



## Welcome to our program!

At Catalyst Kids we make this a wonderful experience for your child – learning, growing, and having fun. We also want you and your family to feel comfortable here. Please do not hesitate to talk with me or any of our teachers. We want to work with you to give your child the best experience possible.

You are welcome in the program anytime: stay for breakfast if you have time; hang out with your child as they engage in our program; chat with staff about what is going on in your child’s life. Please let us know the unique qualities of your child. We want your perspective on how your child is doing in the program.

This is your program too; we want you to see us as part of your family. I encourage you to participate in our program and share your talents, knowledge, traditions, and resources. You may also be interested in participating in our Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee (PAC), or in other ways. Most importantly, please know that you can share any ideas, suggestions, and/or concerns you have with me. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thanks for choosing our program. We will do our best to make your Catalyst Kids experience a meaningful one for your child and family.

**Please print and sign the acknowledgment at the end of the handbook and bring into your center.**

**If you are unable to print, your center will also have printouts of the acknowledgement available.**

Visit Our Website at [www.catalystkids.org](http://www.catalystkids.org)

# Introduction to Parents/Guardians

This handbook has information for parents/guardians of infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age children. There are also sections that may only apply to families with private monthly fees, or to families who receive childcare subsidies through the State of California. When a section or policy applies to a certain group only, it will be specified.

We want you to know that nurturing our relationship with your child and family is of the utmost importance to us. We provide a welcoming place for children and peace of mind for families. Our caring, educated, and trustworthy teachers are your partners, ensuring that your child is safe and has fun in a comfortable, home-like setting where each child can be their best self. We are available for any questions you may have, and we strive to learn about you and your child's strengths, interests, and goals.

In the following pages, you will read about each of the age groups and how our philosophy is demonstrated in the programs. We have a well-developed philosophy and curricula that support children's individual needs, school readiness, academic development, and personal growth. We understand the experts' theories about how children grow and develop, and we carefully observe what children are interested in and how they develop as individuals.

Catalyst Kids' mission is to provide responsive services for communities, families, and children. We are committed to providing children and families with the highest standard of care and enrichment. We keep abreast of the latest child and youth development research and strive to have excellent programs.

While these policies may seem overwhelming, we want you to know that we are following an extensive set of requirements established by the State of California and the Federal Government for your children's education, health, safety, and well-being.

We adhere to all legislated regulations, including licensure of our facilities, program standards, teacher qualifications, group size, and teacher/child ratios. Though these policies and procedures may set a formal tone in this Handbook, your child's learning, growth, and happiness are the most important things to us. We hope you experience a true partnership with us, and your child thrives in our program. Again, if you have any questions, please ask.

## **Definition:**

"Parent" & "Parent/Guardian" for the purpose of this handbook are defined as a biological parent, adoptive parent, step-parent, foster parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, domestic partner of the parent (as stated in Family Code, Section 297), or any other adult living with a child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.

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## Philosophy & Program Overview

### Catalyst Kids Philosophy

**At Catalyst Kids our infant through school age programs are built on the following beliefs:**

All children are competent and capable learners. Each child is encouraged to imagine, learn, and grow through hands-on, active experiences. Through this discovery, children develop deeper connections to their families and community, which creates a foundation for learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable and responsive staff believe learning happens best through authentic and positive relationships with children. We guide children's development based on their individual interests and strengths and group experiences where they can creatively explore and discover together.

Trusting relationships between our families and staff are the cornerstone of our program. Together we promote a safe and nurturing environment that supports each child's emerging abilities and sense of self.

Reciprocal relationships with community-based organizations and school districts result in cohesive services for children and families. We work together to identify the goals and needs of the community and strive to provide optimal support.

### **Program and Curriculum Influences: All Programs**

- **Reggio Emilia**—The city of Reggio Emilia, Italy's early childhood practices have influenced our programs and curriculum at Catalyst. While the model programs in Italy can't be duplicated in the United States, many of their concepts align with our philosophy. In Reggio Emilia, Italy, they believe that children are competent, teachers are facilitators, parents and community are essential partners environments are enriched and enhance learning, and they understand the importance of documenting children's work. These are all concepts our agency embraces and practices at all our sites.
- **California Department of Education/Department of Social Services**—At Catalyst, we align our practices with these agencies' guidelines regarding observation-based assessments, environments, Frameworks and Foundations, Multilingual Language Learners, and cultural/diversity awareness.
- **Developmental Theories**
  - Constructivist Theory—This educational theory recognizes that children's knowledge is built upon what they already know and understand.
  - Observational Learning Theory—This educational theory recognizes that children learn through observing and imitating others.
  - Ecological Systems—This framework recognizes that children's relationships within their families, communities and society have a profound effect on them.

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## Staff Development and Quality Improvement

Catalyst Family holds professional development at its core. We provide comprehensive training after hiring staff, including health and safety procedures and program curriculum and delivery. Our Education Team provides ongoing and in-depth professional development training for all staff, which is offered throughout the year, including problem-solving/behavior guidance, adult/child interactions, and child and youth development. The opportunities for formal learning begin with a new employee orientation focusing on program overview, philosophy, values, and beliefs.

Catalyst Family holds continuous program quality improvement and evaluation as a foundational pillar for program quality. We see continuous program quality improvement as an ongoing four-step cycle of plan, do, check, and adjust. This process helps program staff intentionally and continuously improve their practices.

## Preschool Programs – the HighScope Approach

The **HighScope Approach** sees engagement with materials, activities, and interactions as ways that both encourage and challenge what children are observing and thinking. Activities are both children guided – built upon children’s natural curiosity, and adult guided – introducing new ideas and skills as appropriate for their age group and as children are interested and ready. HighScope calls this approach **active participatory learning** – a process in which children and teachers are partners in shaping the learning experience.

The HighScope Preschool curriculum is a **well-researched** early learning curriculum model widely used in the United States and abroad. It fosters prediction, analytical, and problem-solving skills, which have been shown to give children a better chance of succeeding in school and beyond.

(\* See the HighScope Perry Preschool Study at <https://highscope.org/perrypreschoolstudy>.)

In our Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten **school readiness** curriculum, we are building the foundation for lifelong learning. Children’s cognitive, physical, and social/emotional development aligns with California P-12 standards: Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Science, and the Arts. (For more information on the California Department of Education, Pre-Kindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines, see <https://www.cde.ca.gov>.)

**Our preschool daily routine offers children stability, predictability, and the opportunity for independence. The components that support this age group include:**

- Meeting/Greeting Time: an important transition from home to school.
- Plan-Do-Review: During planning and review, children use their emerging language skills to indicate the details of their intended work schedule and reflect on the experience.
- Small Group: Consists of groups of eight to ten children. Children participate in a minimum of two literacy and two math activities each week during small group Catalyst Kids Pathways to Literacy Curriculum.
- The teacher plans additional events and activities that support children’s other learning domains and incorporate their emerging interests and natural abilities.
- Full day programs: Children rest or nap after lunch. (Your child’s individual needs will be discussed with you.) Children engage in an additional small group or plan-do-review time after nap.

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## **School Age Programs: Before & After School**

Our **Child & Youth Development programs** for those in grades TK-8<sup>th</sup> grade (depending on location) support and foster the positive development of young people. This approach encourages youth to build relationships, set goals, make decisions, develop skills, and practice leadership and life skills in a participatory environment. Our programs use the **Search Institute’s Developmental Assets & Relationships Frameworks** to support opportunities and relationships young people need across all aspects of their lives. In our programs, we are actively cultivating a relationally rich culture where you will see our staff expressing care, challenging growth, providing support, sharing power, and expanding possibilities to support each individual young person to thrive.

Our programs are based on the **interests and abilities** of each young person and have an intentional curriculum. To ensure balance, we provide a daily schedule with opportunities for homework, recreation, and pursuing individual ideas. Our programs also reflect the **partnership** between the center, families, the school, the school district, and the community. While each school-age program is unique to the school and community it serves, in all our programs, you will see:

- Teaching staff that supports the academic, youth development, and recreational needs of school-age children.
- School day learning is being supported daily through hands-on enrichment activities that blend academics, enrichment, and youth development.
- A daily schedule includes dedicated time for homework, recreation, fitness, and personal development based on the interests of the children.
- Teachers and young people co-create and collaborate on activities and clubs emphasizing the arts, engineering, music, cooking, sports, science, community service, fitness, technology, and leadership.
- An understanding that relationships and relational practices may be expressed in many ways based on individual, community, culture, and other differences.
- A home-like center environment, rich in experience and discovery, and with a touch of whimsy, to represent the young people in the program and community.
- Variety of opportunities for young people to practice 21st-century life skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication
- A focused program for TK/K children that includes programming in all developmental domains using our Catalyst Kids Learning Through Literacy Curriculum

## **School Age Program: Camp**

Our School-Age Camp programs occur on days or weeks when school is not in session. During school breaks, our schedule transitions to a full-day camp schedule, which allows young people to use the additional time in our program to expand their creativity, be more active, and expand their comfort zone in a fun and dependable environment.

While at camp, young people become “campers” and participate in a wealth of diverse, creative and challenging experiences while developing various competencies and a positive identity. Our goal is that each camp day ends with our campers excitedly anticipating their next camp experience.

Our program also transitions to a fun, energetic, and even silly camp culture during camp. Our camp culture values creating a community where every camper feels valued, needed, and important. Everyone is respected for what they individually bring to the camp community. Creating a community experience is the most powerful part of camp.

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## **School Age Program: Teaching Staff**

- Facilitate relationship-building through active participation and side-by-side play. They actively participate in all aspects of camp, embodying the camp's culture and transforming the center into a place of exploration and adventure. Leaders transition effortlessly through role model, follower, guide, and friend roles.
- They hold the safety of each camper close to their hearts. They establish supportive and caring boundaries and expectations. They are experts in standard health and safety procedures and have keen observation skills. They create an inclusive community defined by a strong sense of belonging.
- Bring their talents, interests, and upbeat personalities to camp. They share their knowledge and passion with the campers, empowering them to grow. They adopt the program to meet the needs of their group, creating an inclusive environment that promotes success.

