

Newhall District State Preschool
Parent Handbook
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Newhall School District - 25375 Orchard Village Rd. #200 –Valencia, CA 91355

Governing Board Adopted 6/17

Welcome to the Newhall District State Preschools

This book has been completed to ensure that all parents are aware of our preschool philosophy, program practices and policies. Please read and keep this handbook for future reference.

Introduction to Our Program

The Newhall District State Preschool Program provides comprehensive, educational and developmentally appropriate services designed to meet the needs of children who are three and four-years old. The program includes: educational services for children; parent education opportunities; parent participation in the classroom; parent advisory committee; health and nutritional workshops; and social service referrals available in the community. The Newhall District State Preschools are committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education and in employment and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, ethnic group classification, ancestry, religion, age, handicap or physical or mental disability, or any other unlawful consideration. The preschools also refrain from religious worship and instruction of any kind (CCR5 4900). The program promotes the child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development in preparation for Kindergarten. We maintain a 1:8 adult/child ratio and a 1:24 teacher/child ratio. The Desired Results Developmental Profile is completed for each child within sixty (60) calendar days and six (6) months thereafter. The findings of these developmental profiles are used to plan and conduct developmentally appropriate activities. The ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales) is completed a minimum of once a year to measure program quality. With parent approval, information pertaining to the child's progress will be given to the child's elementary school's Kindergarten team.

Program Philosophy

Children learn through play. We focus on providing a developmentally appropriate learning environment that includes child initiated and teacher directed activities. The children's environment is set up to promote safe, comfortable, non-competitive opportunities for children to learn and explore their world. Our program maintains a balance between structure and spontaneity, and also encourages each child to develop as an individual, in his/her own time frame. The program does not discriminate in determining which children are served. The requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act are adhered to and every effort is made to make reasonable accommodation for such children.

Goal

Our goal is to provide each child with a variety of educational and creative material that stimulates both learning and social interaction while allowing for individual differences. We hope to give children the opportunity to make a smooth and successful transition into the Newhall Elementary School District.

Hours of Operation

The Newhall District State Preschool Program operates 3.5 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Morning session is from 7:45 a.m. to 11:15 am. and afternoon session is from 11:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Children must be picked up no later than 11:15/3:15 respectively.

Teaching Staff

The Newhall District State Preschool's Site Directors and teachers hold current Child Development permits with many years of experience in the Early Childhood Development field. All instructional assistants have a minimum of 6 units in Early Childhood Education. Teachers are teamed with

instructional assistants and are responsible for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum. The staff is dedicated to providing an enriched, safe and nurturing environment for children.

Eligibility Requirements

In accordance with the guidelines established by the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division the following eligibility requirements have been established for the Newhall District State Preschool programs:

- The entering child will be 3 or 4 years of age on or before September 1st of the enrolling year.
- Families must meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria:
 - Receiving services from Child Protective Services or at risk of abuse and neglect.
 - A current cash aid recipient.
 - Income eligible (within 70% of the state median income, adjusted for family size.)
 - Homeless.
- A resident of the Newhall School District boundaries.

Admission Policy

- Families are responsible for providing documentation of the family's total countable income and family size. The contractor is required to verify the information provided.
- The entering child has had a negative TB test within twelve (12) months of the first day of school or documentation that the child has no risk factors present.
- Up to date immunization records for the child must be turned in prior to the first day of school.
- Completed Physician's Report is due within thirty (30) days of the first day of school.

Enrollment Priorities

- First priority will be given to four-year-old or three-year-old neglected or abused children receiving services from Child Protective Services or a written referral of being at risk of being neglected or abused, regardless of income.
- Second priority will be given to eligible four-year-old children in the following order:
 - Children who were enrolled in the State Preschool Program as a three-year-old, regardless of income ranking.
 - Children whose families have the lowest ranking based on income.
 - If families have the same income ranking, the child with exceptional needs will be admitted first.
 - If there are no families with children who have exceptional needs, the following priorities will be considered:
 - Children who are identified as limited English or non-English proficient.
 - Children from families with special circumstances that may impact the child's opportunities for normal development.
- Third priority will be given to eligible three-year-old children in the following order:
 - If families have the same income ranking, the child with exceptional needs will be admitted first.
 - If there are no families with children who have exceptional needs, the following priorities will be considered:
 - Children who are identified as limited English or non-English proficient.
 - Children from families with special circumstances that may impact the child's opportunities for normal development.

