child's developmental profile and learning goals to design a high-quality, individualized learning program tailored specifically to their needs.

Photos, Videos, and Social Media

At the time of enrollment, families will be provided with an official Media Consent and Release Form. This form outlines how images and videos may be used within our educational program. We fully respect each family's right to privacy; if you do not wish to have your child photographed or recorded for these purposes, you may request to opt-out.

Because MCCDC is a laboratory childcare facility, Merced College students interact and work with our children as part of their academic coursework.

- **Student Observations:** To fulfill class requirements, college students will observe children, design lessons, and occasionally take photographs or video recordings of the child they are studying. All laboratory students sign a mandatory Oath of Confidentiality and are strictly prohibited from sharing these photos, videos, or information outside of their college classroom.
- **Center Portfolios:** MCCDC staff members also utilize photos and videos for child portfolios, classroom posters, bulletin boards, and daily learning stories.
- **Strict Media Rules:** Only center staff and authorized college lab students (during active assignments) are permitted to take photos or videos of children at MCCDC. While we actively safeguard your child's privacy, MCCDC cannot be held responsible for media shared beyond our facility by outside parties. Note: This policy does not govern social events held outside of normal center operating hours.

No Cell Phone Zone

To foster a connected and engaged environment, MCCDC is a No Cell Phone Zone. We kindly ask that you finish your phone calls before entering the building, and refrain from using your device during drop-off and pick-up times. Please use these valuable moments to connect with your child and check in with their teachers.

Campus Parking

Short-Term Loading: Parents may park in the designated 20-minute parking spaces directly in front of the MCCDC building when dropping off or picking up children.

Campus Parking Enforcement strictly implements all parking regulations. To avoid receiving a ticket, please ensure you do not exceed the 20-minute limit and do not park illegally in staff spaces, handicapped spaces, or areas requiring a college parking pass.

California Child Passenger Safety Laws

Current California Legal Requirements

- **Under 2 Years Old:** Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat unless they weigh 40 or more pounds OR are 40 or more inches tall. Your child must be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the car seat manufacturer (California Vehicle Code Section 27360).
- **Under 8 Years Old:** Children must be properly secured in an appropriate car seat or booster seat in the back seat of the vehicle.
- **Ages 8 and Older (or 4'9" Tall):** Children who are at least 8 years old OR have reached 4'9" in height may transition out of a car seat, but at a minimum must be properly secured by a vehicle safety belt (California Vehicle Code Section 27363).
- **Ages 16 and Older:** All passengers aged 16 and over are subject to California's Mandatory Seat Belt Law.

When is a child ready for a booster seat?

California law does not specify an exact time to transition a child from a 5-point harness car seat to a booster seat. For your child's safety, please do not rush the transition. Every time a child "graduates" to the next stage of car seat, there is a reduction in their overall level of crash protection. We highly recommend keeping your child in each safety stage for as long as possible.

The Right Time: A child is typically ready for a booster seat once they completely outgrow the maximum height or weight limits of their forward-facing 5-point harness (usually between 40 and 65 pounds). Always consult your car seat's owner's manual to determine these specific limits.

Why Boosters Matter: Children who outgrow their forward-facing car seats are still too small for adult safety belts. Adult seat belts are designed to fit a 165-pound adult male; poorly fitting adult belts can cause severe internal injuries to a child during a sudden stop or crash. Children should use a belt-positioning booster seat until they are at least 4'9" tall and between 8 and 12 years old.

Mandatory Safety and Reporting Policy

As a state-licensed childcare facility, MCCDC is legally obligated to report individuals who fail to follow California Child Passenger Safety Laws.

Center policy strictly states: "If a parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person leaves the MCCDC grounds with a child who is not secured according to state vehicle code, or if a child is left unattended in a vehicle, staff are required to immediately report the incident to Campus Police."

Keeping your child properly secured is not just your responsibility, it is the law.

For more detailed information and car seat safety resources, you can visit the California Highway Patrol website at chp.ca.gov/programs-services.

Mandated Reporter Policy

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 11165.7, all staff members employed at licensed childcare centers are legally classified as mandated reporters.

What this means for our families:

- All MCCDC employees are required by law to immediately report any known or reasonably suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- If a staff member reasonably suspects abuse or neglect, or if a child shares information that leads them to believe abuse or neglect has taken place, an official report must be filed.
- It is not the job of the childcare teacher or staff member to investigate, determine the validity of the allegations, or verify if the abuse occurred. That role belongs exclusively to protective authorities.
- By law, no supervisor, college administrator, or parent can impede, inhibit, or stop a staff member from making a report, nor can the reporting person face any professional sanctions.
- To protect the integrity of state investigations, MCCDC is not obligated or permitted to notify parents when a report is filed.

For more information on these state safety guidelines, you may consult the California Department of Education Child Abuse Reporting Guide.

Tobacco-Free District Property (Merced College Board Policy 3570)

To ensure a healthy learning environment and recognize the established medical hazards of involuntary secondhand smoke, the Merced Community College District Board of Trustees enforces a strict tobacco-free policy.

This policy completely prohibits smoking, the use of tobacco products, and the use of unregulated nicotine delivery devices—including vapes and e-cigarettes—by all students, staff, and visitors.

The Tobacco-Free Policy applies to all district-owned, rented, or leased facilities, vehicles, and properties, regardless of location.

This policy applies to every individual on campus, including parents, guardians, and authorized pick-up relatives, regardless of the purpose or duration of their visit.

Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Plans

Your child's physical safety is our absolute greatest priority. As part of our comprehensive safety program, MCCDC has established strict emergency evacuation plans and routine drills to prepare our children and staff.

1. Regular Safety Drills

- **Monthly Evacuation Practice:** In coordination with Campus Police, the center conducts a full emergency evacuation drill every month. When the alarms sound, each classroom immediately evacuates to its assigned outdoor assembly area.
- **All-Hazards Training:** In addition to monthly fire and building evacuations, MCCDC routinely practices emergency drills for severe weather, earthquakes, and violent incidents (lockdown procedures) on campus throughout the year.