## **Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) Approach**

Our **infant/toddler programs** implement the philosophical practices of WestEd's Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC). The PITC Approach provides us with a framework of quality care that is based on sound child development and family research. PITC incorporates relationship-based care, continuity of care, and primary caregiving practices for every child leading to the following working philosophy:

- Families are partners in care.
- Young children are unique individuals with varying temperaments, rates of development, and interests.
- Young children are curious, motivated learners and dependent upon adults for nurturance, support, and guidance. They need to be both respected as learners and protected in their vulnerability. Therefore, planning for a child's care in the program is a shared experience including families and program staff, and is individualized for each child.
- Responsive Caregiving: All of our caregivers respond to each child's individual needs for feeding, changing, sleeping, playing, and nurturing.

## **Infant Needs, Services, and Feeding Plans**

Together, parents/guardians and center caregivers develop individualized plans for each child. The information parents/guardians **provide** regarding their infant's needs, services, and feeding plan will assist our center staff in determining each child's specific needs. Parents/guardians will select the recommended infant meal patterns, identify feeding methods and special instructions, and detail the child's likes and dislikes, sleeping patterns, toilet training plan, etc.

## **Activities and Napping**

The center provides a variety of development-appropriate activities to meet the needs of the children in care, including quiet and active play, as well as rest and relaxation. Infants and toddlers are given various opportunities to explore their environment daily in a safe and attentive atmosphere.

All infants and young toddlers can rest or nap following their own schedule.

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# Creating A Healthy Environment

## Healthy Eating

We know it can be tough to get children to eat healthy. That's why our staff sets a good example and creates a fun environment where children can learn about healthy eating.

- Teachers make food fun! They include cooking activities in the program and teach children how to make healthy choices.
- We offer healthy meals and snacks. Our meals are planned by experts and follow USDA guidelines to limit sugar, salt, and fat. We serve lots of fruits, veggies, and whole grains.
- We can accommodate special diets. If your child has allergies or needs special food, let us know, and we'll work with you.
- We offer meals and snacks at no extra cost. They are included as part of your tuition.
- All food must be safe and healthy. Please don't bring homemade food for sharing unless it's store-bought.
- Family-style meals help kids learn. We serve meals family-style so kids can try new things and learn about healthy eating habits.
- We want to work with you to help your child develop a positive relationship with food! If you have any questions about our nutrition program, please don't hesitate to ask.

<https://cclid.childcarevideos.org/child-care-center-operators/food-service-requirements-for-child-care-centers/>

## Physical Activity & Wellness

All children should be physically active every day. Just like adults, children get important health benefits from being physically active. Benefits of physical activity include reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, stronger bones and muscles, improved endurance and strength, good mental health and cognition, and increased self-esteem. Children should have an opportunity for active play 60 to 120 minutes per day that includes structured (teacher-guided) and unstructured (child-guided) playtime. Children in Catalyst Kids programs will have at least 30 minutes cumulative (half-day program) and 60 minutes cumulative (full-day program) of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. Our school age children participate in **30Fit**. **30Fit** provides all children and youth who attend Catalyst Kids' Before and After School Program with 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Teachers will plan a place and time for active play throughout a child's day and participate with the child as a role model. Active playtime includes a variety of activities for children to choose from and enjoy. Young children will naturally tend to be active, and if children learn to be active regularly and enjoy it, then research indicates that they will continue to be active adults as well.

According to research, children tend to pattern their play based on their environment. Children in Catalyst Kids programs have safe and appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces to encourage large muscle activities and enhance the development of a wide range of motor skills. A wide variety of play equipment increases the opportunities for children to explore and challenge themselves physically. Climbing, balancing, swinging, hanging, and sliding are just a few of the skills children can develop. When playing with portable equipment that requires skills like throwing, catching, and hitting, children also build and expand a variety of other motor skills requiring eye-hand coordination and eye-foot coordination.

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## Health

Catalyst Kids maintains a healthful environment for children and staff by meeting and/or exceeding required licensing and County Health Department standards and Cal OSHA standards. It is important that established procedures be followed in order to protect everyone from the spread of disease. In the event of an outbreak, additional procedures and guidance will be communicated. Staff and parent/guardian education are an important part of Catalyst Kids' goal of providing a healthy environment.

### Immunizations / Physical Exams / TB Tests

Children enrolled in our Infant/Toddler and Preschool Programs must be up to date with immunizations required by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) before their first day of attendance. For preschool programs participating in Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), the physical exam/health screening report (LIC 701) must be renewed and submitted annually. The QRIS preschool centers may also utilize the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ and ASQ-SE) as an additional screening tool if indicated at enrollment.

It is required to complete a Physical Exam and TB Risk Assessment no more than one year prior to enrollment. Both must be submitted within 30 days of enrolling in our Infant/Toddler and Preschool programs. If identified to be at risk for TB, the outcome of the TB skin test must be documented by the physician. A chest x-ray is required for all positive TB skin test results.

### Daily Health Check

Our center and family commitment is to encourage a healthy environment. All children in attendance must be healthy enough to participate in all of the program's activities.

To limit the spread of illness, upon arrival each day, every child's health status will be checked informally. This health check is casually conducted by staff and includes checking for any signs of illness such as a cough, fever, rashes, or signs of fatigue. Children may not be admitted if showing any signs of illness. It is recommended that parents/guardians dropping off children should remain at the center until the health check is completed. If the child arrives directly from school and is ill or becomes ill during the day, they will be isolated and parents/guardians or other authorized people will be called to pick up the child immediately.

### Illness

**If your child is ill and will not be attending the program, please follow these guidelines:**

- Notify the center if your child is ill and let us know the reason for each day your child is absent. If your child has a communicable disease (such as strep throat, fifth disease, lice, or impetigo), we must post exposure notices. Your child will not be identified.
- Some illnesses will require a written physician's release for your child to return to the program. These illnesses could include giardia or strep infections, or as deemed necessary by Catalyst Kids' Center Leader.
- Children who have been absent with a fever and other contagious illnesses will be excluded from the program—until the temperature remains normal the night before through the morning of, without using fever-reducing medications. The symptoms of the contagious illness are minor and improving.
- Children who have been diagnosed with streptococcal infections will be excluded from the program for 48 hours after the initial dose of a physician-prescribed medication.
- Catalyst Kids may require a physician's written release or physician's written instructions regarding a child's medication, care, or health condition at any time.
- If a child becomes ill at the center, parents/guardians will be notified immediately, and the child will rest supervised by a familiar adult in a comfortable, isolated, quiet area until the parent/guardian arrives to pick up the child within one hour.
- In situations that pose a greater risk to the school or community, the County Health Department will be notified, and Catalyst Kids will take direction from their health officials.

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## **Allergies**

Catalyst Kids is committed to accommodating children with moderate and life-threatening allergies. Catalyst Kids has an allergy policy in place to provide guidance and support for your child's requirements, so please alert staff regarding your child's accommodation needs. Additionally, Catalyst Kids' Center Leaders are available to help support this process and work together to ensure your child's safety.

## **Medication and Other Health Needs**

Whenever possible, it is preferred that a child receive medication at home. Please remind your medical provider that your child attends a licensed childcare center and ask for medication that can be scheduled to be given at home.

If this is not possible, please follow the procedures listed below for your child to receive medication at a Catalyst Kids center:

### **Prescription Medication (with the exception of Asthma Inhalers)**

- A **Medication Administration Release** form must be obtained from the center and completed by the parent/guardian and the Center Leader.
- All prescription medications must be current and have a clear, readable, original prescription label from a pharmacy showing the child's name, medication, dosage, frequency of administration, beginning and ending dates of administration, and expiration date. The prescription must be in English.
- Special procedures are in place for administering medications that are classified as controlled substances, such as medication commonly used to treat Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

### **Over the Counter Medication (and Asthma Inhalers)**

- All over-the-counter medications and asthma inhalers require the physician or pediatric practitioner to complete and sign the **Medication Administration Release** form. The parent's/guardian's signature is also required.
- Before a child with asthma attends the program, an asthma action plan signed by the physician is required. Inhalers must be on-site at all times the child is present.
- All over-the-counter medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name.
- The physician or medical provider may write a note instead of completing the **Medication Authorization Release** form as long as the parent/guardian signs the bottom of the release form and the medical provider's note contains all the following information:
  - Child's full name
  - Start and end dates, if applicable
  - Medication name
  - Physician's signature
  - Times to be given
  - Dosage to be given

### **EpiPens®**

An Anaphylaxis Action Plan signed by the physician is required before a child with a life-threatening allergy can attend the program. An EpiPen® (or Avi-Q) must be on site at all times child is present. It is recommended that two EpiPens® always be on site in the case of one EpiPen® malfunctioning. In order to ensure all staff is aware of a child's life-threatening allergy, an Allergy Posting form with the child's picture is posted in the kitchen area and classroom if the parent/guardian provides written consent to do so.

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## Seizure Disorder

A Seizure Action Plan completed by child's physician is required for children diagnosed with a seizure disorder before attending the program. When Diastat (or other emergency medication) is prescribed for prolonged seizures, the physician must complete page 2 of the Seizure Action Plan that designates who will train center staff in administering the medication.

## Type I & II Diabetes

The Center Leader will provide the parent/guardian with all the required forms that must be completed by the parent/guardian and the physician to accommodate your child with Type I or II Diabetes. After all required forms are submitted and center staff is trained in managing Type I and II Diabetes, your child can begin attending the program. For more details on our Type I or II Diabetes enrollment requirements, ask the Center Leader for a copy of our Incidental Medical Services plan.

## G-Tubes

G-Tube feeding and/or delivery of medication is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the staffing pattern at the center. For more details on our G-Tube enrollment requirements, ask the Center Leader for a copy of our Incidental Medical Services plan.

## Medication and School Age Children

Although California state law permits school age children to carry certain medications such as asthma inhalers and EpiPens® while attending public school, the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing (CCL) Division prohibits these same children from carrying any type of medication while receiving care from a licensed childcare facility. In order to comply with CCL, the following policy must be followed at each center:

- Whenever your child needs to carry a medication while attending public school, please meet with your Center Leader to discuss the daily transfer of medication from your child to the teacher. These medications will be stored in our locked medication boxes and released only to a parent/guardian. You will also need to complete the **Medication Administration Release** form according to the instruction above before medication can be administered.
- Medication will not be accepted or allowed to remain in the center **unless** your child needs the medication during center hours and the required authorization forms are completed beforehand.

