



Pacoima Charter State Preschool

A Place to Learn and Grow

Parent Handbook

11016 Norris Ave. Pacoima, CA 91331

(818) 897-8627

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 7:30am – 4:00pm (closed 12:30pm-1:30pm)

School Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm

www.pacoimacharterpreschool.com

Program Year 2021-2022

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Pacoima Charter State Preschool

The Pacoima Charter State Preschool (PCSP) is a full day preschool program that focuses on the development of the whole child. It is a part of a statewide preschool program, funded by the California Department of Education call the California State Preschool Program (CSPP). The program provides subsidized full-day services for eligible three- and four-year-old children with the Curiosity Corner curriculum which is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the children served. The program also provides meals and snacks to children. Parent education, referrals to health and social services for families, and staff development opportunities and ongoing training to employees.

Mission and Vision Statement

Our mission is provide a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment that fosters the development of the whole child. We believe that young children learn social, emotional, cognitive, fine and gross motor skills though their interactions with each other, though exploration and discovery, and play based learning. Our educators are the facilitators of learning, the children take ownership and lead their learning. We thrive to teach our students to be great citizens, academic achievers, and effective communicators. Our goal is to prepare the whole child to take on the academic rigors of elementary school and beyond.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Pacoima Charter State Preschool is available to all who qualify and do not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children are served. The program welcomes children with disabilities, understand the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), makes, and implements reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities. State law prohibits any form of religious instruction or worship within the classroom or program.

Photography and Social Media

Students at our preschool may be photographed during normal school hours, field trips, and/or activities. These photographs are posted on social media to promote our programs. **Parents must notify the preschool office if you do not wish for your child's image to be recorded for print or electronic use.**

Safety Guidelines During COVID

Pacoima Charter State Preschool follows all directives and guidelines from the California Department of Education and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Please visit our website and/or www.publichealth.lacounty.gov for more information.

Open Door Policy

Due to the pandemic, visitors are NOT allowed in the classrooms at this time. We will continue to restrict visitors in the classroom until the pandemic crisis ends and it is deemed safe by the Department of Health and the State of California. You will be notified when visitor's permits resume.

Parent Volunteers

The application process requires applicants to have Megan's Law Website Clearance, FBI/DOJ fingerprint clearance and a health clearance. These requirements are to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

Currently, we cannot accept any volunteers during the pandemic crisis.

Standards of Conduct

All staff, contractors, consultants, parents and volunteers abide by the Standards of Conduct and agree to:

- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping anyone on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- Follow program confidentiality and record-keeping systems concerning personal, health, and other private information about children, families and other staff, consultants and volunteers.
- Always assure that children under their care are supervised at all times.
- Use positive methods of child guidance and not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation or forms of discipline that involve isolation.
- Provide comfortable, safe, interactive environment to support a child's healthy, social and emotional development.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Pacoima Charter State Preschool is committed to increasing staff and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect. Pacoima Charter State Preschool strives to educate families and staff in recognizing and prevent child abuse and neglect. All staff receive annual trainings on preventing, recognizing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. This training includes methods for increasing awareness of child abuse and neglect and prevention techniques. Families are provided information to educate them in becoming more aware of the child abuse and neglect and to empower them in its prevention.

Families who feel their child may have been a victim of child abuse or neglect should contact the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) by calling (800) 540-4000. The Family Service Assistant can provide assistance in obtaining resources for families in need of additional support.

By law, Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect and will conscientiously follow Child Abuse Reporting laws. Procedures for reporting suspected child abuse are reviewed each year. Parents will be provided with training and written information about the laws and mandates that pertain to reporting suspected child abuse. Failure to report any result in jail sentences and/or \$1000 fine.

Statement of Licensing Agency's Rights

As a licensed facility, licensing personnel has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or childcare center records, without prior consent. This may include interviewing children, staff or parents when licensing deems this as necessary. Licensing also has the authority to observe the physical condition or the children/children including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement.

Parental Policy

Per licensing rules, the person present who is in charge of a preschool facility may deny access to an adult whose behavior presents a risk to children present in the facility and may deny access to non-custodial parents or guardians if so requested by the responsible parent or legal guardian.

You can reach Child Care Licensing by calling 1(844) 538-8766 or accessing this web address
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Child-Care-Licensing>.

A copy of California Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards is available for review in the preschool office.
The most recent licensing report for this Center is located on the Parent Board.

