



STATE PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

HUMAN RESPONSE NETWORK

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Human Response Network's
Mission Statement

Recognizing the special vulnerability of children, mission of the Human Response Network is to better the lives of all people in Trinity County through advocacy, education, and programs that promote personal empowerment, peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and access to needed services.

WELCOME

We appreciate you taking the time to read this handbook. We know your time is valuable and we know parenting has its challenges. There is often just not enough time in a day to get everything done. These hard economic times don't help at all. It is easy to forget just how important you are. The fact is that no one is more important, in your child's life, than you the parent or guardian. And we, at the Human Response Network, are here to support you. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

The Human Response Network's State Preschool Parent Handbook is intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Human Response Network (HRN) and participating parents and guardians in the operation of HRN's State Preschool Program. It is important to put policies and procedures in writing so that all participants know what to expect and what they are responsible for. If you have difficulty in understanding these policies, need help with reading them, or need them translated into a language other than English, please let us know. These policies are intended to compliment, not replace, open dialog between parents, guardians, and program staff and we encourage you to make time to talk about any questions or concerns you may have. We want to hear from you.

HRN has many community partners in providing our State Preschool Program. These partners include: the Trinity County Office of Education, Lewiston Elementary School District, Trinity Alps Unified School District, Weaverville Elementary School, Trinity County Resource Conservation District Children's Garden, and others. HRN appreciates these valuable partnerships and encourages a broad range of community involvement in our child care programs.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Our first responsibility with HRN's State Preschool is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children. We work to form a partnership with parents and others entrusted with the care of the children at home to provide a continuum of care that ensures the physical and emotional safety of the children both in the home and in the preschool setting.

Our children's program is designed to educate the "whole" child. We strive to help each child to develop to his or her full potential socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. The children are given opportunities to develop a positive self-image and to extend this positive self-image into positive social interactions with both children and adults. It is our goal to lay a foundation that will help the children experience success in school and in life.

We believe each child is a unique individual and we want to recognize them for their skills and capabilities. We want to encourage individual interests. By doing this we develop closer relationships with them and encourage the children to develop closer relationships with each other.

We feel we are successful if we can help children to:

- Accept natural change,
- Realize that many problems have no easy answers,
- Learn to recognize and accept their feelings,
- Feel joy in their creative endeavors and in working through a problem,
- Develop perseverance, and
- Appreciate themselves for being different and unique.

It is our goal to provide an environment where all personalities will be enhanced, and, love and respect would develop positive social and emotional growth.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS:

- Support State Preschool Policies. If you have concerns, talk to program staff.
- Insure that your child attends the State Preschool regularly and punctually.

- Provide a home environment that encourages respect for school and the learning process
- Provide healthful and nutritious food, and make sure your child gets adequate rest.
- Have child attend school in appropriate and safe clothing.
- Participate in school conferences, twice yearly, to help set goals and objectives for your child.
- Support a parent-teacher partnership to meet individual child's needs.

TEACHER:

- Provide developmentally appropriate curriculum for the children.
- Inform children of classroom expectations and enforce them.
- Assess each child's progress.
- Conference with parents, twice yearly, to help set goals and objectives for the child.
- Support and active parent-teacher partnership to meet the individual child's needs.
- Provide a nurturing and safe environment for children.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

HRN's State Preschool offers a three-hour program Monday through Friday, and will follow the local school district calendar. The preschool will also follow local school district's snow days, when called. Power or water problems may also cause preschool closure. Please have alternative care pre-arranged in case it is needed.

The preschool closes at the end of the three hour period. All children must be picked up by that time. Failure to comply with this could be considered neglect, and Child Protective Services could be notified.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

We recognize that a consistent schedule is very important to young children's health and well-being. The preschool provides exposure to the following types of activities on a regular basis: story time, group time, art, music, dramatic play, block play, outdoor play, and snack time.

SPECIAL TOY OR BLANKET

Children are encouraged to bring their comfort items to make the transition from home to school easier. Please do not send any guns or violent toys. Toys from home are often difficult to share and create conflicts among children. Parents are encouraged to take the toys with them after the child arrives at preschool. Family photos and books are encouraged for transitions.

CLOTHING

We recommend children wear comfortable, easily laundered clothing that is free of complicated fastenings, and suitable for outdoor play and messy arts and crafts. For safety reasons, closed toe (athletic or tennis) shoes are recommended. Please send a change of clothing for your child to keep in their cubby.

FIELD TRIP PROVISIONS

Periodic field trips will take place. You will be notified in advance, and your signed permission will be required for your child to attend the field trip. There is also a yearly walking field trip permission slip to cover nature walks, trips to the park, etc.