## Injuries

Children have accidents even with the best supervision. If while attending Catalyst Kids a child has a minor injury during the day, an Injury & First Aid Report will be sent home. The report will provide information such as the time, what happened, and any treatment given. If the injury involves the head, the parent/guardian will be called regardless of the severity of the injury.

If a more serious injury occurs, Catalyst Kids will initiate our triage procedures that start with center staff. A staff who is certified in CPR/First Aid is always on duty at each center all day. Staff will make a determination as to the severity of the child's injuries and, as appropriate, will contact the parents/guardians, the emergency contact listed on the Emergency Card and Release Form, 911, Catalyst Kids management and/or Catalyst Kids Center Leaders. Staff must first attend to the child's medical needs. Staff cannot transport children for medical treatment. If no authorized person is available and medical treatment is needed, an ambulance will be called. Children must have two Emergency Cards and Release Forms on file at all times. The Emergency Cards and Release Forms contain consent for medical and/or dental treatment in your absence.

**Please note: It is important that all information on the Emergency Cards and Release Forms is accurate and current.**

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## **Lead Poisoning**

Lead poisoning is a serious health concern, especially for children. Protecting children from exposure is important. At Catalyst, faucets in our facilities used for preparing food and drinking have been tested. Information on Lead Poisoning can be found by using this link.

[Lead Poisoning Information](#)

## **Safety**

Safety is foremost at Catalyst Kids centers. Our staff receives safety training and follows all Local, State and Federal regulations. While in our care, children are to remain within sight of staff at all times. The following are some important steps parents/guardians can take to ensure safety at the Center:

- All methods of smoking are prohibited anywhere in or near a center.
- While dropping off or picking up your child:
  - Do not leave a child in your vehicle without an adult in the car.
  - Do not leave the engine running in any vehicle when the driver is not in the vehicle.
  - Do not leave animals in your vehicle on hot days.
  - Follow California Child Passenger Safety laws by properly securing your child in an appropriate child passenger restraint system.
- If your child attends a school age program and does not arrive at the center after school and we have not been notified of the child's planned absence, we will initiate our missing child procedures. These procedures may include calling the police.
- Children may not bring anything to Catalyst Kids that may be considered a weapon or pose a threat to others at the center.
- Emergency Cards and Release Forms must be updated at least annually, and each time a change has occurred that has affected the information on the emergency card.

## **Disaster/Emergency Plan**

A disaster or emergency could include an earthquake, severe weather, lockdown, loss of utility services at a center, etc. that may prevent you from picking up children. Catalyst Kids center staff have been trained in disaster/emergency preparedness. Written procedures are posted at each center.

**Please note: In the event of an emergency or disaster, the following procedures will be implemented:**

Please do not telephone the center.

The telephone will be used for outgoing emergency calls only.

- Children will remain with the center staff members on the premises or at the designated emergency evacuation site unless an injury requires release to an emergency medical facility. Signs will be clearly posted at centers giving the destination of evacuated children.
- Appropriate news media will be informed of the evacuation so information can be broadcast and printed.
- There will be a specific area for reuniting and signing out children at the evacuation site. Only adults previously authorized on the Emergency Cards and Release Form will be able to sign out children.

**Please note: In rare instances, you may be called to pick up your child early, due to circumstances beyond our control at the center (for example, lack of utilities).**

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# Parents/Guardians as Partners

## Parent/Guardian/Center Communications

Open communication is vital to your child's successful experience at Catalyst Kids. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and concerns. We encourage you to take advantage of the many communication channels we've established for you.

We have an open-door policy. Parents/guardians are welcome visitors at any time.

We welcome reciprocal, two-way communication to maintain our quality services. Catalyst Kids teachers have a vital interest in your child's health and well-being, so please share with us any changes in your family's health, housing, employment, or other conditions – these may have an impact on your child and keeping us informed allows us to be fully supportive and work in partnership with you.

Our staff are open to your comments and suggestions. We are here for you and your child, so please do not hesitate to communicate with us frequently. Also, please be mindful that your children, and the other children in our program, are our teachers' and caregivers' primary focus. To support more in-depth conversations, we encourage you to schedule an appointment in advance to ensure we give you the time needed to discuss the needs and concerns of your child. Please check with the Center Leader to determine the best times to meet with you. We seek to maintain the highest level of professionalism and confidentiality.

### Parent/Guardian Information Area

This area is used for information such as menus, program schedules, and general announcements. We encourage you to check daily for important notices.

### Parent/Guardian Engagement

Parent/guardian engagement at our centers is essential to our ability to provide the highest quality program for children. Catalyst Kids has an open-door policy and we encourage parents/guardians to participate in the daily activities whenever possible. Parent/guardian meetings, workshops, and/or special family involvement activities are scheduled periodically during the year. Open House and other events may be held in conjunction with the school, particularly for centers located on school campuses. Please feel free to speak with staff about ways to participate in your child's program.

### Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee

Many of our centers have a Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee (PAC), and we invite you to inquire about being a part of it! The purpose of the PAC is to support the center's program development and parent/guardian involvement. Volunteers on the PAC make recommendations, provide feedback, and participate in the process of innovations and problem solving that help the center better meet family needs.

### **Other ways to volunteer:**

There are many ways to help support Catalyst Kids! Whether it be a few hours or more, in person or from home, we can find the role for you. There are opportunities to help with events, handling administrative tasks, volunteering at your center, or lending your professional expertise via speaking and networking opportunities and beyond. In person volunteer opportunities may be limited during pandemics. Please inquire by contacting [giving@catalystfamily.org](mailto:giving@catalystfamily.org).

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## **Family Announcement Approvals**

Any communication, including flyers, letters, and announcements that parents/guardians wish to distribute to the center's families or staff, must be approved by the Catalyst Kids/Catalyst Family Inc prior to distribution at the center.

## **Assessments and Parent/Guardian Conferences**

### **Individual Assessments**

We have adopted two authentic assessment tools to track the growth and development of children enrolled in our programs:

- 1) A majority of our infant/toddler, preschool and school programs utilize the **Desired Results system**, sponsored by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services document the progress made by children and families enrolled in our programs. The system is designed to provide information to help improve the programs and services we offer.

Catalyst uses the Environmental Rating Scale, DRDP Parent Survey, and Desired Results Summary of Findings Annual Program Assessment and CLASS. Catalyst centers complete the Parent Survey and Summary of Findings annually and the Environmental Rating Scale semi-annually.

Desired Results encompasses authentic assessment through observation of children, parent/guardian input, & evaluation of Catalyst Kids environments in the following categories:

- Children are Personally and Socially Competent
- Children are Effective Learners
- Children show Physical and Motor Competence
- Children are Safe and Healthy
- Families support their Children's Learning and Development
- Families achieve their Goals

- 2) In addition to Desired Results, in some locations, we have adopted the **DESSA Mini** (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-Mini) to support the social-emotional development of our school-age children and middle school students.

### **Parent/Guardian/Family Conferences**

We are interested in regular and ongoing communication with you about your child's development. The program schedules family conferences twice each year, but conferences may be scheduled as often as needed to discuss your child's progress. Conferences provide an opportunity for you, center staff, and/or the Center Leader to share observations and discuss your child's growth, participation, and interests. Children have an opportunity to share their learning and development with you through their portfolios, which include observations, work samples, and photos.

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## **Child Guidance Policy**

We believe children are capable and competent individuals who possess the ability to achieve success within our programs. Our programs and policies are designed to promote the development of self-regulation, self-direction, and socially acceptable behavior. Additionally, the health, safety, and overall well-being of all of the children within our programs are paramount. The California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division requires us to protect the safety and rights of all children at the center.

Our teaching staff plays a key role in attaining these goals. Our staff use these strategies when working with your children:

- Build positive relationships
- Talk with children and families in a respectful manner
- Continually encourage and empower.
- Be sensitive to children's feelings, needs, culture, ability, and situation.
- Establish consistency and follow through
- Model and acknowledge positive, pro-social behaviors
- Use positive reinforcement
- Develop center expectations and living agreements in partnership with children
- Interact individually with children and support problem solving when appropriate.
- Engage children in the problem-solving process (as appropriate).
- Communicate daily with parents/guardian
- Use natural and logical consequences (when appropriate)
- Partner with elementary school (for school age children)
- Develop positive behavior support plans with parents/guardians and child as needed

It is our goal to help each child make appropriate behavioral choices. In order to support this important developmental process, we help children learn to identify, regulate, and express their feelings and needs, listen to others, and resolve conflicts. Our group care environments, provide numerous experiences and opportunities for children to develop these critical life skills.

We believe that a child's behaviors are communication and seek to understand what children are trying to tell us. We encourage children to express their feelings and needs in a healthy and safe manner.

### **Catalyst Kids Positive Behavior Support Plan**

Because we view challenging behavior as communication and see it as an opportunity to teach and learn, this Positive Behavior Support Plan outlines important steps we take to support the child, family, and program. If typical supportive practices do not resolve behaviors, the center team may decide to initiate the following:

#### **Gather and analyze the contributing factors.**

Challenging behaviors can be triggered by a variety of stress factors. These include developmental, environmental, social, and physical sources. Researching and recording this information helps to understand the child in the context of home and center. Behavior Observation Reports will be collected. Due to the confidential nature of this material, these forms are for center use only. The information is analyzed to determine whether modifications to the center environment, daily routine, curriculum, or interactions will remedy the situation, or if the center leader, teachers, and family should also meet to share and evaluate their findings.

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During this time center staff collect documentation that includes the following:

- Time of day, and segment of the daily routine
- Group size, and adult/child ratio
- Where conflicts typically occur
- Who else was involved
- What was available for the child to do

Communicate regularly with the family to discuss the following:

- Changes in school or center environment, friendships, mental and physical health, family structure, and home life
- The child's history, gifts, strengths, talents, and abilities
- The child's needs and the family's goals for the child
  
- Look for patterns such as repeated behaviors, consistent times of day, situations that trigger conflict behaviors, etc.
- Brainstorm possible home/school/center preventive strategies
- Brainstorm family strengths that could contribute to the child's success

### **Create a Positive Behavior Support Plan**

If the challenging behavior continues after documenting and strategizing with the family, a Positive Behavior Support Plan is created. This is developed at a meeting with the staff and family and reflects mutually agreed upon strategies for all participants. The action plan will be documented on the Positive Behavior Support Plan form.