ENROLLING INTO THE CALIFORNIA STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

To enroll in PCSP, families must meet need and eligibility requirements. The need and eligibility requirements are dictated by the Funding Terms and Conditions for the contract with California State Department of Education. If determined eligible, children will be enrolled in a full day program in our center-based PCSP site. Please be aware, your eligibility for services will be determined by your family size and family income.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the PCSP program, children must be three or four years of age on or before September 1 of the fiscal year they are being served and meet eligibility and need criteria. Families will be assisted through the application, determination of eligibility and, if eligible, with enrollment. In order to establish eligibility and, if selected, to remain eligible, eligible families meet one or more of the following categories:

- Child Protective Services (CPS)
- At-Risk (*limited to 3 months*)
- Current Aid Recipient (public assistance)
- Homeless
- Employment full or part time
- Vocational Training or education
- Welfare-to-work plans
- Seeing employment
- Incapacity
- Seeking permanent housing (*limited to 60 days*)
- Income Eligible – at or below 70% state median income, income ceilings/family size

Certification of Eligibility

For this step, bring the documentation as requested by staff. This may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Proof of income (current and 12 month preceding)
- Proof of training/seeking employment (*if applicable*)
- Proof of Child Protective Services involvement (*if applicable*)
- Proof of homelessness (*if applicable*)
- Proof of public assistance (*if applicable*)
- Proof of parental incapacity (*if applicable*)

Notice of Action (NOA), Application for Service

Pacoima Charter State Preschool's decision to approve or deny services to a family will be communicated through a written statement referred to as a Notice of Action, Application for Service. If services are approved, the notice will contain information on the basis of eligibility; duration of the eligibility; name of the children approved; and the hours of child care services approved for each day. If preschool services are denied, the notice will contain information on the basis of denial and instructions for the parent on how to request a hearing if they do not agree with Pacoima Charter State Preschool's decision.

PCSP Eligibility Determination

Once you have completed the process and deemed eligible, Pacoima Charter State Preschool Staff will meet with you to determine your eligibility for the PCSP program. This may include completion of additional intake forms including a Child's Health History, Nutrition History, Emergency Forms and others.

The determination of eligibility shall be without regard to the immigration status of the child or the child's parent(s) unless the child or the child's parent(s) is under a final order of deportation from the United States Department of Homeland Security.

Change of Family Status/Update of Certification of Eligibility

If you have any changes such as changes in income, employment, number of family members, and changes in address or telephone numbers, you must notify the program staff within five (5) working days from the date the change is known so the child's file can be updated.

Notice of Action, Recipient of Service

If upon recertification or update of application, Pacoima Charter State Preschool determines that child care requirements are no longer being met and child care services need to be modified or terminated, Pacoima Charter State Preschool will notify the family through a written Notice of Action, Recipient of Service. This notice will include:

- Information on the type of action being taken
- Effective date of the action
- A description of the action
- A statement of the reason for the changes
- A statement of the reason for the termination (*if applicable*)
- Instructions for the parent on how to request a hearing if Pacoima Charter State Preschool's decision is unacceptable.

Termination of Child Care Services

Failure to comply with state eligibility and certification regulations will result in termination of child care services by the Pacoima Charter State Preschool. Parents may voluntarily withdraw their child from services at any time and are asked to notify Pacoima Charter State Preschool of their intent to do so in advance.

Appeal Procedures for Child Development Division Review

If the parent disagrees with the written decision sent to them by Pacoima Charter State Preschool's Hearing Officer regarding their status in the child care program, the parent has fourteen days in which to appeal to the California Department of Education (CDE).

The parent will specify in the appeal request the reason why it is believed that Pacoima Charter State Preschool's decision was not correct. The parent will include a copy of Pacoima Charter State Preschool's *Notice of Action*, and the written decision from the hearing will be submitted by the parent with the appeal request.

Upon receipt of an appeal request, the CDE may request copies of relevant materials from Pacoima Charter State Preschool. The CDE may also conduct any investigations or interviews necessary to resolve the appeal. The decision of the CDE will be mailed or delivered to the parent and Pacoima Charter State Preschool within thirty

days after receipt of the appeal request. Pacoima Charter State Preschool will comply with the decision of the CDE.

PARENT RIGHTS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION-GENERAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

Parent's Request for a Hearing for Child Care Subsidies

If upon receipt of Notice of Action regarding your preschool subsidy you want to request a hearing, you may file a request for a hearing with Pacoima Charter State Preschool within fourteen days.

Only persons directly affected by the hearing will be allowed to attending the hearing. Pacoima Charter State Preschool will arrange for the presence of an interpreter at the hearing if requested by the parent.

The Hearing Officer will explain to the parent the policy basis for the intended action. You will have an opportunity to explain the reason they believe Pacoima Charter State Preschool was incorrect. The Hearing Officer will mail or deliver to the parent a written decision within ten days after the hearing.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding Pacoima Charter State Preschool's alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (Education Code sections 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135) in any program or activity funded directly by the state or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the State Department of Education:

Child Development Division
Complaint Coordinator
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814

If the complaint is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.