Learning & Discovery Centers

Learning and Discovery Centers provide children the opportunity to explore, develop and expand on interests, skills and concepts introduced during group time. The following centers are available for independent exploration throughout the day:

- **Art Center**
This center allows children to express feelings, promotes creativity and independent work. It asserts individuality and encourages the use of different materials and textures.
- **Writing Center**
Children develop fine motor skills as they practice writing letters and numbers. They build their knowledge of print and pre-literacy skills as they participate in spontaneous and teacher directed pre-writing activities.
- **Science & Math Center**
This center introduces science and math concepts that are developmentally appropriate. Children develop understanding of cause and effect, problem solving, classification, counting, and number sense.
- **Block & Manipulative Center**
At this center, children develop fine motor skills, work on taking turns, sorting, and patterning. It is a great place to develop social and language skills.
- **Music and Movement Center**
Music and movement is an environment where children can experiment and explore a variety of musical instruments and music.
- **Dramatic Play Center**
The dramatic play center allows children to learn and make sense of the world around them. Children practice sharing, social skills, and activities of daily living while they develop self-esteem.
- **Library Center**
The wonderful world of books, stories and letters takes place in this center. Children have the opportunity to access books from the library, the listening center and the puppet theater. The library also serves as a quiet place where children can remove themselves from too much stimuli and process feelings in an appropriate setting.

Curriculum

Newhall District Preschool Programs are designed to provide developmentally appropriate experiences through a comprehensive pre-kindergarten curriculum. OWL (Opening the World of Learning) is an integrated Preschool curriculum that prepares children for Kindergarten. OWL provides a high-quality Preschool experience and is designed to develop oral language, early literacy skills and early math skills.

STEMscopes is founded on NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards), Head Start, and state preschool standards. It is a comprehensive early childhood STEM program (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) designed to support students ages three through five. Students get a jump-start on learning science concepts while preparing for NGSS Kindergarten standards.

Program Information

We feel each aspect of the program provides learning experiences for your child. Schedules, transitions and activities are carefully planned. A balance between quiet and active play is integrated into the program and includes both child initiated and teacher directed activities.

SAMPLE OF DAILY SCHEDULE

Morning Session

7:45 – 7:55 Arrival/Morning Meeting
7:55– 8:10 Literacy Circle
8:10 - 8:50 Small Groups
8:50 – 9:10 Story Time
9:10 – 9:25 Meal Time
9:25-10:35 Learning & Discovery Centers
10:35-11:05 Outdoor Activities
11:05 – 11:15 Wrap Up Your Day
11:15 Dismissal

Afternoon Session

11:45 – 11:55 Arrival/Morning Meeting
11:55 – 12:05 Literacy Circle
12:05 - 12:55 Small Groups
12:55-1:25 Outdoor Activities
1:25-1:40 Story Time
1:45-1:55 Meal Time
1:55-3:05 Learning & Discovery Centers
3:05-3:15 Wrap Up Your Day
3:15 Dismissal