### **Explore Community Resources**

To further support the child and family, the plan will include exploring community resources both formal and informal. Some examples are:

- Family physician
- Public school support services
- Mental health professionals
- Clubs and organizations
- Catalyst Kids support services
- Local resource and referral agencies
- Support from relatives/neighbors
- Support from family's religious affiliate
- Support from community groups (e.g., Girl/Boy Scouts, Camp Fire, 4-H)

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## **Serious and Persistent Behaviors**

Serious, persistent behavior is defined as persistent, consistent behavior that interferes with the health and/or safety of themselves, other children, or staff. The following are examples of serious, persistent behaviors:

- Excessive disruption of the program
- Endangering the health or safety of children, themselves, staff, or other adults
- Continual refusal to follow acceptable rules of behavior
- Use of inappropriate language
- Consistent inappropriate use of technology, including personal devices
- Leaving the center premises without permission
- Theft or damage of center property
- Possession of any objects that may be harmful to themselves or others
- Not adhering to school campus guidelines

**If a child continues to engage in any of the above listed behaviors the following steps will be taken and may include the elementary school (for school age children):**

- Alternative behaviors are discussed with the child.
- Parent/guardian-Center Leader conference will be held. The Regional Director will be notified for support and potential program accommodations will be discussed/A Positive Behavior Plan may be developed in partnership with the parents/guardians to support the improvement of child's behavior.(For school age children, the elementary school may be included in plan development, based on behavior.)
- The parent's/guardian's or the child's failure to comply with the above listed policies may result in disenrollment from the program.

**If a child engages in serious and persistent behaviors that significantly interfere with the learning of others, are not responsive to guidance, and are physically aggressive, destroy property, or cause self-injury and cannot be reduced or eliminated through the implementation of the Positive Behavior Support Plan without limiting the child's full participation in the program, a suspension may be deemed necessary.**

- Program will provide documentation based on the Positive Behavior Support Plan
- A written notice of action will be given to the parent/guardian
- Provide referrals to appropriate community resources
- Develop a written plan to support the child's return to the program
- Seek additional consultation
- Provide the parent/guardian with the appeal process within 14 days of the suspension
- Since the suspension involves severe and persistent behaviors that impact the safety of children, the child may not attend the program during the appeal process.

**If a child continues to engage in serious and persistent behaviors that significantly interfere with the learning of others, are not responsive to guidance, and are physically aggressive, destroy property, or cause self-injury and cannot be reduced or eliminated through the implementation of the Positive Behavior Support Plan without limiting the child's full participation in the program, an expulsion may be deemed necessary.**

- The program will provide documentation based on the Positive Behavior Support Plan, including details related to the persistent and severe behaviors.
- Seek additional consultation
- Consider additional developmental screening
- A written notice of action will be given to the parent/guardian

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- The program will provide additional resources and support to transition the child to a more appropriate placement. The program will complete this process within 180 days
- The program will provide the parent/guardian with the appeal process within 14 days of the expulsion.
- Since the expulsion involves persistent and serious behaviors that impact the safety of children, the child may not attend the program during the appeal process.

**Please note:** If a school-age child is **suspended or excluded from the elementary school**, they will also be immediately suspended or excluded from the Catalyst Kids program for the same period. Parents/guardians will be required to pick their child up from the elementary school.

- If at any time during the course of the plan, a child endangers the safety of themselves or others, the Center Leader will suspend the child with the approval of the Regional Director. A meeting with the staff and family must be held to agree on a specific course of action to prevent the problem from reoccurring before the child can return to the program.
- When all reasonable resources have been exhausted, disenrollment from the program may result (after the Approval Process for disenrollment is completed).

## **General Information**

### **Child Information**

- Child's Personal Space (cubbies, files, etc.)  
Please check your child's personal space (i.e., cubbies, lockers and/or files) in the classroom daily for any treasures that are ready to go home. This is an important part of connecting our families to their child's development and center experience. We also ask that your child's space be cleaned out weekly and everything taken home.
- Dress for Comfort & Activities  
Children may be involved in activities that require ease of movement. Please have your child wear comfortable clothes and shoes. **A back strap is required** if sandals are worn. Other activities may be messy such as painting, gardening, or cooking. You may want to keep a change of clothes for your child at the center. All items, including jackets, should be clearly labeled with your child's name. If appropriate: for NAPTIME, your child CAN bring a special blanket or naptime cuddle toy.
- Personal Belongings  
Catalyst Kids is not responsible for any toy, book, record, jewelry, money, electronics, or other personal belongings brought to the center; this includes clothing items. Please have your child leave valuables at home.

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## **Center Traditions & Events**

We believe that traditions stem from deeply personal individual, family, and cultural beliefs. Therefore, we respect families' knowledge regarding their experiences, cultures, celebrations, and traditions. By acknowledging traditions, we develop a sense of community and connection between us, creating a shared bond around the experience. Activities planned with the children will be developmentally appropriate, based on their interests, and will reflect their home cultures, center, and neighborhood communities.

We believe that any center-wide events should be inclusive, strengthening our school community and bringing us together to promote belonging and friendship. Therefore, all staff, children, and families should have the opportunity to be included in all activities in the center and the purpose shall be to create and support connections.

## **Non-Discrimination and Non-Religious Education**

We believe that it is not only our similarities but also our differences that help us build a **community of respect** within each child development center. At Catalyst, we strive to be inclusive, respecting each other's worth and uniqueness. We strive to understand each other within the context of family, culture, and individuality. Our programs are based on interconnected relationships between and among families, children, staff, and the community.

Our programs do not discriminate based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group, identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served. Catalyst Kids:

- Welcomes the enrollment of children with disabilities.
- Understands the requirement of the American with Disabilities Act to make reasonable accommodations for such children.
- Implements these accommodations.
- Refrains from religious curriculum or worship of any kind.

## **Parent/Guardian Concerns or Complaints – Center Protocol**

The parent's/guardian's concerns or complaints should be addressed immediately to the appropriate staff member in order to achieve a prompt resolution. Parents/guardians should first bring concerns to the attention of your child's classroom teacher. If the matter continues to be unresolved, then it should be brought to the attention of the Center Leader. If the issue remains unresolved or requires urgent attention, the Center Manager can be contacted. In the event that the Center Manager is unavailable, or the issue remains unresolved, the Regional Director at the nearest Catalyst Kids regional office is the next appropriate contact person. It is recommended that parents/guardians put concerns and complaints in writing as early as possible.

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# Administration Policies

## **Admission & Orientation**

Admission into our programs for infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children is open to children 6 weeks old through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. California Department of Social Services and Community Care Licensing Division designates the specific age range for the program in which your child will be enrolled, and it is posted in the center. This licensing agency requires that parents/guardians complete a comprehensive Enrollment Packet to provide Catalyst Kids important information necessary to assure your child's safety and appropriate care and education.

Prior to your child's first day of attendance, we ask that you meet with the Center Leader to review these forms, discuss policies and procedures of the center, and address any questions you may have about the program. This parent/guardian conference is required under California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division regulations. We request that you schedule an appointment in advance with the Center Leader.

### **Orientation**

It is important to us that you and your child feel comfortable in our program. With this in mind, we will plan a thoughtful and individualized transition process for your family to become a part of our "center family." Details of this process will be developed in your initial conference with the Center Leader. Especially for younger children, we ask that you make yourself as available as possible to spend time in our program and help your child adjust to the new setting. Your support is so important to your child, and so appreciated by our program.

### **Inclusion of Children with Disabilities**

We believe that all children benefit from the inclusion of children with disabilities. Therefore, we make reasonable accommodations necessary to support the full participation of children with disabilities in our program. Children with disabilities are enrolled in the center based upon collaborative planning and agreement between the family and the Center Leader. If an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) has been developed, a copy is required before the child's first day in the program in order for our programs to provide inclusive care for your child.

Collaboration with the family and other professionals supporting the child is important to ensure the child's full participation and inclusion in our programs. Our staff will need your consent to have direct communication with the child's IEP/IFSP team. Our staff will engage in conversation with you regarding your child's IEP or IFSP to better implement accommodations and strategies within our program.

Each child's unique needs will be considered on a child-by-child basis. To support inclusion, specific adaptations and accommodations will be examined, and reasonable alternatives explored. Modifications to policies and procedures can be made if they do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program and services the center provides or adversely affect the center's operation. We comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and their family shall be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of the Catalyst Kids program.

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# Enrollment

## Enrollment Process

There are standard forms to be completed for enrollment in our program. Many of these forms are required by the California Department of Social Services, the California Department of Education, or the federal government. We appreciate your patience with this process. More importantly, though, is that your family and child be comfortably introduced to their teacher and that you feel warmly welcomed into our center community. This process can be different for each family, depending on the child's age and needs. For preschool children and younger, sometimes this process can take a week. We encourage you to bring your child to visit while you remain at the center. You may be interested in visiting a second time while your child participates in the program and you watch from a distance. You may want to bring your child for an hour the first day you leave them in the program and gradually extend the amount of time your child stays. You and the teacher can discuss this plan so your child can have a smooth transition into our program. Older children will adjust more quickly.

We also want you to spend enough time in the program to feel comfortable. We want you to know that you are always welcome. Please feel free to talk to the teacher or other staff, to offer your advice or suggestions, and to share information about your child.

## Holidays/Days of Non-Operation (Childcare is not available on these days)

- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Holiday (Thursday and Friday)
- Winter Holiday (2 days)
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day

One additional day may be scheduled for In-Service for staff. You will receive, at minimum, thirty days written notice if/when this day is scheduled.

## Identification and Emergency Information

As the enrolling parent/guardian, you will be required to fill out completely the Emergency Cards and Release Forms included in the Enrollment Packet. Emergency and Release Forms: identify contact information for the parent/guardian in the event of an emergency; provide alternate emergency contacts, and physician, dentist and medical information; and provide consent for emergency medical treatment. This information is **critical** for center staff in the event of an emergency.