EDUCATION & CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Pacoima Charter State Preschool (PCSP) understand that each child comes into our program with a unique personality, various abilities, and a distinctive cultural background. We believe all children can reach their utmost potential when provided with a stimulating learning environment supported and fostered by adults who are nurturing and accepting.

Pacoima Charter State Preschool is responsible for ensuring that teaching staff in our PCSP classrooms provide quality early education and child development services for all enrolled children, including children with disabilities which promote child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth for success in school.

The program is designed to be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual strengths, needs, interest, language, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences to promote the development of his/her intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth. These activities also provide opportunities for the children to learn and practice skills and make progress towards their individual goals as well as program outcomes.

School Readiness Goals

Pacoima Charter State Preschool will promote school readiness by enhancing the physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services. Parents will be engaged in their child's learning and encouraged to support their children's progress toward their school readiness goals. Based on teachers' observations and ongoing child assessments on Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), children will show individual growth in each of the following learning foundations:

- Social-Emotional
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics
- Physical Development
- Health
- Science
- English Language Development (for English Language Learners)
- Visual and Performing Arts
- History-Social Science

Curriculum and Assessment

The Pacoima Charter State Preschool teaching staff uses research-based curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice in every classroom to support children's school readiness and individual learning needs. The curriculum used in our classroom is called Curiosity Corner, from the Success for All Foundation.

Teachers regularly assess all children to determine child's strengths, needs, and progress towards school readiness goals and guide individualized learning plans. PCSP teachers use formal assessments three times per year: at the beginning, mid-year, and end, and also use informal observation and information from parents/legal guardians to assess children's progress. Assessment data is always shared with parents/legal guardians.

Supporting your child's first language

A bilingual approach enhances all children's cognitive development and awareness of other languages and cultures. Our teacher or other staff are bilingual or have a staff that supports communication or a second language.

Religious Activities

Pacoima Charter State Preschool does not provide religious instruction or worship for children enrolled in their programs.

Diversity

Pacoima Charter State Preschool is committed to respecting human differences, recognizing bias, and speaking up for what is right. Our children live in a world that is not yet a place where they have equal opportunity to become all they could be, but in our program, they are provided a safe and nurturing environment where they are able to blossom, and their gifts and abilities are able to flourish. To abide by this, we follow the four goals of anti-bias education:

1. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
2. Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
3. Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
4. Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

To develop cultural competence, our teachers will:

- Reflect on their own cultural background
- Be a learner before trying to be a teacher
- Learn about the children in the program and their families
- Adopt a posture of cultural respect

Conferences

In order to enhance the knowledge and understand of the staff and parents of the developmental progress of children, no less than two parent-teacher conferences will be conducted per program year for each enrolled child.

Daily Health Checks

At the beginning and at the end of the day, your child's teacher will briefly check your child for general signs of communicable infection or other types of illness, as well as general wellness. (Please see COVID section for additional information.)

Your Child's Educational Experience

At Pacoima Charter State Preschool, we believe your children learn best through play; worksheets and dittos sheets will not be used. While to the untrained eye it does not appear learning is taking place, developmentally appropriate play fosters learning development. In the dramatic play area, children practice language through conversations and social-emotional skills by learning to cooperate and get along with others. In the manipulative area, counting and one-to-one correspondence is practiced using small items; measurement is performed using scales, rulers, and non-standard measurements (i.e. linking chains); fine motor skills (small muscles) are developed through lace boards and dexterity vests. In the blocks area, children problem-solve ways to best construct a structure, practice social-emotional skills through sharing, and use cognitive skills to create a needed square block using triangle blocks.

To ensure that your child is ready for Kindergarten, we provide daily developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, math, science, and social studies. To support your child's learning and development, the day-to-day procedures are as followed:

- Greet and welcome children and parents daily
- Supervise children at all times
- Speak to children in a friendly, courteous manner
- Show respect for individual differences and diversity
- Interact with children in a positive, responsive manner at their eye level
- Model desired behavior and use positive and consistent guidance techniques with children at all times
- Provide a safe, comfortable environment that includes children in meaningful activities
- Consistently implement developmentally appropriate activities that focus on school readiness
- Communicate with individual children, encouraging language development
- Encourage positive social behaviors in children such as cooperating, helping, taking turns, and talking to solve problems.
- Allow children to make choices with a balanced schedule of large-to-small group activities throughout the day
- Conduct smooth transition between activities while encouraging them to try new foods
- Encourage and welcome parent participation in classroom activities

Your Child's Daily Routine

The daily routine helps your child feel secure, independent, and able to easily and confidently move from one activity to another as well as develop and use predicting skills. A typical day might consist of:

- Group activities
- Clean-up
- Story/music time
- Free choice activities/center time
- Rest time
- Family-style meals
- Outdoor time/gross motor play
- Morning meetings/circle time
- Sand/water play

This routine allows your child to practice self-help skills, solve problems, develop language, use small and large muscles, refine social skills, think, create, and have fun. Please see the classroom daily schedule for times of specific activities.