Because our field trips require an adult to child ratio of 1 to 4, we depend upon parent participation to hold them. Driving trips require participating parents to provide a current DMV printout and proof of insurance to drive other children in their vehicle.

TRANSPORTATION

The State Preschool is not able to provide any form of transportation other than in an emergency situation where the parent or guardian cannot be reached and the child must be transported to the hospital or physician for emergency medical treatment.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to participate in the preschool to the fullest extent they are able. Parents may choose to be involved in a variety of ways, which may include classroom participation or other forms of contribution. While parents are

expected to become involved, their individual situations will determine what form and level their involvement may take.

Parent meetings are a forum for parental input into the State Preschool Program. Parents are expected to participate in these meeting and every attempt will be made to schedule them when convenient for the majority of parents.

When planning the agenda for parent meetings, opportunity for parental input for discussion topics will be made. A record, including brief minutes of each meeting, will be kept on file. In January of each year, part of the parent meeting will be devoted to program evaluation so that the parents can advise program staff as to necessary or desired program modifications. A special meeting, for this purpose, may be convened if so desired.

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

Due to the limited enrollment, unique to the provision of preschool services in rural and sparsely populated areas, the monthly parent meetings will act as the preschool's Parent Advisory Committee.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A primary goal of the HRN's State Preschool Program is to utilize community resources to meet the needs of the children, families, and preschool. Community involvement also enriches the preschool and creates a bond between child, family, and community.

Each Head Teacher will be responsible for linking with local resources to create opportunities for interaction. This may take the form of field trips to local business or farms, or visits from community members with skills, interests, or occupations to share. These efforts will incorporate activities in conjunction with the local elementary school in order to develop strong relationships between the preschool, the local elementary school, and other local resources, all of which are intended to facilitate transitional activities.

Through outreach efforts, each community will also be given opportunity to contribute to the preschool by donations of goods, funds, or other support services.

Each community has its own personality and character. Opportunities for interaction will differ from one site to another. The goal is to develop the broadest base of support for the preschool.

We welcome suggestions on how best to develop strong relationships within each community.

AGE CRITERIA FOR ENROLLMENT

The preschool is open to children who reach their fourth (or third) birthday by September 1st. Four-year-old children have first priority.

GROUP SIZE AND STAFFING

The preschool is licensed by the State Department of Social Services and maintain an adult to child ratio of 1 to 8 for preschool.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

Attendance Records are used to document a child's attendance or absences from the preschool. It is mandatory that all parents or guardians sign their child in and out when arriving and departing from the preschool. Please enter the actual time and provide their full signature in ink on the record.

The parent must notify the preschool staff, in writing, if anyone other than the parent will be signing the child in or out of preschool on the record. Only the people you authorize when you fill out the Emergency Form will be able to pick up your child. A photo identification card will also be necessary for that person to pick up your child. Also, please inform whoever is picking up your child of the sign-out procedure.

Refusal by the parent to sign the Attendance Record daily is reason for the family to be terminated from State Preschool Program.

ATTENDANCE

We require that parents inform us as quickly as possible if their child will not attend on a scheduled day, or there is a change in the child's normal schedule.

Please phone the school as soon as you know your child will not be attending that day. Alps Preschool Staff can be reached at 623-3784 and Lewiston State Preschool Staff at 778-3984 ext. 102.

Reason for absence must be written on an Absence Verification Form, with the date of absence indicated, and signed by the parent. The types of absences that are considered excused absences may include illness, doctor appointment, transportation problems, family emergencies, death of a family member, any incident such as theft, fire, flood, or any situation which results in the family having their normal schedule disrupted.

Ten In Best Interest days plus an additional ten unexcused absences over and above the ten In Best Interest days will be allowed, before being subject to termination from the Preschool Program.

HRN's State Preschool requires a two-week notice prior to withdrawing your child from the preschool as stated on the Admission Agreement. Parents will be charged their parent fee for the two weeks whether the child is in care or not, unless there are extenuating circumstances, for example, non-payment of fees. The preschool is also required to give two-week's notice, unless there are extenuating circumstances, if the child is to be terminated from the program.

WAITING LIST

A waiting list is maintained by HRN for eligible children. Because funding is limited, not every eligible child is able to be enrolled. Funding availability varies with current program enrollment.

CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES

For the protection of your child, please provide HRN staff with documentation of any court orders that may apply to your child being picked up from the preschool. We will comply with orders issued by the court for this purpose. We cannot comply simply based on verbal instruction.

SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE FOOD PROGRAM

The preschool participates in the Subsidized Child Care Food Program. Parents must sign an enrollment form for their child to receive nutritious snacks in the morning. Parents must update this form every year, and when any family

member becomes unemployed, whenever household income increases by \$50.00 per month, or \$600.00 per year or more, or when the number of household members decreases, or when Cal WORKS, FDPIR, or Food Stamp benefits are terminated.

The Subsidized Child Care Food Program requires the preschool to serve milk. If you do not want your child to be served milk, you need to have a medical statement completed by the child's physician, and return it to the Preschool Staff.

PHYSICAL EXAM

A signed physician's report of physical examination is required for admission to the preschool, and must be returned to HRN prior to admission to the preschool. In the case of over booked physicians, an appointment date for the physical can be used until the physical is complete.

HEALTH POLICY

Prior to admission, documentation must be provided to prove the child has been immunized against diseases as required by the California Administrative Code, Title 17. The following immunizations are required: Polio (three doses), DPT (four doses), MMR, HepB, and Hib.

IN CASE OF ILLNESS

Your child should be kept at home and not brought to preschool when:

1. Your child has a fever. If your child had a previous fever, their temperature should be normal for 24 hours, without fever reducing medication, before they attend preschool.
2. Your child is vomiting or has diarrhea.
3. Your child excretes green mucus from their nose.
4. Your child cannot stop coughing or has been up all night coughing.
5. Your child has chicken pox, pinkeye, or any other communicable disease.
6. When your child has nits or lice, or they are present in your household (see the Head Lice/ Nit-Free Policy section below.)

Preschool staff will have the final decision on allowing a sick or recovering child to attend.

If a child becomes ill at the preschool, the child will be isolated from group play and the parents will be contacted. Immediate arrangements must be made by the parents to remove a sick child from the preschool. Parents are strongly encouraged to arrange for back-up care in case their child is too ill to be in group care.

ALLERGIES

Parents must notify the Preschool Staff in writing of any allergies or food sensitivities their child has. To request special meals and/or food accommodations, you need to have a medical statement completed by the child's physician, and return it to the Preschool Staff.

MEDICATIONS

Staff will administer physician-prescribed medication after the parent has filled out and signed the consent form for medication administration. Medications must be in the original labeled container, with the child's name, date, and dosage. Non-prescription medications will be administered when the parent has filled out and signed the consent form for medication administration.

HEAD LICE/ "NIT-FREE" POLICY

Head checks for lice will be a routine activity at the preschool. Children with active head lice will be immediately excluded from the preschool, and may not return to the preschool until all lice (dead or alive) are gone, as it is a highly contagious condition.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Human Response Network shares your concern about the health and safety of your child. We are keenly attuned to public concern about the prevalence of child physical and sexual abuse and neglect. California State Law requires that all Preschool staff report any suspected child abuse or neglect. We want you to know that as child-care providers and teachers, our staff, being mandated reporters, will comply with this requirement. If you have any questions or doubts about our policies, please talk to the Head Teacher or HRN staff for clarification.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Please keep your child's file current in regard to emergency contact persons and numbers. This is very important for the welfare of your child.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The following procedures will be followed in the event of a medical emergency:

1. Staff will attempt to notify the parent by phone immediately.
2. Necessary steps will be taken to protect the life and health of the child, which may include:
 - (a) Use of EMT and ambulance services.
 - (b) Use of emergency medical care at Trinity Hospital or nearest medical facility.

RELOCATION SITE

In the event of an emergency, or staff determines the preschool is not a safe environment the children, will be relocated to another site. This site is posted on the wall in the classroom on the emergency procedure form.

If you cannot reach the preschool by phone, please contact the Human Response Network at 623-2024 or 1(800) 358-5251, and they will be able to contact preschool staff.

DISASTER DRILLS

Monthly disaster drills will be conducted by preschool staff to ensure the children are aware of how to safely exit the preschool and where to meet after evacuation. Please see the Evacuation Plan posted in the preschool.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Positive discipline techniques are tools used by the preschool staff to help children learn appropriate social behavior and develop self-control. At the preschool, discipline techniques are used which encourage children to work out problems constructively, develop respect for self, others, and the environment. If a child exhibits behavior that infringes on another person's rights or property, one or more of the actions listed below may occur. These are examples only. Staff actions may not occur in this order since staff will try to match an action which is appropriate for the misbehavior:

- Re-direct the child to achieve a desired behavior. For example, if a child is throwing blocks staff will explain to the child that it is not okay because someone could get hurt. The staff will help the child find a quiet activity to do, or an activity where throwing is okay, like throwing a ball outside.
- Remind child of the preschool classroom rules to give the child the opportunity to modify their own behavior without intervention.
- Help the child with problem-solving. Help the child or children figure out a solution to the problem. For example, when two children want to play with the same toy. Preschool staff can help them find a solution so they both can play with the toy, possibly taking turns or playing together.
- Time out will not be used unless the child needs time to get themselves back in control. It will not be used as punishment. The child may be required to remain with the teacher until the inappropriate behavior changes, at which time the child will discuss with the teacher how they will modify their behavior.