Classroom Information

- **Sign-In and Out Procedures:** It is a requirement of the State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division and the Newhall School District that all children be signed in and out daily by an adult 18 years of age or older. Parents must use their full legal signature in the sign-in/out book. When the staff is not familiar with the person who is picking up your child, they will ask to see a picture ID and check to make sure this person is listed on your child's emergency card. Children will not be released until the adult picking them up shows proof of identification. This practice applies to parents, family members, and friends. Parents are welcome to add or delete names to their emergency cards throughout the year. If a name is not on your emergency card, you can either send a note, email, or call the preschool site.
- **Birthday Celebrations:** Birthdays will be celebrated with special attention at Morning Meeting. Parents are welcome to, but not obligated to provide a healthy snack. Arrangements must be made ahead of time, keeping in mind to send nutritious snacks, with sugar at a minimum.
- **We Get Messy:** We do a lot of active, messy work (that is how we learn). Digging in the sand and water play are all part of the curriculum. Creative expression with art material is also encouraged and it's difficult to prevent paint on clothes. Therefore, we recommend sending children in clothes that can get dirty. Please provide a complete set of weather appropriate clothing in a labeled bag to keep at school

- **Shoes:** Children are asked to wear a closed toe, rubber soled-shoes to school (Velcro closure preferred). Tennis shoe type footwear is preferable for the safety of your child. Staff will call parents of children with open toed sandals or high heeled shoes and ask that appropriate shoes be brought to school.
- **Newsletter:** A monthly newsletter will be sent home to keep parents informed on what is being taught during the month. Please review those skills and concepts that are being presented during the month.
- **Parent Involvement:** We encourage parental participation in our preschools. Parental involvement may include volunteering in the classroom, assisting the teacher with projects at home, joining the Parent Advisory Committee, and Parent Education Workshops.
- **Parent Volunteers:** We welcome parent volunteers in our classrooms. As of September 1, 2016, parents who volunteer in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to provide vaccination records for the following: influenza, pertussis, measles, and a current negative TB test (for more detailed information, please refer to the Parent Volunteer Guidelines). The Newhall District State Preschool maintains an open door policy; parents are welcome to volunteer and observe their children in the preschool environment. All parents must sign in and receive a visitor's badge before entering the classroom.
- **Parent Survey:** Parents will have the opportunity to participate in a survey during the month of November. Survey findings will be collected and analyzed as part of the self-evaluation process.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Conferences between parent and teachers are held twice a year and as needed. Teachers are happy to meet with parents at any time; however, they are requested to schedule the meeting after class, so as not to interfere with instruction.
- **Parent Advisory Committee:** Parent Advisory Committee is a mandatory component of state preschool funding. The committee of parents and staff meets a minimum of four (4) times a year. Committee members are notified in writing about each meeting. All parents are encouraged to attend and participate in the development of parent education topics and any other subject parents would like to discuss.
- **Parent Education:** Topics such as discipline, nutrition, community services, preparation for kindergarten are presented throughout the year to promote a "team approach" between home and school.

Behavior Intervention

The goal of the preschool staff is to build on successful experiences through praise, encouragement, and positive reinforcement. Children will receive positive reinforcement through verbal praise and materials (e.g.) stickers for appropriate behavior.

Whenever dealing with inappropriate behavior, staff will pinpoint the behavior, model appropriate behavior and let the child know what behavior is expected from him/her. Staff may also redirect the child in a firm, loving manner. If possible, staff will give choices that are appropriate and help negotiate and problem solve.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Parent/Guardian must sign their child in and out every day of preschool attendance, recording actual clock time.
- Parent/Guardian must use full signature (first and last name) in the sign –in/out book.
- Parent/Guardian must notify the teacher in the event their child will be absent.
- Parent/Guardian must record the reason on the Absence Excuse slip.
- Parent/Guardian must check the parent information box/and or parent bulletin board for communication from the center, program announcements, flyers, and bulletins.

- If parents/guardians have a concern related to sexual harassment as related to the California Education Code should contact the Newhall School District office:

**25375 Orchard Village Rd #200
Valencia, CA 91355
(661) 291-4000**

If parents/guardians have a complaint regarding an alleged violation of federal or state laws or regulations, parent/guardians should check the steps in the Newhall School District Parent and Student Handbook in relation to the Uniform Complaint Process, Education Code 32289, that was distributed to parents upon enrollment.