2. Evacuation Protocols

In most emergency scenarios, staying sheltered inside the secure MCCDC facility or gathering at our adjacent outdoor assembly areas is the safest choice. However, if the buildings are determined to be unsafe:

- The fire alarm will be activated, and staff will immediately guide children to our practiced, predetermined outdoor evacuation sites.
- During any evacuation, classroom teachers and center administrators take the daily sign-in/out records and your emergency contact binders containing all parent phone numbers.
- Toddlers and preschoolers will walk with staff, while infants will be safely transported using emergency evacuation cribs and multi-child buggies.
- If a major campus crisis requires a full evacuation away from the childcare center, our designated secondary relocation site is the Downey Learning Resource Center.

3. Emergency Contact and Family Reunification Plan

Once all children and staff are safely accounted for and secured at our designated assembly site, administration will immediately initiate family notifications.

- Emergency alerts, updates, and instructions will be broadcast via the Learning Genie App, Hubbe Parent Portal, and direct phone calls.
- Please note that if our building has been evacuated, the main MCCDC office phone lines will be down. Please rely on the digital messages sent to your phone for instructions.
- Emergency notifications will tell you exactly where to go to pick up your child. For your child's protection, any parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact person arriving to pick up a student must present a valid photo ID and sign the child out before they can be released.

Attendance

The California Department of Education and the California Department of Social Services reimburse MCCDC based on children's daily attendance and valid, documented excused absences.

To protect our program's state funding, it is your responsibility to bring your child to the center according to your certified schedule and to notify us promptly if they must be absent.

How to Report an Absence

If your child will be absent, you must notify MCCDC before 8:30 AM on the morning of the absence. You can report this in one of two ways:

- Submit an absence note through the Hubbe Parent Portal or Learning Genie app.
- Call the main office directly at 209-384-6245.

Excused Absences

In accordance with state funding terms and conditions, absences are only considered "excused" if they fall under one of the following categories:

- **Illness or Quarantine:** Covers situations where either the child or the parent is ill, quarantined, has a medical/dental/social services appointment, is hospitalized, or has suffered a serious injury. This also includes contagious childhood conditions (such as head lice or pink eye).
- **Family Emergencies:** Sudden, unexpected circumstances that prevent your child from attending, including:
 - Lack or sudden disruption of transportation.
 - Court dates or court-ordered appointments for anyone living in the child's household.
 - Moving to a new home.

- The death or serious illness of an immediate relative (such as a sibling, grandparent, aunt, or uncle).
- Severe weather conditions or utility emergencies.
- Extreme family crises, including domestic violence or unsafe community emergencies.
- **Court-Ordered Visitations:** Time the child is legally required to spend with a parent or relative as mandated by a court of law. *Note: A current copy of the official court order must be kept on file in your family data file.*
- **Religious Observances:** Active observance of a traditional religious holiday, ceremony, or custom.
- **Disability Accommodations:** Absences required to accommodate a child with a disability, including appointments to receive specialized services outlined in an active IEP or IFSP.
- **"Best Interest of the Child" (BI) Days:** Time away that you deem to be in your child's best interest, such as family vacations, family bonding, visiting out-of-town relatives, or sibling school field trips.

Best Interest absences are strictly limited to a maximum of **10 days** per year for each child. The 10-day limit does not apply if your family is experiencing homelessness, has an incarcerated parent, is receiving Child Protective Services (CPS), or if the child is officially identified as at risk of abuse or neglect.

Abandonment of Care and Unexcused Absences

Because our center relies on state funding to provide subsidized care, regular attendance and clear communication are strictly required. Missing too many days without a valid reason can lead to a loss of your childcare slot.

1. Abandonment of Care Policy (Applicable to CCTR Programs)

"Abandonment of Care" occurs when a family stops using childcare services and fails to communicate with MCCDC for seven (7) consecutive calendar days without providing a reason.

- Upon seven days of non-attendance and zero communication, our administration will immediately attempt to reach you using all contact information on file (phone, email, and text). All outreach attempts will be formally documented in your family file.
- If a family remains completely out of communication for a total of 30 consecutive calendar days, MCCDC will automatically issue a Notice of Action (NOA) to disenroll the family on the basis of abandonment of care.

2. Unexcused Absences and Disenrollment (Applicable to CSPP Programs)

Any absence that does not meet the state criteria for an "excused" absence is classified as unexcused.

- Unexcused absences are strictly capped at a maximum of 10 days per program year.

- We want to help your child stay enrolled! As unexcused absences begin to stack up, our staff will contact you to discuss helpful strategies to improve attendance. To keep you fully informed, the center will send you a formal written notice within one business day whenever your child hits these specific milestones:
 - The 3rd unexcused absence
 - The 6th unexcused absence
 - The 9th unexcused absence (*Final Warning*)
- If a child accumulates more than 10 unexcused absences in a single program year, they will be automatically disenrolled. MCCDC will follow all state-mandated due process procedures and issue an official Notice of Action (NOA).
- Arriving late or picking up your child early is considered a partial-day absence. Partial days are not counted as unexcused or excused absences. An absence will only count toward your 10-day limit if your child misses their entire certified schedule for that day.

Disenrollment Policy

We value our partnership with your family; however, certain circumstances may require enrollment to end.

- **Standard Termination:** Either you or MCCDC may voluntarily terminate enrollment at any time by providing a two-week written notice.
- **Administrative Termination:** MCCDC reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment with a two-week written notice if a family commits any of the following violations:
 - Failure to provide necessary paperwork when requested, incomplete documentation, or the falsification of any documents (including child attendance sheets).
 - Delinquent family fees.
 - Repeatedly attempting to drop off or leave an ill child in our care.
 - Expressing aggressive adult behaviors or harassment toward MCCDC staff members.
 - Choosing to intentionally violate MCCDC policies and procedures.