Rest/Nap Time

Each child will have a period of an hour for rest/nap time. A cot will be provided for each child, but we ask that parents provide a blanket and wash the linen weekly. If there is a comfort item a child prefers to have, to settle down, we encourage parents to provide it. If a child does not nap or does not want to rest, they will not be forced to; a quiet activity will be provided.

Dress Your Child for Success

Each child will have their own space to store their artwork, pictures, and personal possessions. You should dress your child in comfortable clothes and closed-toe-shoes. Please send an additional pair of underwear, pants, shirt, and socks. We encourage you to also send a sweater or light jacket because the temperature varies throughout the day. Please label all clothing with your child's name. Children should not wear jewelry or other items that may present a safety risk. Please ensure all valuables are kept at home and not with the child. Pacoima Charter State Preschool is not responsible for lost or damaged valuables.

Discipline & Guidance

It is an expectation of the Pacoima Charter State Preschool to create an age and developmentally appropriate environment, set reasonable limits, redirect unacceptable behavior through positive guidance, and nurture positive interactions. The Pacoima Charter State Preschool does not tolerate humiliation, physical punishment, or negative reinforcement. We believe that by setting reasonable limits on the child's behavior, we give them the security of knowing exactly what is expected. Children will be given choices and allowed to make decisions according to their age. A child's growing self-esteem flourishes as he or she experiences success with a variety of tasks and feels safe to learn from consequences.

All Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff are trained to use positive discipline and guidance techniques when a child is exhibiting inappropriate behaviors. When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, the Pacoima Charter State Preschool will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. Such steps will include:

- Engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and support under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability, in 29 U.S.C. §705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child's teacher.
- If the child has an individualized education plan (IEP), the program must consult with the agency responsible for the IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services.
- If the child does not have an IEP, the program must collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implement IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.

If, after Pacoima Charter State Preschool, has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described above, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the mental health and disabilities specialist, and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment resents a continued serious safety threat to the child or the other enrolled children and determines the program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, the program will work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement. **The Pacoima Charter State Preschool is against suspending and expelling young children.**

As we value and respect all parents, we expect our parents to display courtesy and respect to all parents and staff on agency premises. We strongly encourage our parents to use positive guidance and discipline techniques with their children. Parents are prohibited from using negative discipline techniques on any Pacoima Charter School Property, including:

SLAPPING, LOUD OR PROFANE LANGUAGE, THREATENING, OR SPANKING children or Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff, volunteers, and other parents. Further, in accordance with the "Minimum Standards" of the State of California, negative discipline techniques, displayed in the presence of children, is inappropriate and will place the preschool out of regulatory compliance.

Communication with Parents/Legal Guardians

Teachers will communicate regularly with parents/legal guardians and maintain personal daily contacts to provide information and address concerns. The director or site supervisor is also available to answer questions and address concerns.

Teacher can answer brief questions during pick-up and drop-off times but are focused on the supervision of the children. Please schedule a parent-teacher conference with your child's teacher if you have questions that require more time to address or would like to have a conference. The site supervisor is also available during drop-off and pick-up times to answer any questions and may be able to answer questions that require more time. Teachers will also use electronic forms of communication, including, but not limited to, Parent Square. Parents are encouraged to connect with their child's teacher through Parent Square. **During the pandemic crisis, all parent conferences will take place via Zoom.**

Parent Boards

Each classroom has a bulletin board located at a designated location with important information posted for you, including:

- Lesson plans
- Menus
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Parent Meetings, Policy Council Meetings, Current Events
- Copy of the Minimum Standards and Day Care Licensing Report
- Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services Website, <http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us/> and phone number (213) 351-5507
- Recalls from the United States Consumer and Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website www.cpsc.gov
- Pacoima Charter State Preschool website: www.pacoimacharterpreschool.com

Notes and Flyers

Notes and flyers will be distributed throughout the year. Please make sure you check your child's folder daily for important information. **(During the pandemic crisis, children will not be given folders. They will occasionally take-home notes and flyers. All important information will be conveyed on Parent Square)**

Program Changes

Information affecting program operations or services to children and families will be sent as soon as available.

Arrivals

Please ensure that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time for learning. Your child's regular attendance is important to the success of every classroom.

- You must drop off your child according to the established preschool schedule and procedures each day.
- You are required to bring your child onto campus, walk your child to his/her classroom, and sign your child in each day, using your full legal signature and time of day.
- No one under the age of 18, except a parent, is allowed to drop your child off.
- You must ensure that your child is under the supervision of a staff member before you leave.
- Upon arrival, a staff member will greet your child and assist your child with arrival procedures.