Authorized Family Representative(s) must show photo identification or, in the event no such photo identification is available, must be personally introduced to the Center Leader by the parent/guardian before a child may be released to that authorized representative.

Keeping the above-mentioned forms current and accurate is important to the center's records. Standard examples include information like address, home/work telephone numbers, work location, emergency contact information, and names of persons authorized to pick up your child. You must notify center personnel of any changes to the Emergency Cards and Release Forms in writing.

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**Please note: The California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division regulations requires that you complete new forms if you transfer to another Catalyst Kids location.**

## **Custody**

As the enrolling parent/guardian, you must complete, sign, and update all enrollment forms accurately. By signing the enrollment forms, the enrolling parent/guardian certifies that they have legal authority for the child. California law is very clear that parents/guardians (married or not) who have joint legal custody have equal access to all information regarding the child. Only orders by a court of law can change access to a child's information.

Catalyst Kids procedures do not allow center staff to make copies of forms or any other documents or to provide testimony, verbally or in writing, about any child, unless subpoenaed by a recent validated court order. Designated administrative personnel in our agency headquarters may review subpoenas. Catalyst Kids understands the burden this process places on parents/guardians, but it is not in the best interest of any child for Catalyst Kids employees to act with partiality to one parent/guardian or the other. Our goal at Catalyst Kids is to remain neutral in these situations.

## **Attendance**

### **Sign In and Out**

The California Department of Social Services and California Department of Education require that when signing the child in and out, the person signing shall use their **Full Legal Signature** and shall record the time of day. Signatures are captured electronically and, as a backup, will be captured with pen and paper if the electronic system is not working.

Catalyst Kids defines **Full Legal Signature** as the signature used upon registration and/or certification by each child's parent/guardian when completing the Emergency Cards and Release Forms contained in the Catalyst Kids Child Enrollment Packet. When living in separate households, each parent/guardian must submit their own signed Emergency Cards and Release Forms as part of the registration process.

Additional family representative(s) who are authorized to sign the child in and out must show photo identification at time of pick up. Children will be released only to the parent or other adult authorized by the parent to drop off/pick up a child.

If a school age child is to be involved in any on-site activities (e.g., soccer, music, dance, Scouts) that are not a function of our center, you will be required to complete Catalyst Kids' Activity Authorization Forms. An authorized family representative must sign the child in and/or out and identification will be required. Please arrange this with the Center Leader.

### **Transportation Policy**

Our programs do not transport infants, toddlers, or preschool children in any vehicles or provide daily transportation for students. Public transit, school bus, or commercial vendors provide transportation for field trips. Private vehicles are never used. Catalyst Kids is not liable for personal items that are left on the bus.

### **Volunteer Policy**

Catalyst Kids believes that including volunteers from our communities adds value to our programs. Most often, these volunteers are students from local colleges or former students that have grown out of our programs. These volunteers come to us to get work experience, training,

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and leadership opportunities and they are always supervised by Catalyst Kids staff. Volunteers over the age of 18 with exception to parents/guardians will be required to have a criminal record clearance. Parents/guardians who volunteer over 20 hours a month are required to have a criminal record clearance. All volunteers are required to sign a statement of good health, must receive a TB clearance, and must show documentation of the following immunizations received: Tdap, Measles, Flu (or a signed Flu Vaccination Declination form). In person volunteer opportunities may be limited during pandemics.

## **Code of Conduct: Our Guiding Principles**

In our Catalyst Kids center community, made up of staff, parents/guardians, extended family, children, and those who may work or reside near the center, we make it a priority to work together to solve problems. We respect that people have different viewpoints and often see challenges through their own story or personal perspective. Sometimes resolving problems becomes more difficult when someone's child is involved, or a belief is challenged.

As adults, we are the models for our children and help them to learn how conflicts can be resolved reasonably and respectfully. Sometimes children get frightened when adults raise their voices or seem to become unreasonable or even unpredictable. We consider our Catalyst Kids centers to be a safe haven for children where they are respected and treated kindly and where all adults model the same behavior.

Therefore, the following sections related to adult behavior in our programs are written to ensure the safety of everyone, especially the children. Our ultimate goal is to resolve problems to meet the needs of those involved so that children have a positive experience in our program. In all cases, even if a resolution is not possible, we expect adults, parents/guardians, and our staff to be responsive, respectful, and reasonable.

### **Guiding Principles**

- We commit to having the best qualified employees who will provide the best care and program for your children.
- We provide a positive, safe, and harassment-free environment.
- We reflect respect towards peers, our children, parents/guardians, families, culture, communities, and ourselves.
- We expect our employees to maintain the highest degree of integrity, honesty, and professionalism.
- We live within the spirit of all applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards applying to employment and the operation of a childcare center.
- We value diversity and respect differences.
- We believe in open, direct, honest, and respectful communication with our children, families, school personnel, and peers.

Based on these principles, the following behaviors by children, staff, parents/guardians, families, or community members will not be tolerated at the centers:

- Abuse of any kind, physical or verbal (including yelling), or usage of improper language
- Harassment of any kind
- Possession of any type of firearm, ammunition, or weapon for any reason, unless required to carry these weapons as part of their employment as a law enforcement officer
- Possession and/or usage of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Smoking on the center's premises or at any center-related activity

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- Illegal activities including theft and/or damage of property
- Appropriate clothing is worn by families to provide an environment free from distractions

If these principles and conduct are not followed, suspension and/or disenrollment from the program may result.

## **Parent/Guardian Exclusions from Participation at Catalyst Kids Center**

The health and safety of children attending Catalyst Kids centers is the most important goal of each program. It is also our goal to have parents/guardians and parent representatives included as much as possible in their children's lives while at the center. Parent/guardian participation is an integral part of our program and presents many rewards for children, families, and the program.

There are, however, some situations where parents/guardians and/or their representatives cannot participate in regular and special activities (including drop off and pick up of children) because of our responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Some circumstances may require that a parent/guardian or their representative not be allowed any contact with the Catalyst Kids center. If a parent/guardian or their representative needs to be excluded from a center, the parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. We reserve the right to prohibit individuals from being at or near the center if the health and safety of the children and staff is threatened or compromised. Please ask for a more detailed copy of our Parent/Guardian Exclusion Policy if you are interested.

Court orders may be required to prove custody, guardianship, visitation, or other requests made by parents/guardians.

## **Personal Rights**

**We believe in the rights of children and parents/guardians/families; therefore, the following two sections are taken directly from the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division Regulations:**

### **Child's Rights**

In each Catalyst Kids center, each child shall have personal rights, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To be accorded dignity in their personal relationships with staff and other persons.
2. To be accorded safe, healthful, and comfortable accommodations, furnishings, and equipment to meet their 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 the daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication, or aid to physical functioning.
4. To be informed and to have their 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 be free to attend religious services or activities of their choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of their choice. Attendance at religious services, either in or outside the facility, shall be on a voluntary basis. In Child Care Centers, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child shall make decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual advisors.

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6. Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.
7. Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.

### **Parent's/Guardian's Rights**

As a Parent/Authorized Representative, you have the right to:

1. Enter and inspect the childcare center without advance notice whenever children are in care.
2. File a complaint against the licensee with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office.
3. Review, at the childcare center, reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the childcare center without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child.
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the childcare center, provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order.
6. Receive from the licensee the name, address, and telephone number of the local licensing office.
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to the childcare center for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may be obtained by contacting the local licensing office.
8. Receive, from the licensee, the Caregiver Background Check Process form.

**Please note: California State law provides that the licensee may deny access to the childcare center to a parent/authorized representative if their behavior poses a risk to children in care.**

# **Families with Private Fee Section – For Your Information Only –**

## **Fees and Other Information**

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

Each center operates within the hours authorized by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division and reflects the greatest need in a specific community. Your Registration Agreement will document the hours your child is scheduled to attend the center. We understand our families' schedules may change. If your schedule does change, please contact the Center Leader as soon as possible to discuss how we can meet your needs. We must adhere to specific adult/child ratios and appreciate advance notice from you about schedule changes to ensure our classroom ratios are always in compliance with the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division requirements.

Any changes needed in your child's schedule requires submission of a Change Notice Form to the Center Leader by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month in writing. Schedule changes require the approval from the Center Leader and Enrollment Specialist to be effective. Changes in schedules require a signed Parent Registration Agreement. Changes to schedules will be effective at the beginning of the following month. Full Monthly Fees payment is required until the effective date of the approved change. Any over-payment of fees will be applied towards Monthly Fees for the new schedule.

### **Waiting List Priority**

Reasonable efforts will be made to enroll your child as soon as possible, or when care is requested, to meet your family's needs. In general, enrollment occurs on a first come, first served basis. When all program vacancies are filled, a waiting list will be created. However, enrollment is also subject to the Center Leader's discretion to achieve balanced classrooms comprised of children of the appropriate ages and developmental levels. Placement on the waiting list does not guarantee an immediate or specific date of enrollment.

Catalyst Kids families are given priority on the waiting list. The next priority is given to siblings of enrolled children, to avoid fragmenting family childcare plans. In general, priority is given to children with the greatest needs, which is defined as children who are enrolled for the greatest number of hours.

### **Annual Registration**

An initial Registration Fee is charged at the time of your family's enrollment in a program. An annual Registration Fee will then be charged each year to re-enroll your family and to guarantee your family a continuing place in the program for that school year. All registration fees are **nonrefundable**. There is no guarantee of re-enrollment if your child leaves the program during the school year. A re-enrollment fee is also charged if your child re-enters the program after 30 days. Registration Fees are listed on the Center's Fee Schedule and provided to you at the time of registration.

### **Fees**

Fees are generally updated annually, and a current Fee schedule will be provided during registration. Rates are subject to change at any time and Catalyst Kids shall provide a 30-day written notice to advise of any changes.

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Your child's Fees and payment schedule will be calculated based on the program selected and specific childcare requirement. Any changes needed in your child's schedule or program plan requires a written request to the Center Leader by the 15th of the month and an approval from the Center Leader and Enrollment Specialist to be effective. Each schedule change will require a \$35 change fee. Changes in schedules or program plans will require a new signed Parent Registration Agreement. Changes in schedules and payments will take effect the beginning of the following month.