Health and Social Services

Maintaining a healthy environment requires a partnership between our staff and your family. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping all our children and educators safe and well.

Daily Morning "Health Check"

To help everyone stay healthy, teachers conduct a quick health screening as soon as your child arrives each morning.

- **Parent Participation Required:** No child will be admitted to the classroom without a parent or guardian participating in this daily health check with the teacher.

- **Immediate Exclusion:** If the check reveals signs of illness, active infection, or head lice, you will be required to take your child home.
- **Illness During the Day:** If your child becomes ill while at school, MCCDC will call you to pick up your child immediately.
- **Mandatory Handwashing Routine:** Before joining classroom activities, each child and parent must wash their hands. After your child passes their morning health check, please assist them with handwashing and diapering or toileting before you leave the building.

When to Keep Your Child Home

For the welfare of our entire center community, please keep your child home if they cannot comfortably participate in normal daily activities or if their illness requires more one-on-one care than our staff can safely provide.

Your child must stay home if they exhibit any of the following conditions or signs of illness:

- **Fever:** A temperature of 100.0°F or higher taken axillary (under the arm), with or without behavioral changes, sore throat, rash, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- **Severe Respiratory Symptoms:** Unusual fatigue, an uncontrolled cough, wheezing, difficulty breathing, or continuous crying.
- **Nasal Discharge:** Thick, green discharge from the nose accompanied by other symptoms or behavioral changes.
- **Diarrhea:** Runny, watery, or bloody stools.
- **Vomiting:** Any vomiting, including dry-heaving.
- **Unexplained Body Rash:** A rash with or without an accompanying fever or itching.
- **Mouth and Throat Irritation:** A severe sore throat, swollen glands, or mouth sores causing visible drooling.
- **Eye Discharge:** Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye. (Note: Clear, watery discharge caused by viral conjunctivitis or allergies may not require exclusion; please consult with your
- **Head Lice:** Visible live lice or nits (eggs).

Note: MCCDC administration and teaching staff retain the final right to refuse services to any child or parent deemed "not in good health" for the day.

When Your Child May Return to School

Children may return to the center when they are completely symptom-free for a full 24 hours without the use of symptom-masking medication (such as Tylenol or Motrin) and are able to comfortably participate in daily activities.

A healthcare provider's note may be requested in situations involving communicable diseases, prolonged symptoms, body rash, or when clarification is needed regarding a child's ability to safely participate in care.

“No Lice” Policy

Head lice are common and spread quickly through direct contact. Preventing and treating infestations is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. If head lice or nits are detected at school, the child will be sent home immediately, and a general notification exposure letter will be sent to all families in that classroom.

To return to school after a lice infestation, families must meet these steps:

- Treat the child's hair with a medicated lice shampoo (pediculicide) or an approved, non-toxic alternative solution.
- Carefully comb out and remove all lice and nits (eggs), dead or alive. Manual removal is the most effective method of eradication.
- The child may return the next school day but must be physically examined and cleared by an MCCDC staff member before entering the classroom.
- For chronic outbreaks, MCCDC reserves the right to request proof of the treatment product used.

Chronic Cases and Safety Referrals: If a child suffers from chronic, recurring cases of head lice (defined as three or more separate occurrences, or missing more than 14 school days within a 3-month period), designated MCCDC administration may file an official welfare referral with Child Protective Services (CPS) to secure outside health support for the family.

Medication Administration, Asthma Care, and Emergencies

1. Administration of Medication

To ensure your child's safety, MCCDC follows strict state guidelines for storing and dispensing medication. Only designated, classified staff members are authorized to administer medication to a child.

- Before we can store or give any medication, parents must complete the proper authorization forms. You must detail the medication name, specific illness symptoms, precise dosage times, amounts, and potential side effects. Some forms will require your licensed pediatrician's signature.

- All medications—including prescription and over-the-counter items—must be provided in their original packaging with the manufacturer's dispensing instructions or pharmacy prescription label clearly visible.
- Mandatory staff training must take place before any specialized or prescribed medication can be administered or stored on-site.

Strict Storage Safety Rule: Medications (including over-the-counter items like cough drops, sunscreens, or creams) must never be stored in a child's backpack or cubby. All medications and matching medical forms must be handed directly to an authorized staff member so they can be placed in a locked cabinet.

2. Asthma Management & "Asthma Friendly" Environment

If your child has been diagnosed with asthma, you must complete a Nebulizer Care Consent/Verification Form alongside the standard medication procedures listed above.

- Children with asthma must have an unexpired quick-relief rescue inhaler and a spacer prescribed specifically for use at MCCDC.
- MCCDC is an "Asthma Friendly" program. We kindly ask that you respect children with asthma or respiratory conditions by keeping colognes, perfumes, and strongly scented soaps to an absolute minimum.
- Because we live in the Central Valley, MCCDC tracks the local Air Quality Index (AQI) daily via the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to determine if it is safe for children to play outdoors.

3. Medical or Dental Emergencies

During enrollment, you must provide a current medical assessment detailing your child's ambulatory status, dietary restrictions, and allergies. You must also sign an emergency treatment consent form.

- This form includes specific instructions on what actions to take if you or your designated emergency contacts cannot be reached during a crisis.
- Signed emergency medical and dental consent is mandatory unless a parent provides a formal, signed written statement indicating that the family adheres to a religious faith that practices healing exclusively through prayer or spiritual means.
- MCCDC will immediately contact you if your child becomes ill or sustains an injury more serious than a minor cut or scratch. While awaiting your arrival, staff will supervise your child directly in a quiet, isolated area until you arrive or medical personnel take over.
- If an injury or illness is severe or life-threatening, MCCDC will bypass standard notification steps and obtain emergency medical treatment immediately without waiting for parental instructions.

4. Immunizations, TB Risk Assessment, and Physician's Reports

Healthy children learn better! To keep our classrooms safe, MCCDC requires complete, up-to-date health records.