Departures

You must make necessary arrangements for your child to be picked up by the established departure time each day.

- You must pick your child up according to the established preschool schedule and procedures each day.
- You are required to walk onto campus to your child's classroom and sign your child out each day, using your full legal signature and the time of day.
- Should you sign your child out during the day, and then return the child to the center the same day; the child must be signed in again and signed out when leaving for the day.
- If an emergency occurs that prevents you from picking up your child by departure time, you must contact the preschool staff to inform them.
- You must designate, in writing, who is allowed to pick up your child from the preschool. Staff will not release your child to anyone without written notification, from you.
- All individuals picking up a child, who is not a parent or guardian, must be over the age of 18 and must submit a copy of their valid government issued identification.
- No one under the age of 18, except a parent, is allowed to pick up a child from this site.
- If a staff member suspects that the adult picking up the child is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or is not able to drive safely, the Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff will request that another adult listed on the emergency care be contacted to pick up the child. All efforts will be made until another adult can pick up the child and safely take him/her home.
- The Pacoima Charter State Preschool is released from liability once your child has been signed out.

Late Drop off and Pick-Ups

We ask you to be on time when bringing and picking up your child. When late, your child misses learning opportunities that are essential for his/her growth and development. We realized that emergencies and unusual circumstances occur which may prevent you from dropping off or pick up your child at the appropriate time.

Because we know that unexpected circumstance may arise, it is required that you have at least one alternate person that can pick up your child at the end of his/her day. If your child has not been picked up by the end of his/her day, and no parent contact has been received, the following steps will be taken:

1. Persons on the emergency contact list will be contacted in order to locate someone to pick up your child immediately. It is essential that the parent/legal guardian advise the Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff of any changes and keep the emergency contact information current at all times.
2. If the teacher is unable to locate someone, s/he will contact the administration office, and a staff member will advise and assist the teacher in making arrangements to have your child picked up.
3. If circumstances arise that keep you from being able to drop off or pick up your child on time, on a regular basis, please speak with your child's teacher or the site supervisor.
4. Children left after closing, and with no contact from parents or emergency contacts, are considered abandoned. After reasonable attempts to locate and authorized adult to pick up the child, the teacher will call authorities to report and abandoned child.

Attendance

Children who attend consistently and have few absences will benefit the most from the program and the learning opportunities planned and provided on a daily basis. A record of each child's attendance is kept. Whenever the child is absent, please contact the Pacoima Charter State Preschool to state the reason for the absence. If no contact is made, a Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff member will contact you to ask the reason for your

child's absence and offer any needed support. The PCSP is a state program and funding depends on good attendance.

Excused/Unexcused Absence Policy

If the child is absent from the center for any reason, the following steps need to be taken by the parent/guardian and the Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff:

1. If your child is unable to attend, you must notify your child's teacher immediately and let them know when you expect your child to return to the program.
2. Parents or guardians must call each day of absence until your child return to school.
3. If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days due to illness, a note from the doctor is required, clearing the child to return to school.
4. The Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff is required to monitor all absences and tardiness and ensure reason for absences are well-documented and parent support, where/as needed, is provided. Expect a call whenever your child is absent.
5. When chronic absenteeism occurs, the Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff will meet with the parents to explore solutions to the absenteeism, provide support, resources, and referrals and possibly explore other program options that may best meet the family situation.
6. Valid reasons for an "Excused Absence" are as follows:
 - Illness/injury/quarantine of child
 - Medical/Dental appointment
 - Hospitalization
 - Medical treatment or therapy
 - Communicable disease (rash, pink eye, etc.)
 - Best interest (up to 10 days per school year) such as vacation
 - Health ailments, which prevent attendance (cold, flu, chicken pox, etc.)
 - Death in the family
7. Excessive absences may result in removal from the program.

Transportation

The Pacoima Charter State Preschool does not provide for transportation of children. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for the transportation. The Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff will provide you with resources regarding transportation services. Our agency is not affiliated with any private transportation services. Staff are not responsible for any communication or scheduling between parents and transportation serviced providers.

Transition

Pacoima Charter State Preschool will support successful transitions for children and parents upon entering and leaving the program. During the registration process, the parents receive verbal and written information to understand the program goals, philosophy, guidelines, and expectations for PCSP. All four-year-old students will visit transitional kindergarten (TK) and kindergarten (K) classrooms in the spring to experience TK/Kindergarten. The Pacoima Charter State Preschool teachers will work with the TK/K teachers to ensure a smooth transition and obtain all prerequisite information.