**FEES ARE DUE AND PAYABLE IN ADVANCE. Fees are due on or before the first day of each month and are considered late if not paid by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month.** Make checks and/or money orders payable to Catalyst Kids. An online payment option is available for ACH or credit card payments. Please ask the Center Leader about this option.

## **Late Fee Payment**

If non-payment results in disenrollment of services, reinstatement to any Catalyst Kids program for one year from the date of disenrollment is prohibited. Any unpaid balance will require payment in full prior to re-admission to any Catalyst Kids program.

## **Optional Fees**

We offer additional services when schools are closed and centers are open, such as camp programs. The full day of care may be covered in our All-Inclusive options, while the School Days Only plans options may require additional fees for specific service dates. Inquire with your Center Leader about specific options available to meet your needs. Once you have submitted your Camp Registration, you will be financially responsible for the fee, regardless of your child's attendance, to pay for scheduled staff and purchased camp materials.

## **Refund Policy**

The only exception is when there is a closure to the enrolling center before the start of the school year and child(ren) are unable to attend any centers for the entire school year. Catalyst Kids has a no refund or credit policy. There are no refunds/credits due to temporary closures. If a child or parent has been exposed or contracted a highly contagious illness, there will not be a refund or credit. No exceptions.

## **Field Trips, Special Events, Activity Fees**

Field trips and special events/activities are an integral part of our program, and your child is encouraged to participate in them. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend any field trip or special event. If the school age program site adjourns to a park, staff and children will make use of the facility with prior notification. You will be notified in advance of each field trip, advised if there is any special fee needed, and asked to sign a permission slip before the day of the trip. In a few cases, you may be asked to provide lunch during the summer or other vacation periods.

## **Absences**

Please notify the Center Leader by phone or in writing as early as possible regarding your child's absence. Monthly Fees guarantee your child's place at the center; therefore, no monthly fee credits or makeup days will be given for any reason. Monthly Fees remains the same whether or not the child attends.

## **Returned Check Fee**

Please note that checks returned from the bank will be subject to a \$25.00 service charge. If a check is returned, you will be notified by phone and/or mail and will be expected to pay by

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cashier's check or money order within 24 hours. Non-payment of fees may result in disenrollment of services.

If two checks are returned from the bank, cashier's checks or money orders will be required for a period of one year following the last returned check. If a check is returned due to a bank error, a letter of explanation from the bank will be accepted and the service charge will be waived.

### **Late Pick-Up Fee**

Catalyst Kids assesses a \$25.00 Late Pick-Up Fee per child for any part of a fifteen-minute increment you are late to pick up your child(ren) after the program's designated time ends. For example: If your child's program ends at 6:00 p.m. and your child is not picked up until 6:01 pm, a \$25.00 Late Pick-Up fee will be assessed. Late Pick-Up fees will be charged to your account and must be paid in full by the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) day of the next month. Please note: The late pick-up fee is per child.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

Parents/guardians must provide **written** notice of their intention to withdraw their child(ren) by the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) of the month to avoid being charged for the next month's fees. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying the fees for the remainder of the current month after giving notice of withdrawal, regardless of their child(ren)s attendance during that period or regardless if moving to another Catalyst division. No refunds will be provided for fees paid for the notice period or for any portion of the next month's fees if the thirty (30) day notice requirement is not met. A refund will be given for any overpayment of fees. Please allow two to three weeks for the refund to be processed. If you wish to re-enroll your child back into the program, there is no guarantee that a spot may be available, and a non-refundable Registration Fee will be charged.

### **Suspension**

Catalyst Kids works closely with our school partners, and suspension/exclusion of a school-age child from the school will result in suspension/exclusion from Catalyst Kids for the same period. Your child must be picked up within one hour of notification of suspension. The full monthly fee payment remains due to Catalyst Kids for the duration of the suspension; no credits will be issued for this absence.

### **Disenrollment of Services**

In the event that a child/parent/guardian/family is disenrolled from a Catalyst Kids program for failure to follow Catalyst Kids policies and procedures and/or state guidelines, services may be unavailable for a minimum of one year from the date of disenrollment. If there is an overpayment of fees, a refund will be due. Families cannot be re-enrolled into any Catalyst Kids program until any outstanding fees are paid in full.

## **Families with State Funded Child Care Section – For Your Information Only –**

**If you are enrolling your child into a Subsidized Program, please read this section thoroughly so that you understand your specific responsibilities and obligations.** The Desired Results Development Profile online data is shared with California Department of Education (CDE) and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) per contract requirements.

**The following section contains information that is important if you receive childcare subsidy from California Department of Education and California Department Social Services. These rules are set by the California State Legislature and must be followed in order to remain in the subsidy program. Please ask your Center Leader or the agency representative for further explanation of the subsidized program.**

### **Waiting List**

Catalyst Family maintains a current waiting list in accordance with admission priorities. Families are contacted in order of priority from the waiting list as vacancies occur.

### **Eligibility**

For a family to receive childcare services, they must be deemed eligible in one (1) of the categories of eligibility listed below:

- Child Protective Services (CPS)/At Risk
- Income Eligibility - Employed
- Income Eligibility – Self-Employed
- Income Eligibility – Self-Certification
- Current Aid Recipient
- Homeless
- Family resides in an approved Neighborhood School Boundary
- Exceptional Needs (CSPP only applies to three- and four-year-olds)

To be eligible for childcare and development services, you, as the enrolling parent/guardian, must live in the State of California while services are being received. Prior to admission into the subsidized program, you must complete a Catalyst Kids Eligibility Application. The Eligibility Application is based on income and family size. Documentation to verify eligibility and need (if applicable) will be collected and reviewed prior to enrollment.

### **Income Eligibility**

Your family's total countable gross income must meet the income guidelines as established by the California Department of Education and California Department Social Services.

### **Need Eligibility (This requirement is not applicable for Part Day Preschool Programs.)**

To be eligible for a childcare subsidy, you must have at least one need status, in addition to being income eligible. The California Department of Education and California Department Social Services has identified the following categories of need:

- **Child Protective Services/At Risk:** Must have a written referral from the Department of Health & Human Services, Child Protective Services (CPS) unit or another person qualified to make the referral. Contact your agency representative for details.
- **Employment/Self Employment:** The applicant's employment must preclude the supervision of the child.

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- **Seeking Employment:** Limited to not less than 24 months. The 24 months begin on the first day of certification for job seeking. Care is limited to less than 30 hours per week.
- **Seeking Permanent Housing:** Limited to not less than 24 months. The 24 months begin on the first day of certification for seeking permanent housing. Care is limited to less than 30 hours per week.
- **Homeless:** Identified as not having permanent or adequate living arrangements.
- **Vocational Training:** limited to six (6) years from the initiation of services for vocational training or twenty for (24) semester units (or its equivalent) after the attainment of a Bachelor's Degree whichever expires first.
- **Education Programs:** English Language Learner (ELL)/English as a Second Language (ESL)/General Education Diploma (GED)/High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate. Services for education programs are limited to a total of six (6) years from the initiation of services for the education program
- **Parent/Guardian Incapacitation:** A Statement of Parental Incapacity must be provided by a legally qualified health professional, including the specific days and hours of care needed.
- **Exceptional Needs (CSPP only)** is defined as a child with IFSP (early intervention services) or IEP (special education services). IFSP or IEP will be required to meet the Exceptional Needs option.

## Continued Eligibility

Once your child has been enrolled in the subsidized program, eligibility for childcare services is not less than 24 months.

- **Income:** You must report if your income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI). For CSPP, you must report if your income exceeds 100% of the State Median Income (SMI)

If there has been a change in your status and additional childcare hours are needed, contact an agency representative to discuss available options.

## Recertification of Eligibility and Need

After initial certification and enrollment, the California Department of Education, and California Department of Social Services require your declared need and eligibility to be recertified. At the time of recertification, you will be required to update your file with current income documentation and other supporting documentation as requested.

Any changes in the contracted hours of care must be supported by the necessary documentation requested before the changes in service becoming effective. Recertification and changes will not be approved without the appropriate documentation on file. Failure to comply with the recertification requirements will result in disenrollment.

## Migrant Program Only – General Requirements

To receive State or Federally Based Migrant Program services, employment must be in fishing, agriculture, or agriculturally related work. Your family shall also meet all eligibility and need criteria.

If the center operates in federally funded public migrant housing, the first fourteen (14) days of the enrollment period shall be reserved for residents of the public migrant housing center.

## Enrollment & Attendance

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When a Center is able to enroll children based on available funding and licensed capacity, families are contacted for enrollment. As the enrolling parent/guardian, it is your responsibility to accurately complete and sign all Enrollment and Certification (Recertification) documents prior to the child being admitted into our program. By signing the Enrollment and Certification (Recertification) documents, you are also certifying that you have legal authority for the child. California law is clear that parents (married or not) who have joint legal custody have equal access to all information regarding the child, including enrolling and making changes to the enrollment information. Only orders by a court of law can change parental access to a child's information. The above referenced law does not include access to information regarding the enrolling parent/guardian.

## **Admission Priority**

### **For CCTR**

#### **Enrollment Priorities:**

**First Priority:** The child is recipient of Child Protect Services or At-Risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited

**Second Priority:** income Ranking Order

Within each ranking, prioritize as follows:

- 1) Exceptional needs
- 2) Dual Language Learner
- 2) Earliest application date

#### **For CMIG**

Children of migrant agricultural worker families shall be enrolled in the CMIG program based on the following priorities:

1. The family moves from place to place.
2. The family has qualified under subparagraph (1) above within the past five years and is currently dependent for its income on agricultural employment but is currently settled near agricultural areas.
3. The family resides in a rural agricultural area and is dependent upon seasonal agricultural work.

### **For Part-Day California State Preschool Program (CSPP)**

**First priority:** first priority for services to CSPP three- and four-year-old children who are recipients of child protective services or who have been determined to be neglected, abused, or exploited or at risk thereof.

**Second priority:** second priority for services to all three- and four-year-old children with disabilities from families with incomes below the income eligibility threshold. This priority is for children with disabilities that are enrolling in CSPP after the percentage of funded enrollment set-aside

**Third priority:** third priority for services to eligible CSPP four-year-old children not enrolled in TK, not including children with disabilities with incomes above the income threshold, in the following order:

#### **Eligible children who were enrolled in CSPP as a three-year-old.**

Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table at the time of enrollment.