- Immunizations: Children must be fully immunized, and parents must present official proof of immunizations upon enrollment. Failure to provide current records will result in your child being excluded from attending school.
- Physician's Report and TB Risk Assessment: A completed Physician's Report, including proof of a current TB Risk Assessment, must be submitted within 30 calendar days of enrollment. If this report is not received within 30 days, your child will be excluded from the program until it is turned in.

Aggressive Behavior

Watching a child navigate aggressive behavior can evoke strong emotions. It is important to know that occasional aggressive behavior can be a typical part of early childhood development. For most children, these phases are short-lived. However, if a child displays long-term or persistent aggression, MCCDC will partner with your family to implement a structured support plan.

Understanding "Persistent and Serious" Behaviors

To stay compliant with California state law, we categorize continuous unprovoked aggression under "Persistent and Serious Behaviors." These are defined as:

- Disruptive Patterns: Repeated behaviors that significantly interfere with the learning, well-being, or safety of other children in the classroom.
- Unresponsive to Standard Guidance: Interactions with peers or adults that do not improve after teachers utilize standard, developmentally appropriate guidance techniques.
- Specific Actions: This includes physical aggression (such as hitting, biting, or kicking), property destruction, and self-injury.
- Unprovoked Aggression: Physical actions that occur without an immediate, observable trigger or external cause (such as a disagreement over a shared toy or an accidental physical bump).

Our Progressive Intervention Plan

- If a child begins showing a consistent pattern of unprovoked aggressive behavior, MCCDC will initiate a 30-day intervention process to support the child, family, and classroom:

Week 1: Family Check-In & Strategy Sharing

The classroom teacher will meet with you to discuss any recent changes in your child's routine or home environment that might be impacting their behavior. The teacher will provide you with helpful documentation and coordinate shared strategies to manage and reduce the behavior.

Week 2: Formal Observation & Daily Communication

If the consistent pattern continues, the teacher will forward a Child and Family Concern Form to the Program Director. Staff will begin tracking the behavior using a Behavior Observation Report or Interval Data Sheet for a two-week period. Our teaching team will connect with you daily to share progress and highlight positive behavioral steps.

Week 3+: Behavior Action Plan Meeting

If the unprovoked behavior persists, a formal meeting will be scheduled with you, the teacher, and the Program Director to build an official Behavior Action Plan.

- Classroom Support: This plan may include mandatory parent participation in the classroom to help guide the child through this developmental stage.
- Weekly Reviews: The team will hold brief weekly check-ins to monitor how the behavior is shifting.

The 30-Day Evaluation & Community Referrals

After the Behavior Action Plan has been active for 30 days, you will meet again with the teacher and Program Director to evaluate its effectiveness. At this meeting, the team will adjust the plan if necessary and determine whether a referral to specialized community support services would benefit your child.

Suspension and Expulsion

At MCCDC, we believe every child deserves a safe, supportive, and continuous learning environment. We work hard to keep children successfully enrolled and strictly follow California laws regarding student discipline.

1. Prohibitions Against Expulsion and Suspension

In accordance with California state law (WIC 10491.1 and EC 8489), the Merced College Child Development Center is strictly prohibited from:

- Expelling or disenrolling a child solely because of their behavior.
- Persuading, encouraging, or pressuring parents to voluntarily withdraw a child due to behavioral challenges.
- Suspending a child or asking a parent to pick them up early before the program day ends due to behavior, except as an absolute last resort.

2. How We Support Children with Persistent Behaviors

If a child exhibits persistent and serious behaviors (such as repeated patterns that significantly interfere with learning, physical aggression, or self-injury), the center will immediately take the following supportive steps:

- We will inform you in writing of the specific behaviors observed and outline the center's active plan for support.
- We will meet with you and your child's teacher to collaborate on solutions.
- When available, the center will bring in an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant to guide staff and support your family.
- We may complete social-emotional screenings and connect your family with helpful community resources.
- IFSP/IEP Coordination: If your child has an active Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP), we will—with your written consent—contact the responsible agency for expert consultation.

Note: The center has up to 180 days to fully implement and document this comprehensive support process.

3. Strict Limitations on Suspension

Suspension is used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where a serious safety threat cannot be reduced or eliminated in any other way.

- The 30-Minute Regulation: Removing a child from a stressful situation to calm down (such as taking a short walk or spending time in a classroom "Safe Place") is not considered a suspension. This applies as long as the child returns to the classroom as soon as they regain composure and is away for no longer than 30 minutes.
- Return-to-Care Plan: If a temporary suspension is absolutely necessary for safety, the center will immediately develop a written plan to help your child safely return to full participation as quickly as possible.

4. Expulsion as an Absolute Last Resort

The center may only disenroll a child if, after quickly pursuing and documenting all the supportive steps listed above, administration determines (in consultation with parents and teachers) that the child's continued presence poses a serious, ongoing safety threat to themselves or others.

- Transition Support: If expulsion becomes necessary, the center will actively refer your family to other potential child placements or the local Resource and Referral agency to ensure a direct, supportive transition to a more appropriate setting.

5. Due Process and Your Right to Appeal

If the center must take action to suspend or expel a child, you are protected by specific legal rights:

- **Notice of Action (NOA):** You will receive a formal, written Notice of Action. The effective date of the action will be no less than 24 hours after the notice is served to you.
- **14-Day Right to Appeal:** You have 14 calendar days from the day you receive the NOA to file an official appeal directly with the state department (the California Department of Education for Preschool slots, or the California Department of Social Services for Infant/Toddler slots).
- **Services During an Appeal:** Because these actions are only taken due to severe safety risks, the center is not legally required to allow a child to receive childcare services while the appeal is being processed.

Health and Development Screening

We are proud to provide a comprehensive support program for the whole family, including direct screening services for all children enrolled at MCCDC.