HEALTH

Immunizations and Exemptions

In accordance with California Child Care Licensing requirements, children must be up-to-date with all immunizations before entering the program. If additional immunizations are due during the year, the parents will be advised of the immunizations needed and will be offered support to obtain those. Per the California School Immunization Law, **personal and religious exemptions are not allowed**. You must present a statement signed by your doctor for all exemptions for immunizations.

- We maintain a copy of your child's immunization record at the center your child attends
- The Health and Nutrition Specialist will assess each child's record to determine their current immunizations status. If your child's immunization status is not current, you will receive written notice regarding your child's needed immunization.
- To ensure State Law compliance, a child will be excluded from the center if they have not received the required immunization five (5) days after the notice was given and a current record has been obtained.
- During all recognized communicable disease outbreaks, children with these exemptions may be excluded from attending the preschool per the local Health Authority.

Exclusion Procedure for Sick Children

If a student has any symptoms, he/she will be immediately referred to the Health Office during the pandemic.

A child will not be permitted to stay if any of the following symptoms are apparent when the child arrives at the center. The main office will notify the parent immediately to pick up the child from the center if any of the following symptoms occur:

- **Fever:** 101°F by any method accompanied with behavioral changes or other signs and symptoms.
- **Diarrhea:** that contains more than a drop of blood or mucus, is not contained by diapers or toilet use, and/or causing excessive handling (exceeds 2 stools about normal per 24 hours from the child while the child is in the program)
- **Vomiting:** two or more times in the previous 24 hours
- **Mouth Sores:** unless health care provided stated child is noninfectious
- **Rash:** until a medical exam indicates it is not associated with an infectious agent
- **Eye Drainage:** until permission and/or a permit for readmission is issued by a physical or local health authority, or until symptom free
- **Abdominal pain:** continues for more than two (2) hours of intermittent abdominal pain
- **Respiratory Distress:** fast, difficult or different breathing, uncontrolled coughing, and/or wheezing
- **Unusual Color of Skin, Eyes, Stool, or Urine:** until a medical exam approves readmission
- **Unexplained Lethargy:** unusual tiredness, sleepiness, lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying
- **Lice, Ringworm, (or the head) Impetigo, or Scabies:** that is untreated and contagious to others. Head and body must be covered
- **Chickenpox:** until all of the lesions are crusted and dried, and no new lesions have shown for a least 24 hours.
- **Open Sores, Wounds and Cuts:** that are open, red, swollen, draining or appear to be infected. Sores must be covered.
- **Runny Nose:** with thick, yellowish-greenish drainage with fever
- **Strep throat:** until the child starts antibiotics

associated with fever or other signs or symptoms

- **Ear Ache:** if child complains of persistent pain, or if visible drainage is present

Because we want to protect the health and safety of all children who participate in our programs, we ask that you please observe your child(ren) for illness before bringing her/him to school.

Children Cannot Attend with the Following Symptoms:

- Severe or persistent coughing
- Fever 101°F or higher (must be fever free without medication 24 hours prior to returning)
- Vomiting (must be free of episodes for 24 hours prior to returning)
- Diarrhea-frequent, loose, water stool (must be free of episode for 24 hours prior to returning)
- Sore throat with fever
- Breathing problems
- Infective or unusual spots or rashes
- Impetigo (mouth sores)
- Chickenpox
- Ringworm (head, body must be covered)
- Evidence of head lice
- Open sores

Symptoms Requiring a Doctor's Release:

- Strep Throat
- Scarlet Fever
- Influenza
- Thrush
- Ringworm (head or scalp)
- Impetigo (mouth sores)
- Open Blisters on the skin
- Hepatitis A & B
- Scabies
- Mumps, Measles and Rubella
- Meningitis
- Salmonella, Shigella and Yersinia
- Pertussis
- Tuberculosis
- Fractured, sprained or broken bones
- Chickenpox
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Illness/Communicable Disease Exclusion Procedure

Because our program is a group setting, it is possible that your child will be exposed to illnesses or communicable diseases such as chickenpox, pink eye, and head lice. If this occurs, we will inform you of the possible exposure while maintain the privacy of the children.

Medication Administration

Should your child require to take medication during program hours, we must obtain a prescription from a physician and the steps below must be completed before any medication can be administered.

- The parent/legal guardian and the child's physician must fill out a "**REQUEST FOR MEDICATION TO BE TAKEN DURING SCHOOL HOURS**" form. This form can be obtained from the health office.
- The medication must be in the original container and include the name of the child, name of the medication, and dates and time it is to be taken by the child.
- A brochure of the medication's side effects must be provided to the health office and preschool office to be placed in the child's folder as a reference.
- Medication is only administered by the health office.
- Over-the-counter medications or outdated medication **will not** be administered to children.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, staff will notify parents or guardians using the emergency contact numbers on file or 9-1-1 to transport the child to the nearest medical facility.