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According to the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table, the child with a primary home language other than English shall be enrolled first when two or more families have the same income ranking.

If there are no families with children that have a primary home language other

than English, the family that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

**Fourth priority:** fourth priority for services to eligible CSPP three-year-old children, not including children with disabilities that are above the income threshold, in the following order:

Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table at the time of enrollment.

According to the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table, the child with a primary home language other than English shall be enrolled first when two or more families have the same income ranking.

If there are no families with children with a primary home language other than English, the family on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

After all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, the contractor may enroll the following children in the order listed:

Children from families with no more than 15% above the eligibility income threshold may be enrolled. Children from families enrolled under this exception may not exceed ten percent of the participating CSPP's total contract enrollment. Priority shall be given to four-year-olds before three-year-olds.

Children with disabilities within this priority shall not count towards the ten percent limitation.

For CSPP Neighborhood School sites operating within the attendance boundaries of a qualified FRPM school, the contractor may enroll CSPP three- and four-year-old children whose families reside within the attendance boundary of the qualified FRPM elementary school without establishing eligibility. These families shall, to the extent possible, be enrolled in income ranking order, lowest to highest.

Children enrolling in the CSPP to provide expanded learning and care to TK.

Childcare services will not be denied, nor will they be assigned a lower priority to a family that needs less than full-time services.

The CDE may grant a waiver to the priorities specified above for the contractor to serve specific populations. Requests may not include waiver of the fee schedule or admission of ineligible families. Waiver requests shall be submitted to the CDE and approved prior to implementation.

### **For Full-Day California State Preschool Program (CSPP)**

**First priority:** first priority for services to CSPP three- and four-year-old children who are recipients of child protective services, or who have been determined to be neglected, abused, or exploited or at risk thereof. If an agency is unable to enroll a child in this first priority category.



**Second priority:** second priority for services to all three- and four-year-old children with disabilities from families with incomes below the income eligibility threshold. This priority is for children with disabilities who are enrolling in CSPP after the percentage of funded enrollment is set aside.

**Third priority:** third priority for services to eligible CSPP four-year-old children not enrolled in TK, not including children with disabilities with incomes above the income threshold, in the following order:

- Eligible children who were enrolled in CSPP as a three-year-old.
- Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table as published by the SSPI at the time of enrollment.
- When two or more families have the same income ranking, according to the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table, the child that has a primary home language other than English shall be enrolled first.
- If no families with children have a primary home language other than English, the family that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

**Fourth priority:** fourth priority for services to eligible CSPP three-year old children, in the following order:

- Children whose families have the lowest income ranking based on the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table as published by the SSPI at the time of enrollment.
- When two or more families have the same income ranking, according to the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table, the child that has a primary home language other than English shall be enrolled first.
- If no families with children have a primary home language other than English, the family that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

After all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, the contractor may enroll the following children in the order listed:

- Children from families with no more than 15% above the eligibility income threshold may be enrolled. Children from families enrolled under this exception may not exceed ten percent of the participating CSPP's total contract enrollment. Priority shall be given to four-year-olds before three-year-olds. Children with disabilities within this priority shall not count towards the ten percent limitation.
- The contractor may enroll CSPP three- and four-year-old children from families that meet eligibility criteria without establishing a need for services. Within this priority, contractors shall enroll families in income ranking order, lowest to highest, and enroll four-year-olds before three-year-olds.
- For CSPP Neighborhood School sites operating within the attendance boundaries of a qualified FRPM school, the contractor may enroll CSPP three- and four-year-old children whose families reside within the attendance boundary of the qualified FRPM elementary school without establishing eligibility or a need for services. To the extent possible, these families shall be enrolled in income ranking order, lowest to highest.

"CSPP eligible four-year-old children" means children who will have their fourth birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a CSPP, or a child whose fifth birthday occurs after September 1 of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a California state preschool and whose parent or guardian has opted to retain or enroll them in a CSPP.

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“CSPP eligible three-year-old children” means children who will have their third birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a CSPP. Children who have their third birthday on or after December 2 of the fiscal year, may be enrolled in a CSPP on or after their third birthday.

For CDE and CDSS programs, families who have a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from Medi-Cal, CalFresh, the California Food Assistance Program, the California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, the Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Head Start, Early Head Start, or any other designated means-tested government program, as determined by the department, will have categorical eligibility

### **Please note:**

For CSPP, 5% of subsidized enrollment is reserved for children with exceptional needs. Only the child in the family who has exceptional needs may be enrolled under this eligibility criteria.

### **Hours of Service**

The childcare hours of service are determined upon certification and specified in the Parent Registration Agreement:

- Days and hours per day requested
- Effective date of proposed reduction of service level
- Acknowledge in writing that they may retain their current service level.

If a family requests a change to current service level, an update will be necessary to reflect approved hours, this will include documentation to support the increase in childcare hours. Contact your Agency Representative or Center Leader immediately should your schedule need to be adjusted to suit your childcare needs. Schedule changes must be approved before they become effective.

### **Notification of Changes**

You must notify your Agency Representative or Center Leader if your family income exceeds the 85% State Median Income (SMI) for CSPP 100% of the State Median Income (SMI).

### **A Family’s Right to Voluntarily Request Changes**

At any time, a family may voluntarily request to reduce a family fee or increase their certified schedule and shall provide applicable supporting documentation for the requested change.

### **Family Fees**

Families enrolled in the State or Federally funded program may be required to pay a fee. (This requirement is not applicable for Part Day Preschool Programs.) A Family Fee is charged based on the California Family Fee Schedule.

You, as the enrolling parent/guardian, will be assessed either a full-time monthly fee or a part-time monthly fee, based on hours of care certified for the month, your family gross income, and your family size. Families with a certified need of less than 130 hours per month will be assessed a part-time monthly fee while families with a certified need of 130 hours or more per

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month will be assessed a full-time monthly fee.

**Please note: You may be eligible for a credit to your Family Fee if you are paying other childcare costs that Catalyst Kids is not able to subsidize.**

### **Other Child Care (OCC) Receipt**

If Catalyst Kids cannot meet all of your needs for childcare, for which eligibility and need have been established, Catalyst Kids will grant a fee credit equal to the amount paid to the other childcare provider. Catalyst Kids will apply the fee credit to the family's subsequent fee billing period. Families using other childcare receipt are responsible for the first month of family fees. Families are not allowed to carry over the fee credit beyond the family's subsequent fee billing period.

**OCC receipts are due by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the following month.** In order for OCC receipts to be applied to Family Fees, the OCC receipt must have the following:

- Date the OCC was issued
- Last name and first name of the child whose fee the OCC is being applied to
- The dates childcare services were provided
- Signature from the childcare provider

If the OCC receipt does not have all the requirements listed above, the OCC will not be processed.

**Catalyst Kids cannot, under any circumstances, recalculate fees based on a child's actual attendance.**

FAMILY FEES ARE DUE AND PAYABLE IN ADVANCE. **Fees are due on or before the first day of each month and are considered late if not paid by the 7<sup>th</sup> (seventh) of the month.** Make checks and/or money orders payable to Catalyst Kids. An online payment option is available for ACH or credit card payments. Please ask the Center Leader about this option.

Please note that if a check is returned for insufficient funds, only other payment methods (money orders, cashier checks, or paying online) will be accepted for one year.

### **Late Family Fee Payment**

Family fees must be paid in advance and are due on or before the first of each month. The monthly bill is given or mailed out during the week of the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month prior to the month in which care is given. The bill will state your full-time or part-time monthly fee. **If Catalyst Kids does not receive payment in full by the 7<sup>th</sup> (seventh) of the month, a Notice of Action will be issued to disenroll services.** Services will end two weeks from the date the Notice of Action is issued, with an additional 5 days if mailed.

Parents/guardians with delinquent fees may request the establishment of a reasonable delinquent fee repayment plan prior to the effective disenrollment date. To continue receiving subsidized childcare services, you must pay all current fees when due and comply with the provision of your repayment plan.

### **Late Pick-Up Fees**

Children must be picked up according to their contracted hours. For example: If you work or are in training from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., your contracted hours may be 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; therefore, your child should be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m.

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If you are going to be late because of an emergency, you must arrange with another authorized parent/guardian to pick up your child. You must contact the center to notify them before your scheduled pick-up time.

Children participating in the Part Day Preschool and any other programs with designated program end times must be picked up at the same time that the program ends. If you are late picking up your child at the designated time, your child(ren) may be disenrolled from the program.

Catalyst Kids assesses a \$25.00 Late Pick-Up Fee **per child** for any part of a fifteen-minute increment you are late to pick up your child after the center closes for the day. For example: If your child's program ends at 6:00 p.m. and your child is not picked up until 6:01pm, a \$25.00 Late Pick-Up fee will be assessed. Late Pick-Up fees will be charged to your account and must be paid in full on or before the first of the next month.

**Please note:** The late pick-up fee is **per child**.

### **Field Trips, Special Events, Activities, Additional supplies**

Field trips and special events/activities are integral to our program. A non-refundable family fee of \$25.00 may be solicited for field trips. Your child will not be denied a field trip if the family cannot pay the fee.

The center will supply diapers for all children who need them. Please let the center know if you will supply your own diapers.

### **Absences**

You, as the enrolling parent/guardian, must notify the Center Leader by phone or in advance in writing regarding your child's absence no later than the time the child is scheduled to attend that day. The reason for absences and a **full legal signature** must be written on the Sign-In & Out sheet by the parent/guardian or authorized center staff. **Family fees remain the same whether or not the child attends.**

**Excused Absence** is defined as:

- Child illness
  - Quarantine, including exclusions following the school's policies.
  - In relation with child's illness
- Parent/guardian illness
  - Quarantine
  - In relation with parent's illness
- Family Emergency (urgent, unexpected)
  - Car problem / no transportation (limit 3 days per month)
  - Death of a family member
  - Sibling illness
  - Other emergency that is urgent and unexpected
- Court Ordered Visitation (court order needed)
- Best Interest of the Child Absence (maximum of ten [10] days per child within the fiscal year\*) is defined as:
  - Vacation
  - Out of town
  - Child's birthday
  - Child stayed home at the request of the parent/guardian
  - Occasional special event (school play, recital, etc.)
  - School program or field trip
  - Stayed with a friend
  - Other reasons which are clearly in the best interest of the child

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**\* Child Protective Services/At Risk families are not limited to 10 Best Interest Days within the fiscal year.**

### **Other Reasons for Absences**

- Bad weather (not extreme)
- Child didn't feel like getting up
- Personal business / family business
- Parent/guardian/child overslept
- Any absences not falling into Best Interest or Excused Absence definitions

### **Non-contracted days:**

- Catalyst Kids holidays
- Other days to be determined at time of certification
- Suspension from elementary school or any Catalyst Kids center

### **Disenrollment of Services**

If your child is disenrolled from a Catalyst Kids program and has unpaid family fees, your child will not be re-enrolled in the program until all outstanding fees are paid in full.