- **The Goal of Early Detection:** The main focus of this program is to provide early detection screenings to catch hidden health, learning, or developmental concerns before they become significant issues.
- **Why Early Screening Matters:** Children facing hidden physical or cognitive challenges need early detection to keep them from falling behind. Access to quality preventative care—including regular immunizations and professional dental, hearing, vision, and speech screenings—leads to improved emotional growth, better educational performance, and healthy self-esteem. Our goal is to ensure your child is happy, healthy, and school-ready!
- **Free of Charge:** All health screenings are offered to children attending MCCDC completely free of charge.
- **Attendance and Scheduling:** It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the child is present at the center for all scheduled screening days—even if the screenings occur on a day your child is not normally scheduled to attend.
- **Right to Opt Out:** Participation is voluntary. Families have the absolute right to opt out of these screening services upon request.

Megan's Law Notice

Your family's safety extends beyond our center walls. In compliance with California state law, information regarding all registered sex offenders in the state is accessible to the public.

If you would like to look up registered offenders or search for individuals living in your specific neighborhood, please visit the official California Megan's Law website at meganslaw.ca.gov.

Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention

Caring for an infant can sometimes be overwhelming. It is vital to know that shaking a baby, even for a few seconds, can cause severe, life-altering consequences. Statistics show that 20% to 30% of all shaken infants do not survive, and the vast majority of survivors suffer permanent, severe brain damage.

- We are here to support you: If you ever feel frustrated, exhausted, or unable to cope with a crying infant, please step away safely and reach out for help.
- You can talk to the MCCDC Director immediately for confidential support, or find immediate coping strategies, tips, and resources at the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome website at dontshake.org.

Education Program

Our educational environment is designed to provide maximum opportunities for individualized growth. Children are free to choose their own tasks and are gently encouraged to complete them. Our classrooms and outdoor spaces are filled with creative, responsive, and age-appropriate materials that foster experimentation, self-discovery, and muscle development.

Our Curriculum

The Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) utilizes a multi-faceted approach to early education rooted in proven developmental theories. All lesson plans are built directly around observation and assessment of your child's individual needs, interests, and ideas. Our classrooms blend the following philosophies:

- Relationship-Based & Play-Based: Building secure bonds with educators and peers through meaningful play.
- Project-Based & Emergent: In-depth investigations that evolve from the children's organic questions and ideas.
- Inclusive & Creative: Expressive arts and activities that embrace all children's unique learning styles.
- STEAM Focus: Daily integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math.

Weekly activity plans and daily schedules are posted clearly in every classroom.

Freedom from Religious Instruction: In accordance with state funding guidelines, the Merced College Child Development Center completely refrains from any religious instruction, tracking, or worship.

Positive Guidance and Classroom Discipline

Our staff is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and emotionally supportive environment. We use constructive, positive methods to maintain group discipline and guide individual behaviors.

- **Using Our Words:** Staff actively encourage children to use language to express big emotions (e.g., “I’m mad,” “I don’t like that,” or “You’re hurting my feelings”) instead of resorting to physical actions like hitting or biting. If a child forgets, they are gently reminded and redirected.
- **Prohibited Practices:** Under no circumstances will corporal punishment, emotional humiliation, isolation, or frightening techniques be used by any adult on our campus.
- **"Time-In" Strategy:** Instead of traditional timeouts, our staff utilize a "Time-In" technique. When a child is struggling, an adult will stay close by to help them calm down, discuss appropriate choices, and keep the classroom safe. We will partner and follow up with the Master Teacher, Program Director, and parents regarding these moments.
- **The Safe Place:** Every classroom features a designated "Safe Place." This is a soft, cozy, and quiet space where a child experiencing distress can choose to take a break from the fast-paced classroom, look at books, or process their feelings until they feel ready to rejoin the group.

Our Classrooms

Infant and Toddler Care (Ages 3 Months to 3 Years)

MCCDC operates four specialized infant/toddler classrooms:

- **The Water Room (3 to 18 months) & The Earth Room (18 to 36 months)**
Curriculum here is heavily rooted in relationship-based caregiving practices. Core daily routines—such as mealtimes, nap times, and diaper changes—are treated as primary opportunities for one-on-one bonding to build a lifelong foundation of trust.
- **The Star/Nova, and Wind Rooms (2 to 3 years)**
These classrooms focus on early project exploration and social-emotional growth. Children learn how to relate to peers, problem-solve conflicts, express feelings, and navigate group interactions safely through play.

Preschool Classrooms (Ages 3 to 5 Years)

Preschool learning takes place in The Sun Room and The Moon Room.

- **The Project Approach:** Children engage in deep, child-initiated investigations focused on answering their own questions about the world. As these studies grow, teachers intentionally weave in foundational math, literacy, science, and social studies concepts.
- **School Readiness:** These classrooms focus on expanding oral language, advanced vocabulary, alphabetic knowledge, phonological processing, and emergent writing skills.
- **Attendance Matters:** To ensure your child receives the full benefit of this scientifically based instructional program and is prepared for elementary school, it is highly encouraged that your child arrives on time every day.

Clothing

Please dress your child in clean, comfortable "play clothes" that are allowed to get dirty. Our daily activities are messy and involve paint, sand, water, and mud.

Shoes must allow children to run and climb safely. Rubber-soled shoes are highly recommended. Open-toed shoes are permitted only if they have a secure ankle strap on the back. Flip-flops and slippers are strictly prohibited.

You must always keep two complete changes of weather-appropriate clothing in your child's cubby.

If your child soils their clothes and no replacement clothing is available in their cubby, you will be contacted to bring clean clothes immediately.

Personal Belongings

Please leave toys, jewelry, money, and personal electronics at home.

- Comfort Items: Your child may bring a small item to help them transition or rest (such as a small blanket, pillow, pacifier, or stuffed animal). These will be stored safely in their assigned cubby bin.
- Prohibited Items: No toy weapons of any kind are allowed on campus. Toys or children's smart devices that take photos or record video are strictly prohibited.

Note: MCCDC is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal items.

Field Trips

Field trips consist of supervised walks across the Merced College campus (such as visiting the Agriculture Farm, the Quad, or the Campus Amphitheater). You will sign a General Release Form at enrollment to cover these walks. If an off-campus field trip is ever planned, you will receive an explicit advanced notification.