Children's Files

It is a state law that we maintain a completed file on each child in attendance in the program. The preschool office will ask for emergency and other information periodically throughout the school year in order to maintain current files. Parents must notify the preschool office immediately of any change in address and/or telephone numbers.

Pupil Records

You and your children over 18 have the right to review, get copies, and inspect their school records within five business days of a written or oral request or before any meeting regarding an individualized education program or a hearing. Those records are confidential, and privacy will be maintained, except in some instances such as when your child transfers to another school. In some instances, information about your child may be released to District staff, foster agencies, after school program operators, summer camp operators, lawyers, law enforcement, state researchers, and nonprofit researchers. Sharing of pupil records must conform to federal laws and in some cases must be approved by the State Committee for Protection of Human Subjects. The records include transcripts, discipline letters, commendations, attendance, and health information. The records are maintained at each school site by administrative staff. There is someone to help interpret the material. When more than one child is named in the records, parents may only see material related to their child. If requested, the district will provide a list of types and locations where materials are held. There is a log of who has viewed the records that is kept at the same location as the records. District policy or administrative regulation 5125 sets forth the criteria by which school officials and employees can look and change or delete the files and why. You may have copies made free of charge. You also have the right to file a written request with the superintendent challenging the records. You can challenge how your request was handled with the district or with United States Department of Education if you think there is an inaccuracy, unsubstantiated conclusion or inference, a conclusion outside the observer's expertise, comment not based on personal observation with time and date noted, misleading information, or violation of privacy rights. You will get to meet with the superintendent or designee within 30 days. If your challenge is sustained, the changes will be made. If not, you can appeal to the school board, which has final authority. If you still have a different view, your view can be included in the student's record. [EC 8484.1, 49063, 49060, 49068, 49069, 49069.3, 49070-49079.7, 56043, 56504; CC 1798.24(t); FERPA; 20 USC 1232(g); 34 CFR Part 99]

Release of Directory Information

The law allows schools to release “directory information” to certain persons or organizations. Directory information includes student’s name, address, telephone number, and email address. You may have the district withhold any of this information by submitting a request in writing. Written notification received after the date specified will be honored, but the student’s information may have been released in the interim. In the case of students with exceptional needs or who are homeless, no material can be released without parent or guardian consent. [EC 49061(c), 49070, 49073(c), 56515; FERPA; NCLB; ne]

Food Services

A nutritious meal is provided daily for students. A monthly meal menu is posted on the parent information board. Parents are asked to notify the school of any food allergies or special dietary restrictions their children have, so that appropriate, alternate choices will be made available for those children as needed. All food is provided through the Santa Clarita Valley Food Services Agency (SCVFSA) the agency provides all food for the Newhall School District. Food served meets all state nutritional guidelines and the Newhall School District’s Wellness Policy.

Health

Your child should not be brought to school if he/she has a fever or had one during the previous 24 hours or has any symptoms of possible communicable disease. Children who have been ill may not return to school until they are free of symptoms for a 24-hour period, and 48 hours after starting any prescribed antibiotic. If your child appears to have symptoms of illness, he/she will immediately be isolated from the other children and parents will be contacted. In case of serious illness or injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If necessary, we will call an ambulance or paramedics.

Medication

The following procedure must be followed in order to administer medication:

- A Newhall School District medication permission form must be completed and signed by the physician and a parent or guardian, detailing the amount, the method, and time schedule the medication is to be taken.
- Each medication is to be in the original container and clearly labeled.

Emergency Plan

In the event of an earthquake, fire or any other disaster, students will be evacuated to a designated area on the playground. They will have access to the emergency supplies and equipment at their respective school sites in addition to the preschool’s emergency supplies. In a disaster situation, students will be released to parents and adults listed on the student’s emergency card only. All adults will be required to present a picture identification at the time of release.

Absences

Parents/guardians are asked to notify the site by phone each morning the child will be absent and give specific reason for the absence. If the child is ill, the specific illness must be stated (cold, cough, flu, fever, etc). Upon return to school after an absence, parents/guardians must complete an absence report that includes: name of the child, the date of the absences and the full signature of the parent/guardian. If the child is out consecutively for 5 days, a doctor’s note is required.