Safety and Health Practices

It is our goal to protect the health and safety of all children from having contact with animals in the facility. The preschool and the playground will be kept free of animals at all times.

NUTRITION

Meals

The Pacoima Charter State Preschool program assists families in meeting each child's nutritional needs by serving a variety of nutritious meals and snacks, based on the guideline for meal patterns of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meal reimbursement to the preschool program is based on the children present for every meal provided. Menus will be posted and sent home. The preschool staff are responsible for ensuring food safety and sanitation as it pertains to the storing, preparing, and serving of foods. As a program that administers CACFP, all applicable regulations must be met, including compositions and portions.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service Non-Discrimination Statement

Pacoima Charter State Preschool is available to all who qualify and do not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children are served. The program welcomes children with disabilities, understand the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), makes, and implements reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities. State law prohibits any form of religious instruction or worship within the classroom or program.

We establish good eating habits by:

- Serving family style meals
- Providing nutritionally balance breakfast, lunch and hot supper
- Providing special dietary meals as prescribed by a physician
- Providing resources/information for the whole family
- Children are offered and encouraged to try new foods

Food Allergies

Children with food allergies or medical restrictions to certain food will be accommodated. However, parents must provide the teacher with written orders from a licensed physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner during enrollment and if/when a change occurs during the school year. Parents or guardians can obtain a **“MEDICAL STATEMENT TO REQUEST SPECIAL MEALS”** for the child's physician to fill out, at the preschool main office. If medication is required to be administered, signed written orders from the authorized healthcare provider and a Health Plan must be provided.

Birthday Celebrations

A child's birthday is a wonderful occasion and the Pacoima Charter State Preschool staff will lead classroom celebrations designed to make all children feel special. Due to the COVID pandemic, the distribution of celebratory items, from families, is prohibited until further notice.

Holiday Celebrations

Holidays are a way to teach and learn about cultural diversity in the classroom. The holiday policy of the program is focused on educating children about different beliefs and traditions of various cultures. When grounded in anti-bias principals, holiday activities support children's cultural identity and enhance their and their family's feelings of belonging to the school community. The main goals are to support children's family customs and racial uniqueness and to increase children's consciousness and appreciation of others' culture practices. This will broaden children's awareness of our diverse world and teach about people who make important social contribution. Learning about a holiday means teaching children about what the holiday means to a variety of groups of people. Celebrating a holiday engages children in holiday activities as full-fledged participants.

We invite families to share child friendly photos, stories, music, songs, and traditions with their classroom. Our teachers are willing to collaborate with families to plan developmentally appropriate activities that allow us to share culturally diversity. It is our intention to teach children that we are global citizens and thus, we must bring about cultural awareness and understanding.

Celebrations in class will relate to the children in the class/program. We will provide lessons and activities that are appropriate to the age and developmental level of the children. Stereotypes and misconceptions will be avoided.

All children will learn about holidays but not all children will have to celebrate them. Families who do not want their child to participate in holiday activities will be respected. The child will be given an alternate activity or will be permitted to visit another class during any holiday activities.

Outside Food

Pacoima Charter State Preschool provides all meals for the students. No outside food is permitted, except under special circumstances. When a child is new to school, they may feel scared and insecure. This sometimes causes children to refuse to eat prepared school meals. To avoid children from going without food all day, families will be permitted to send their child to school with healthy snacks, such as fruits, until the child is comfortable at school and will eat the prepared meals. Pacoima Charter State Preschool is a peanut free school. Peanuts and other nuts are not permitted on campus. If you have any questions, please contact your child's teacher and the preschool coordinator directly.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Disability Services

Pacoima Charter State Preschool is a special place for all children. We are committed to working with families to ensure that their children, those with significant disabilities and those without, receive the comprehensive services needed to meet their developmental, health and social needs. The Pacoima Charter State Preschool supports teaching staff with classroom routines, and activities that support the Individual Education Plans of children with special needs.

Curriculum Support

Pacoima Charter State Preschool supports the individual learning styles of each child. All children, including children with special needs, participate in the on-going development assessments. Classroom routines and activities support the Individual Education Plans (IEP) of children with special needs.

PARENT, FAMILY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (PFCE)

As your child's primary teacher, parents are the most important influence on a child's development. An essential part of every early education and care program is the involvement of parents. There are four ways you may choose to be involved to gain the skills and tools necessary to continue making a lasting difference in your child's life.

1. Direct involvement in shared decision making in program planning and operations by participating on the Parent Policy committee.
2. Participation in the classroom and other program activities as volunteers, and offering suggestions for daily learning activities.
3. Developing activities for the parents, such as sharing personal interest and hobbies with children, workshops and meetings.
4. Working with your child(ren) in cooperation with staff. Participating in home visits, developing goals with your child, home teaching activities and parent-teacher conferences.