Daily Diaper Checks at Arrival

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child enters the program in a clean, dry diaper to prevent prolonged exposure to moisture.

- The Arrival Routine: Upon entering the classroom each morning, you must take your child to the diaper changing table to check their diaper. If it is soiled, you must change it following the Steps for Diapering posted on the wall. Both you and your child must thoroughly wash your hands after this check.
- Center Tracking: Teachers will perform diaper checks a minimum of every two hours throughout the day and right before departure.
- Ointments: If you would like diaper ointment applied during the day, you must submit signed medical authorization forms to the office.

Toilet Training

When your child shows signs of readiness, speak with their Master Teacher to design a unified, consistent training plan. Pull-ups with side tabs are permitted during this process.

Note: Unless explicitly diagnosed as a condition of a documented disability, children must be fully toilet trained to participate in the Moon Room preschool classroom.

Resting, Relaxation, and Safe Sleep

Because we are a full-day program, a mid-day rest period is vital for child development.

- **Toddler and Preschool Rest (Ages 2 to 5):** The rest period runs from approximately 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM. MCCDC will never force a child to sleep, nor will we intentionally wake a sleeping child. Children who do not sleep after the required brief rest period will be provided with quiet table activities (puzzles, drawing, playdough) supervised by a qualified adult.
- **Infant Safe Sleep (Ages 0 to 24 Months):** Infants sleep according to their own natural individual schedules. MCCDC complies with strict infant safe sleep regulations. Staff will physically check on every sleeping infant every 15 minutes, looking for normal breathing, flushing, restlessness, or distress. Each check is documented in writing on our Infant Safe Sleep Log, which is kept on file and available for your review.

Infant Bottles

6 to 12 Months: MCCDC provides one standard style of bottle (Gerber 9-ounce). If your child requires a different style, you must provide four labeled bottles with nipples of your choice. All bottles are sterilized daily in our dishwasher.

Prepared Bottles: You may store home-prepared infant bottles in the classroom refrigerator; however, per funding regulations, beverages brought from home cannot be served to children while at the center.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

To ensure your child is making excellent developmental progress, MCCDC uses the DRDP assessment tool, a standard framework developed by the California Department of Education. We observe and track growth across core domains: Self-Regulation, Social-Emotional, Language/Literacy, Cognition (Math/Science), and Physical development.

Children are assessed within the first 60 days of enrollment and every six months after. (Children in our Head Start Partnership slots receive three formal assessments per year). Parent input is a vital part of this profile.

All of our developmental notes, daily logs, and observations are securely managed via the Learning Genie web platform.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal conferences are scheduled twice per year immediately following your child's DRDP rating period. During these conferences, we will celebrate your child's progress and collaborate to set personalized learning goals. You are welcome to request additional conferences with your teaching team at any time.

Program Quality and Assessments

1. Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ERS)- CCTR Classrooms Only

At least once each school year, MCCDC is required to assess every classroom using the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) tool.

- **What It Measures:** The ERS evaluates the physical quality of the childcare environment, the variety of learning materials provided, and overall classroom safety and programming.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Our goal is for every classroom to exceed state quality standards. After a rating is complete, teachers and administrators collaborate to set concrete improvement goals. We use the data gathered to intentionally design environments and purchase new, high-quality materials to foster optimal learning.
- **Transparency:** Classroom ERS scores and tool overviews are available for parents to review upon request.

2. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)- Preschool Classrooms Only

In addition to the physical environment, we measure the quality of our teaching practices. MCCDC is required to evaluate each preschool classroom using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool at least once per school year.

- **What It Measures:** CLASS measures teacher-child interactions. It looks closely at the moment-to-moment, back-and-forth verbal and non-verbal exchanges that build strong relationships and drive cognitive development.
- **The Metric:** The CLASS system uses behavioral evidence from both educators and children to judge the effectiveness of these daily interactions by analyzing their depth, frequency, and duration.

3. Mandatory Parent Surveys

Your voice matters! Parent input is a core component of the success of the MCCDC program.

- **The Requirement:** At the conclusion of each parent-teacher conference, parents/guardians are required to complete a comprehensive program survey.
- **How We Use Your Feedback:** The information from these surveys is compiled anonymously to find areas where we can improve our services. Program administration

and teaching staff utilize your feedback to establish specific, family-centered operational goals for the following year.

4. Head Start Partnership Site Support Review

As a proud partner site, the Head Start Administration team conducts an extensive formal review of our program each year.

- **What They Assess:** The federal team audits our entire operation, including health and safety protocols, special education services (accommodations for children with special needs), nutritional standards, fiscal compliance, family engagement services, and the overall educational curriculum.
- **Action Plans:** Following the review, findings are presented to the Program Director. Collaborative goals and objectives are immediately established between the partners to ensure seamless compliance and program enrichment.

5. Staff Development and Professional Standards

MCCDC's exceptional standard of care is driven by our highly qualified educators.

- **State Credentials:** All classified teaching staff hold or are eligible for the specific child development credentials and permits mandated by the State of California.
- **Orientation:** New employees undergo a rigorous onboarding orientation to ensure they thoroughly understand how center safety and educational policies apply directly to their daily job descriptions.
- **Continuous Growth:** We support ongoing professional development by regularly assessing employee needs and providing professional development, college coursework support, and training opportunities. All staff members receive regular administrative evaluations and supportive coaching throughout the year.

Family Engagement

Health Requirements for Classroom Participation

To maintain a healthy environment and fully comply with California Title 22 Regulations, all parents, children, employees, and volunteers must have a complete health screening on file before participating in classroom activities (15+ minutes) or meal service:

Before volunteering or participating inside the classroom, you must submit proof of:

- **TB Skin Test:** A negative Tuberculosis (TB) test completed within the last 12 months.
- **Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Vaccination**
- **Measles Vaccination**
- **Influenza (Flu) Vaccination:** *Note: A formal annual waiver is allowed if you choose to opt out of the flu vaccine.*

Building School-Family Partnerships

Our center firmly believes that every family functions as a vital home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, or cultural background. Every family holds the powerful potential to support and improve their child's academic success.