Disenrollment may result from failure to adhere to any rules established by Catalyst Kids that include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to provide requested documentation by the due date.
- Submission of fraudulent, false, or misleading information or documentation.
- Failure to complete re-certification.
- Failure to pick up child on time from the center.
- Failure to pay assessed Family Fees by the due date.
- Family's gross monthly income exceeds the state income guidelines as defined by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services.
- Failure to comply with Catalyst Kids policies.
- Failure to comply with any other or any additional regulations set forth by the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services.
- **Abandonment of Child Care Services** It is the expectation that your child participates in our program based upon their approved schedule. We understand that life situations occur (illness, family emergencies, etc.) and request that you notify us within 24-48 hours if such a situation occurs. However, if your child is absent for more than 7 consecutive days without contacting us, we will reach out to you in many ways via the contact information we have on file. Please make sure we have the most current information on file. If there is no response, the Enrollment Specialist will make one final attempt to contact the parent at 15 calendar days via phone or text. If no response after 30 consecutive days, a NOA for disenrollment based on abandonment of care will be issued to the last known address.

### **Fraud Policy ("Fraud" is defined as a deliberate deception for unfair or unlawful gain)**

Families enrolled in the state or federally funded programs must meet the Eligibility and Need criteria. All documentation supplied to Catalyst Kids regarding verification of need and eligibility must be complete, accurate, and true. Any fraudulent, false, or misleading information provided to Catalyst Kids to establish initial or on-going eligibility and/or need for childcare, including address, use of care, employment or student status, family size, income, or eligibility relating to medical incapacitation, will be grounds for disenrollment.

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## **Appeal Process**

If childcare services are changed or discontinued, you will be issued a Notice of Action in advance that states the effective date and reason for the Action. If you have questions after receiving the Notice of Action, please immediately contact your agency representative in your region.

If you, as the enrolling parent/guardian, do not agree with a decision made regarding your eligibility for services, you have the right to file an Appeal and request a Fair Hearing and should immediately contact the Regional Contact Person listed on the back of the Notice of Action.

Procedures for appeals are outlined on the reverse side of the Notice of Action. This may also include submitting an appeal to the California Department of Education or California Department of Social Services if an appeal has been denied by Catalyst Kids. If an appeal is submitted to the California Department of Education or California Department of Social Services, childcare may continue during this process.

A Parent Appeal Pamphlet from the State of California is given to you with your initial certification into Catalyst Kids. Additional copies are available upon request.

If you appeal a decision, childcare will continue during the Fair Hearing process. However, if the Appeal is denied, services may be terminated immediately.

## **Catalyst Kids Office Locations & Contact Information**

### **Corporate Office/Bay Area Regional Office**

350 Woodview Ave, Suite 100  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037-8105  
(408) 556-7300

### **Oxnard Regional Office**

200 East Bard Road  
Oxnard, CA 93033  
(805) 738-7900

### **Sacramento Regional Office**

4540 Duckhorn Drive, Suite 202  
Sacramento, CA 95834  
(916) 830-3300

### **South Regional Office**

**5 Park Plaza Suite 950**  
Irvine, CA 92614  
(949) 553-4440

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## Licensing Agency – Center Visitation

### **Admission Agreement 101200 (b) (c)**

- The Department of Social Services or Licensing Agency shall have the authority to interview clients, including children or staff, and to inspect and audit client or facility without prior consent.
- The Department of Social Services or licensing agency shall have the authority to observe the physical condition of the client, including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the client.
- Appropriate identification from the licensing agency will be obtained prior to the interview.

### **Community Care Licensing**

All Catalyst Kids programs are licensed through the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Department (DSS/CCLD). The DSS/CCLD is a statewide agency that sets the standards for health, safety, and educational requirements in childcare programs. If you would like more information or have any questions regarding licensing, visit their website at <http://www.cclcd.ca.gov> or contact the regional office closest to your child's program.

#### **Los Angeles - zip code 90301**

El Segundo Regional Office  
300 N. Continental Blvd., Suite 209A  
MS: 29-13  
El Segundo, CA 90245  
(424) 301-3077

#### **El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Yolo Counties**

Sacramento Regional Office  
9835 Goethe Road, Suite 100, MS 19-872  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
(916) 263-5744

#### **San Mateo County**

San Bruno Regional Office  
851 Traeger Avenue, Suite 360, MS 29-24  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650) 266-8800

#### **Monterey and Santa Clara Counties**

San Jose Regional Office  
2580 N. First Street, Suite 300, MS 29-08  
San Jose, CA 95131  
(408) 324-2148

#### **Orange County**

Orange County Regional Office  
750 The City Drive, Suite 250, MS 29-10  
Orange, CA 92868  
(714) 703-2800

#### **Riverside County**

Riverside Regional Office  
3737 Main Street, Suite 70, MS 29-12  
Riverside, CA 92501  
(951) 782-4200

#### **Ventura County**

Santa Barbara Regional Office  
6500 Hollister Avenue, Suite 200, MS 29-09  
Goleta, CA 93117  
(805) 562-0400

#### **Solano County**

Rohnert Park Local Unit  
101 Golf Course Drive, Suite A-230, MS 29-11  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
(707) 588-5026

#### **Alameda County**

Oakland South Regional Office  
1515 Clay St, Suite 1102, MS 29-855  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 622-2602

Visit Our Website at [www.catalystkids.org](http://www.catalystkids.org)

## Complaint Policy & Procedures

### Uniform Complaint Policy – Catalyst Kids

Catalyst Kids’ mission is to provide the community with the highest quality programs and services for children, families, and providers. We strive to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships and practices. We welcome feedback and suggestions from parents/guardians, families, and providers about our programs and services. We recognize that there are times when there appears to be a mismatch between what a family deems to be in their best interest and Catalyst Kids’ policies and procedures that derive from local, state, and federal regulations. Our agency’s desire is to handle all issues that arise as fairly and quickly as possible.

Catalyst Kids prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, age, disability, religion, national origin, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, or any other consideration made unlawful by local, state, or federal law.

Individuals, agencies, organizations, families, providers, students, and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding our program’s alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. Our agency prefers that complaints be filed directly with us first so that we can work to arrive at an equitable solution.

However, in the event that any party is not satisfied with the services rendered and wants to express or file a formal complaint, we will handle such complaint in the following manner:

- We will provide the complainant with the information about their rights and guidelines for filing a formal complaint with the appropriate government agency or department that has jurisdiction for the program.
- When a written complaint is brought directly to any staff manager at Catalyst Kids, they will acknowledge receipt, in writing, within three to five working days.
- Catalyst Kids will conduct an internal investigation regarding the issue or complaint. Senior Catalyst Kids management will decide on the composition and size of the team conducting the investigation, depending on the nature and severity of the issue. An independent party will be designated to coordinate and conduct the investigation.
- The family and/or provider will not be negatively affected in the continued usage of our services due to their action of filing the complaint.
- We will treat the family and/or provider with respect in the investigation of the complaint.
- We expect the family and/or provider to provide necessary information and cooperation in the investigation of the complaint.
- We will give the employees who are involved in the situation the opportunity to give an account of the events and explain their perspectives.
- The decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing within 30 days. Any extenuating circumstance that might require more time will be communicated at least one week prior to the date the decision is due.
- An officer of Catalyst Kids will make the final decision on the outcome of the investigation, should there be any conflict or disagreement about the initial decision made by the in-house independent investigation.
- The time limit during which a complaint can be filed is governed by our funding terms and conditions, and in the absence of those, is two years.
- Remedies may be sought in federal or state court, if the family and/or provider are not satisfied with the final decision of the agency.

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# **Uniform Complaint Procedures – External & Internal**

## Uniform Complaint Procedures (5CCR 4600-4687)

### **Where to File a Complaint:**

#### **External:**

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the appropriate agency.

- For licensing issues, complaints are to be sent to the local offices of the Child Care Program. Please contact their main office for the appropriate location.

Community Care Licensing Division, Child Care Program Office  
744 P Street, MS T9-15-48  
Sacramento, CA 95814

- For CDE Child Development Division programs, complaints should be sent to:

State Department of Education,  
Complaint Coordinator  
1430 N Street, Suite 3410  
Sacramento, CA 95814

- For CDSS programs, appeals should be sent to:

California Department of Social Services  
Child Care and Development Division  
744 P. Street, MS 9-8-351  
Sacramento, Ca 95814  
Phone: 916-651-9142  
Fax: 916-654-1048  
CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

- For Irvine Unified School District Programs, any grievances that remain unresolved at the conclusion of the site procedure may enter the formal Irvine Child Care Programs (ICCP) Grievance process. Please contact the ICCP Administrator at (949) 724-6635 to learn more about the ICCP Grievance Process.

#### **Internal:**

- Annually, we will notify our employees, regional offices, individuals, agencies, organizations, families, providers, students, and interested third parties of our complaint procedures in writing.
- A notice will be visibly posted at all centers and office locations where the agency operates.
- The notice shall be in English and, where necessary, in the primary language or mode of communication of the recipient of the notice as required by law.
- A copy of the Complaint Procedures shall be available free of charge.

Catalyst Kids Board approval: 7/2/2024

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# Parent Handbook Receipt

**I have received a copy of the Catalyst Kids Parent Handbook.**

**I have read all policies of this handbook, which includes lead poisoning information, and this form and agree to them.**

**I understand that failure to follow these policies may lead to disenrollment of childcare services.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Center Leader Name (Please Print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Center Leader Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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