Excused Absences

- Illness or quarantine of the child enrolled or parent (*stomachache, medical appointments, headache, fever, sore throat, runny nose, diarrhea, flu, cold, rash, ringworm, scabies, head lice or any other serious illness or contagious diseases*).
- Doctor or dental appointment for the child.
- All appointments not related to illness.
- Court ordered visitation: if an excused absence is based on time spent with a parent or other relative, as required by a court of law, the child's file shall contain a copy of the court order.
- Family Emergencies such as:
 - Serious illness of a family member.
 - Death in the family/making service arrangements.
 - No transportation and/or transportation problems that are beyond your control: car accident or bus didn't arrive.
 - Weather conditions.
 - No one to drop off or pick-up child.
 - Unforeseen emergency/lockdown.
 - Natural disasters (flood, fire, earthquakes, etc.).
- Best Interest of the Child: (limited to 10 days per year). An absence in "the Best Interest of the Child" is defined as:
 - Visit with immediate family members.
 - Required court appearance.
 - Religious holidays/ceremonies.
 - Need to be with a parent.
 - Family vacation/out of town/personal day.

Termination of Enrollment

The following circumstances may be cause for termination of a child's enrollment:

- Ten (10) unexcused absences.
- Repeated failure to sign a child in or out using full legal signatures.
- Repeated failure to be at school on time (7:45 a.m. session /11:45 p.m. session)
- If it is the opinion of the Newhall School District Preschool staff that the child is socially, emotionally or physically unprepared to cope in the preschool environment.
- If the family's declared income or other information provided at the time of registration is found to be fraudulent.

Withdrawal of a Child

Withdrawal of a child from the preschool program prior to the end of the school year must be reported in writing with a two-week notice. Withdrawal of a child without proper notification may result in loss of priority and the child will be placed on a waiting list should you decide to re-enroll.

Complaint Procedures

If you have a complaint or a concern, please follow the guidelines below:

- Discuss concern with the teacher
- Discuss concern with the Site Director
- Discuss concern with the Program Director

Grievance Procedures for issues regarding agency policies, practice and personnel should be followed as stated in the Newhall School District Parent and Student Rules and Policies Handbook.

Uniform Complaint Procedures which are posted at each preschool site and outlined in the Newhall School District Parent and Student Rules and Policies Handbook are to be followed if allegations exist that the agency does not adhere to state federal statutes and regulations.

Appeal Information

If you do not agree with the agency's action as stated in the Notice of Action, you may appeal the intended action to the agency. To protect your appeal rights, you must follow the instructions described in each step listed on the back of the Notice of Action (CD7617). If you do not respond by the required due date or fail to submit the required appeal information with your appeal request, your appeal may be considered abandoned. Your appeal should be submitted to:

**Newhall School District
25375 Orchard Village Rd #200
Valencia, CA 91355**

Within ten (10) calendar days following the agency's receipt of your appeal request, the agency will notify you of the time and place of the hearing. You or your authorized representative are required to attend this hearing. If you or your representative do not attend the hearing, you abandon your rights to an appeal, and the action of the agency will be implemented. Within ten (10) calendar days following the hearing, the agency shall mail or deliver to you a written decision.

If you disagree with the written decision of the agency, you have 19 days from your receipt of the written decision from the agency to file an appeal with the California Department of Education (CDE). Your appeal to CDE must include the following documents and information: (1) a written statement specifying the reasons you believe the agency's decision was incorrect, (2) a copy of the agency's decision letter, and (3) a copy of both sides of the Notice of Action (CD7617). Mail your appeal to the following address:

**California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, Ca 95814
Attention: Appeals Coordinator**

Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of you appeal, CDE's Child Development Division will issue a written decision to you and the agency. If you appeal is denied, the agency will stop providing care and development services immediately upon receipt of CDE's decision letter.