Family involvement works best when it is practiced as a true partnership between home and school. We request that all parents/guardians aim for one hour per month of involvement.

Fun and Easy Ways to Get Involved:

- At Home: Read to your child every day, encourage them to "read" independently, or ask your teacher for take-home classroom prep projects.
- At the School Site: Visit your child's classroom, volunteer your time (if fully immunized), or leave a note for your child's teacher whenever you have a question, compliment, or concern.
- In the Community: Participate in parent-teacher conferences, welcome staff during scheduled home visits, and attend our interactive workshops.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and Parent Socials

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is an excellent way to advocate for your child's education and future. The council is made up of two parent representatives from each classroom who meet once per month with members of the MCCDC administration.

- PAC Responsibilities: Representatives provide vital feedback on center procedures, share important updates back with other classroom parents, and help support our center fundraising events.
- A Inclusive Calendar: The staff and parents work together to establish a yearly PAC calendar distributed to all families. This schedule includes educational workshops, specialized trainings, and guest speakers chosen directly by parents through our enrollment surveys.
- Equal Value: Every parent holds equal placement and value within the PAC, regardless of how many meetings you can attend or how many years your family has been with the center.
- Head Start Board Members: Due to federal performance standards, the executive PAC Board Members are selected from parents receiving services through our Head Start Partnership. These board members attend and conduct additional Head Start leadership meetings outside of MCCDC.

Parent Café Workshops

Offered every other month, Parent Cafés engage families in meaningful, small-group conversations about what matters most: your family, your goals, and how to stay strong.

We believe that families are stronger when they are connected. We are proud to host Parent Cafés, a series of free, structured, small-group workshops designed for parents and caregivers to come together, talk, and learn from one another.

Unlike traditional classes or lectures, Parent Cafés are peer-led conversations where every voice is valued. It is a physically and emotionally safe, judgment-free space to talk about the real victories and challenges of raising a family.

Parenting is a beautiful journey, but it isn't meant to be done alone. By attending a Parent Café, you will have the opportunity to take a break, focus on your own well-being, make new friends, and build a stronger support network right here within our school community.

Note: For details on how to coordinate parent involvement activities at home, please connect directly with your child's teacher or the Program Director.

Nutrition Program

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Merced College Child Development Center (MCCDC) proudly participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), funded through the California Department of Education's Nutrition and Fiscal Services Division.

- **Free Meals for All:** This federal program allows us to provide nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks to all enrolled families completely free of charge. All meals and snacks meet the strict nutritional guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- **No Outside Food Policy:** To protect children with severe allergies and maintain program compliance, outside food is strictly prohibited on the premises unless explicitly approved by the Program Director.
- **Drop-Off Food Rule:** Children may not enter their classroom with partially finished food items. If your child is finishing a morning snack or breakfast from home, you are welcome to sit with them in the outdoor courtyard until they are finished before entering the classroom.

Menus

MCCDC operates on a rotating five-week cycle menu, which is evaluated regularly by a Registered Dietitian. Menus are posted publicly on the parent boards in the main building and in front of the portable classrooms. Necessary meal substitutions will be noted clearly on the posted menus.

Mealtime Schedules

Meal	Infant/Toddler Classrooms	Preschool Classrooms
Breakfast	8:15 AM	8:30 AM
Lunch	11:15 AM	11:30 AM
PM Snack	1:45 PM	2:00 PM

Late Arrivals and Food Restrictions

- **On-Time Arrival:** We encourage you to drop off your child either before mealtimes begin or after it has completely finished.
- **No Held Meals:** Because we follow strict schedule guidelines, meals cannot be held in the kitchen for children who arrive late. If you arrive during an active mealtime, you may sit with your child at the table until they finish eating.
- **No Leftovers Sent Home:** Due to federal CACFP safety regulations, MCCDC is strictly prohibited from sending children home with leftover food or snacks served during the school day.

Infant Feeding

Infants are always held warmly while being bottle-fed to establish emotional security, improve digestion, and protect developing teeth. We feed infants on demand and collaborate with you to design a personalized eating schedule for any child under one year of age.

- **Breastfeeding Support:** MCCDC highly encourages and supports nursing mothers. We offer a quiet, comfortable, and private room on-site for breastfeeding or expressing milk. Mothers are welcome to visit and nurse their infants or toddlers at any time.
- **Formula Provided:** The center provides a high-quality, iron-fortified infant formula for children 12 months and younger. The specific brand utilized is selected at the discretion of MCCDC management.

Transitioning to Table Food

Solid table food will be introduced to your infant as they become developmentally ready, entirely at your direction. When you feel your child is ready to transition, you will meet with the classroom teaching staff to discuss appropriate food textures, components, and safety milestones.

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Accommodations

We happily provide alternate meals for children who have documented food restrictions due to health, medical, religious, or personal reasons.

- **Required Paperwork:** Parents must complete a specialized dietary accommodation form, which must be signed by the child's licensed physician and center staff before any substitutions can be made.
- **Parent-Provided Substitutions:** MCCDC works diligently to accommodate dietary requests. However, if a request is beyond the center's financial or operational ability, you may be asked to provide the specific substitution items.
- **USDA Compliance:** All substitutions, whether provided by the center or the family, must strictly meet the required nutritional guidelines established by the USDA for the CACFP program.

Birthdays, Special Occasions, and Classroom Celebrations

MCCDC hosts seasonal celebrations throughout the school year. To promote lifelong health, the center enforces a strict "no sugar" policy for classroom events.

The local health department requires that all food brought onto the campus by families must be purchased from a commercial store and remain sealed in its original manufacturer packaging. Home-baked items are strictly prohibited.

If you prefer your child to refrain from participating in classroom celebrations for personal or religious reasons, please notify your classroom teacher in advance so we can arrange a fun, alternative activity.