Male Involvement

All fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers, or other male role models that play a positive role in the child's life are invited to participate in all aspects of the program. According to research and studies, the involvement of the father or a positive male role model positive influences the child's development. Pacoima Charter State Preschool will always have open doors for fathers to be involved. If you wish to be involved, just ask your child's teacher for guidance.

Advocacy

An advocate is a person or group of people who plead on behalf of others or who speak or write in support of some cause, argument, or proposal. Pacoima Charter State Preschool will help guide and direct parents on how to empower an individual or group of citizens to create change for the better. Issues to advocate can be as small as adding a streetlight or as important as opening a local clinic to provide health services to low-income families. Whatever the needs are, here are some steps to advocate change.

- Identify the problem
- Research and gather information
- Contact area residents who can support that the problem is a concern and should be addressed
- Photographs or videotapes can be very beneficial to legitimize your concerns
- Contact your local representatives in your county. Ask for their support and help.
- Attend your local city hall meetings, your child's school meetings, and neighborhood watch meetings that are already established in your neighborhood.
- Other sources to contact are the local radio, television, and newspapers
- Voice your concern by making a personal statement.
- Start a petition, a formal request to a governing body that is written and signed by a large number of people
- The most effective tool that can be used by any person is the right to vote

Advocacy is a constitutional right given to all people to help create a better system in their communities, their state, their country, and, most importantly, in their lives.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Parent Advisory Committee

All parents are members of the Parent Advisory Committee that meets monthly. At one of the first meetings, the parents elect Advisory Committee officers which are as follows:

- **Chairperson-** works with staff and other officers to plan the agenda for the parent meetings, conducts all Advisory Committee meetings, and serves as a non-voting member of all sub-committees.
- **Vice-Chairperson-** In the absence or disability of the Chairperson, s/he shall assume the Chairperson's duties and assist the Chair as needed.
- **Secretary-**records attendance of all Advisory Committee meetings and keeps and distributes minutes.

EMERGENCY & SAFETY PROCEDURES

We are concerned about and monitor the safety of children and adults involved with program activities. The Pacoima Charter State Preschool has developed safety procedures that ensures the wellbeing of all people on campus. Safety procedures include:

- Staff and volunteers will closely supervise all children at all times.
- The preschool has posted evacuation plans for the children and adults. Practice safety drills are held monthly during the year. Parents should become familiar with the evacuation plans. If an actual emergency occurs, you or the emergency contact will be informed for the situation as soon as possible.
- Every child enrolled must have a current consent and emergency information sheet on file. It is very important that parents or guardian continually update the staff with any new phone numbers and new contact information. In the event of a serious accident, the staff will call 9-1-1 if necessary.

Pedestrian Safety

Your child's and family's safety is our top priority. We require everyone to comply with the following driving/parking rules and regulations at all times. Please go over the guideline with your family before arrive to drop off or pick up your child or attend workshops or meetings.

- Do not leave young children unattended in the vehicle at any time.
- Parking in the school parking lot is prohibited. Parking must be found on the streets.
- Do not leave your car engine on
- Hold your child's hand and look both ways when crossing streets and driveways.
- Do not block our neighbor's driveway

Pedestrian Safety Guideline

- Children under 10 years of age **MUST ALWAYS** be accompanied by an adult when crossing the street.
- Stop at the curb before crossing the street
- Walk; don't run across the street
- Cross at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks
- Look left, right and left again before crossing
- Walk facing traffic

- Make sure driver see you before crossing in front of them
- Do not play in the driveway, street, parking lots or unfenced yards by the street
- Wear white clothing or reflectors when walking at night
- Cross at least 10 feet in front of a school bus

GRIEVANCE & RESOLUTION PROCESS

We believe that the primary avenue to providing quality services is through effective communication between staff and families we serve. Most questions and concerns are resolved through open communication with your child's teacher. If you have a concern, please utilize the four-step process outlined below to assist you in the timeliest resolution of your concern.

STEP 1: Address your concern with your child's teacher. We encourage you to put serious concerns in writing

STEP 2: Within five (5) working days of receiving your concern, the teacher will schedule a meeting with you to discuss them at a mutually agreeable time.

STEP 3: If your concern is not resolved, then another meeting will be scheduled, within five (5) working days, with you, the teacher, and the grade level coordinator.

STEP 4: If your concern is still not resolved, proceed by sharing your concern with the Executive Director: Sylvia Fajardo.

Pacoima Charter State Preschool
Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I _____ have received a copy of the
(Parent/Guardian's Name)

Pacoima Charter State Preschool Handbook.

As a Pacoima Charter State Preschool parent/guardian, I agree to adhere to all stated policies and procedures outlined in this handbook by the Pacoima Charter State Preschool.

Child's Name _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date _____