The parent may be contacted and a phone or in-person conference requested regarding the child's inappropriate behavior.

In the event of fighting or hitting another child or staff, or any situation which the teacher feels may pose a threat to the health and welfare of the children in the preschool, the child may be suspended for a period of up to five days the preschool is in operation. The parent will be charged parental fees for the time the child is suspended.

The State Preschool reserves the right to terminate child care services if it is deemed that the needs of the child cannot be met or the child poses a threat to the health and well-being of staff or other children of the preschool. If possible, a two-week notice will be provided to enable parents to find alternative care.

SERVICES THE STATE PRESCHOOL WILL PROVIDE

The preschool shall provide the following basic services for the child or children:

- A. State Preschool will be offered three hours a day, Monday through Friday, and will follow the local elementary school schedule, and will be closed on Legal Holidays.
- B. The State Preschool shall assume responsibility for the child after the child has been signed in by a parent, guardian, staff, or designated representative.
- C. The State Preschool participates in the Child Care Food Program and the child shall be furnished with a nutritious morning snack. A Child Care Food Program application form must be completed and re-certified every year to participate in the Child Care Food Program.
- D. The child will be involved in a developmentally appropriate curriculum of consisting of themes and activities which help develop the emotional, social, physical, aesthetic, and individual growth of young children.
- E. Staff shall administer physician-prescribed medication only upon the written request of the child's parents or guardians. Medications must be in the original labeled container, with the child's name, date and dosage. Non-prescription medications will be administered when the parent had filled out and signed the consent form for medication administration.
- F. Staff shall give appropriate first aid to an injured child. A parent, guardian, or person(s) listed on the emergency card shall be contacted if it is the judgment of staff that immediate medical attention is necessary. If it is further the judgment of the State Preschool Staff that the injury is of an emergency nature, paramedics shall be called to the school, and a parent or guardian contacted.

- G. An ill child shall be isolated and given appropriate care until pick-up by a parent, guardian, or designated representative, who must respond immediately to staff request to pick up their child.
- H. The State Preschool shall notify the child's parents or guardians of a suspected exposure to a communicable disease.
- I. The State Preschool shall make every effort to safeguard personal belongings brought by the child, but shall not be responsible for lost or broken items.
- J. California State Law requires that all staff of this State Preschool report any suspected child abuse or neglect. We want you to know that as child care providers and teachers, our staff, being mandated reporters, will comply with this requirement. If you have any questions or doubts about our program or employees, please talk to the Head Teacher for clarification.

OBLIGATIONS OF PARENT(S) AND/OR GUARDIAN(S)

“Parent” shall mean parent, guardian, or designated representative.

1. A parent shall furnish requested medical information and all other paperwork prior to acceptance into the program.
2. A parent shall notify the State Preschool in writing when someone other than those named on the emergency information card will be calling for the child.
3. A parent shall use full signature when signing the child in and out on the Attendance Voucher.
4. The parent shall make sure the child is dressed appropriately when brought to the State Preschool, following the guidelines in the parent's handbook.
5. The parent shall notify the school of the child's possible exposure to a communicable disease.
6. The parent understands a child in the State Preschool must be picked up by the end of their three hour program. In both cases it is suggested that you have an alternative provider for emergencies. Failure to comply with this could be considered neglect and Child Protective Service could be notified.

7. The parent shall notify the State Preschool any time the child will not be in attendance, preferably before 8:30 a.m. (see Absences section above).
8. The parent will treat all children, staff, and other persons at the State Preschool with respect.
9. The parent shall refrain from verbally reprimanding children of other families or from verbally or physically disciplining their own children while on the State Preschool premises.
10. If the parent has a concern they will arrange a time to discuss the concern with staff when it does not interfere with staff's supervision of the children.

PERSONAL RIGHTS

In addition to other rights contained herein, each child shall have the following rights:

1. To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.
2. To be accorded safe, healthful, and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.
3. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to interference with daily living functions, such as eating, sleeping or toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.
4. To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative, if any, informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited to , the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving unit of the licensing agency and of information regarding confidentiality.

5. To not be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night.
6. To not be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.
7. In child care facilities, decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual advisors shall be made by the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

There will be no discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, ancestry, or disability.