Note regarding Annual Fall Parade: Our annual on-campus campus trick-or-treating event is the singular exception where children may collect sweet treats from campus departments. Parents are encouraged to review their child's collection bag at pick-up.

Birthday Acknowledgments

To keep the focus on healthy development, classrooms have the option to celebrate individual birthdays or host a single, collective birthday celebration once per month for all children born in that month. Please coordinate directly with your child's teacher if you would like to collaborate on an approved, non-sugar contribution for your child's birthday month.

Civil Rights, Grievances, and Appeal Procedures

Federal Nondiscrimination Statement

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of 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 the USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Alternative Communications

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 the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Filing a USDA Program Discrimination Complaint

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](#), or at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to the USDA containing all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter by:

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

Questions, Concerns, and Local Hearing Procedures

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

Requesting a Local Hearing

If a parent/guardian disagrees with an administrative action or a formal Notice of Action (NOA), they have the right to request a formal hearing.

- **14-Day Request Window:** The parent(s) must file a written request for a hearing with the Program Director within 14 calendar days of receiving the Notice of Action.
- **Suspension of Action:** Upon filing a timely request for a hearing, the intended adverse action (such as unenrollment) will be suspended until the local and state review processes are complete.
- **Scheduling:** Within 10 calendar days of receiving your request, the Program Director will notify you of the time and place of the hearing. To the extent possible, this will be scheduled at a convenient time for the family.

Hearing Attendance and Procedures

- The Hearing Officer: The hearing will be conducted by a designated Hearing Officer who must hold a higher staff level of authority than the person who made the contested decision. *Note: If the initial decision was made by the Program Director, please contact the Vice President of Enterprise and Academic Partnerships, Merced College, 3600 M Street, Merced, CA 95348 or call (209) 386-6735.*
- Mandatory Attendance: The parent(s) or an authorized representative must attend the hearing. Failure to appear will be deemed an automatic abandonment of the appeal, and the center's intended action will take effect.
- Interpreters: MCCDC will arrange for a qualified interpreter to be present at the hearing if requested by the parent in advance.
- The Review & Decision: The Hearing Officer will explain the legal or regulatory basis for the action, and parents will have a full opportunity to explain why they believe the decision was incorrect. The Hearing Officer will mail or deliver a written decision to the parent within 10 calendar days after the hearing. This decision will include instructions for submitting a secondary appeal to the state.

State-Level Appeal Procedures

If you disagree with the local written decision from the Hearing Officer, you have the right to file an appeal with the state of California within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision. If no appeal is filed within 14 days, the local decision stands, and services may cease. Your specific appeal path depends on your child's classroom:

For Preschool Classrooms (Sun and Moon Rooms)

Mail your appeal request, a copy of the MCCDC intended action, and the local written hearing decision to:

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

For Infant and Toddler Classrooms (Water, Earth, Star, and Wind Rooms)

Mail or email your appeal request, a copy of the MCCDC intended action, and the local written hearing decision to:

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

State Review Timeline

Upon receiving an appeal, the CDE or CDSS may request copies of the family's data file and relevant center materials. The state agencies may conduct independent investigations, interviews, or mediation. A final state decision will be delivered to both the parent and MCCDC within 30 calendar days after receipt of the appeal. MCCDC complies with all state decisions immediately.

Reporting Health and Safety Concerns

Health and Safety Concern forms are always available at the main CDC front desk. Completed forms will be forwarded to administration for immediate review and tracking. If you are unsatisfied with the internal resolution of a safety or operational concern, formal complaints may be made to our state licensing agency:

Community Care Licensing
Fresno Regional Office
1310 East Shaw Avenue, MS 29-01
Fresno, CA 93710
Phone: (559) 243-4588 • Fax: (559) 243-8070

Food Program Complaints (CACFP)

If you have questions or civil rights complaints regarding the Child and Adult Care Food Program at MCCDC, you may contact the Program Director or file a complaint directly with the state:

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

Note: All complaints filed with the Nutrition Services Division (NSD) are resolved at the state level. The NSD tracks the complaint, coordinates with the district, and reserves the absolute right to conduct unannounced center site visits to validate allegations. Per federal guidelines, the only protected classes covered under the Child Nutrition Program are race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

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MERCED COLLEGE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER (MCCDC)

Family Handbook Receipt & Policy Acknowledgment Form

Please review, sign, and return this form to the during your intake appointment or prior to your child's first day of attendance.

1. Handbook Access

- I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the MCCDC Family Handbook.
- The handbook is continuously accessible online via the official Merced College webpage at <https://www.mccd.edu/student-support/support-programs/childcare/>
- I understand that it is my responsibility to stay informed of center updates by actively checking my accounts daily on both the Hubbe Portal and the Learning Genie App.

2. Agreement to Abide by Policies & Procedures By signing below, I agree to comply with all policies instituted by MCCDC.

I recognize and agree to the following core mandates:

- **Attendance:** I agree to report child absences promptly and understand that unexcused absences or abandonment of care can result in disenrollment.
- **Arrival & Pick-Up:** I understand that a daily morning "Health Check" is mandatory before my child can be signed in. I will never share my personal PIN with anyone else.
- **Late Pick-Up:** I agree to collect my child at their scheduled pick-up time. I acknowledge that accumulating late pick-up notices will result in reduced care hours or a report to Child Protective Services (CPS).
- **Emergency & Contact Cards:** I agree to maintain an active, accurate Emergency Procedure Card and will review or update contact information in the Hubbe database monthly.
- **Laboratory School Operations:** I understand that MCCDC is an adult learning and training environment. I recognize that Merced College students will observe, interact with, and complete coursework assessments alongside the children in a supervised layout.

3. Regulatory Compliance I recognize that MCCDC functions under strict legal alignment with the California Department of Education (Title 5 Regulations), the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division (Title 22 Regulations), and Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Parent/Guardian Signature & Authorization

Child's Full Name: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature: _____ Date: _____