



PARENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025 School Year

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Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

Every Pre-Kindergarten student will have equitable access to a nurturing and rigorous early childhood education that successfully prepares them for their Kindergarten journey and beyond.

Mission Statement

The mission of CCS Pre-Kindergarten is to provide all Pre-Kindergarten students with a rigorous and nurturing learning environment that promotes early academic skills, creativity, and discovery through the use of developmentally appropriate practices.

Welcome Letter



A Child's Eight Commandments to Parents

1. My hands are small; please don't expect perfection whenever I make a bed, draw a picture, or throw a ball. My legs are short; please slow down so that I can keep up with you.
2. My eyes have not seen the world as you have; please let me explore safely. Don't restrict me unnecessarily.
3. Housework will always be there. I'm only little for a short time~ please take time to explain things to me about this wonderful world and do so willingly.
4. My feelings are tender; please be sensitive to my needs; don't nag me all day long. (You wouldn't want to be nagged for your inquisitiveness.) **Treat me as you would like to be treated.**
5. I need your encouragement to grow. Please go easy on the criticism; remember you can criticize the things I do without criticizing me.
6. Please give me the freedom to make decisions concerning myself. Permit me to fail, so that I can learn from my mistakes. Then someday I'll be prepared to make the kind of decisions life requires.
7. Please don't do things over for me. Somehow that makes me feel that my efforts didn't quite measure up to your expectations. I know it's hard, but please don't try to compare me with my brother or sister.
8. Please don't be afraid to leave for a weekend together. Kids need vacations from parents, just as parents need vacations from kids.

Adapted from Dr. Kevin Leman's *A Child's Ten Commandments to Parents*

Pre-Kindergarten Goals

When a developmentally appropriate environment is provided for young children at home and at school, each child will develop and expand in the following areas.

- Self-worth
- Begin to value and respect the physical environment and to assume responsibility within the immediate and personal environment
- In the ability to express, represent, and understand thought, feelings, and experiences of self and others in their personal and immediate environment
- In the ability to make decisions and to solve problems within the immediate and personal environment
- In the capacity to use large and small muscles in the immediate and personal environment
- In the ability to live in harmony with others in the immediate and personal environment

Activities and materials in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom are planned and organized to promote growth and development of the whole child – physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

The School Day

Each pre-kindergarten teacher has his/her own way of organizing class time and materials; however, all classes spend the day learning through their play. Each class has a center time, group time, and a rest time on a daily basis. Most classes eat breakfast and lunch in the classroom in a family style manner. A doctor's note is required for children with special diet needs due to food allergies.

Typical Daily Schedule

7:15- 8:00*	Arrival/Wash Hands/ Free Choice Centers
8:05- 8:30	Wash Hands/Breakfast/ Morning Announcements
8:35- 8:45	Group Meeting/ Morning Songs
8:50- 10:50	Bathroom/Free Choice Center Time
10:55- 11:30	Recess Outside/ Inside
11:35- 11:40	Bathroom/Wash Hands/Music/Story
11:45- 11:55	Prepare for lunch/Wash hands/Bathroom
12:00- 12:25	Lunch
12:30- 1:30	Nap time/quiet time
1:35- 2:00	Snack/Bathroom /Recess
2:00- 2:25	Let's Talk About it!! Review of the Day /Dismissal
2:45-3:30	TEACHER MEETINGS/PLANNING

* This schedule is based on a school whose hours are 7:45am-2:25pm.

School Attendance

Parents and guardians are responsible for seeing that children attend school each day it is in session. When a child returns to school after being absent, a note stating the reason for the absence, date of absence and parent's signature, must be sent to school. (No note will result in an unexcused absence.) The note should be sent to school on the day that the child returns to school after the absence.

In an effort to provide a quality Pre-Kindergarten program that helps prepare children for a smooth transition into kindergarten, it is important that we closely monitor student attendance. Excessive absences and tardiness may result in the child being dismissed from the program; however, every effort shall be made to maintain the child's enrollment and participation.

More information regarding Student Attendance is located on the CCS Board of Education website, Policy Code: 4400 Attendance.

Curriculum and Digital Resources

Our Pre-Kindergarten classes use the Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers curriculum. This is a play-based curriculum where children learn through play, social interaction, functional communication, motor development, and self-care/independence. Our curriculum is approved through the Department of Public Instruction and the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The curriculum is managed through an online platform called Teaching Strategies Gold. Families will be given access to resources through the platform via email and text messaging.

Family engagement is an important aspect of child development and the curriculum. We utilize a program called ReadyRosie! This online program contains tools that help families create meaningful home-learning environments. Your child's teacher will set up your account so you can participate in the family engagement activities. Please click on this link for a video overview of the program.

Illness

The following guidelines are for non-COVID related illnesses. We follow the COVID guidelines set by Cumberland County Schools, the local Health Department, and State Agencies.

If your child comes to school when he/she is not feeling well, they will be more vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of your child and of the other people at school to keep him/her home when he/she is ill. A child needs to be well to be able to

participate actively in the program.

Please:

- Keep your child at home if he/she has a fever, bad cold, upset stomach, earache, rash, swollen glands, or a runny nose that is green or yellow.
- If a child is well enough to come to school, he/she will be expected to go outdoors with his/her classmates, weather permitting.
- Often children may ask to come to school, even though they are ill. Although your child may be disappointed, please keep them at home if they are sick.
- If your child becomes ill while at school and you are called, please cooperate by picking him/her up promptly. We will not call unless your child needs to be at home.
- If your child has prescribed medication, a medication form must be completed by your doctor in order for the school to dispense the medicine. All prescribed medication must be handled through the school office. Classroom teachers are not permitted to dispense medications.
- Pre-kindergarten students should not bring lotions, creams, Chapstick, cough drops or hand sanitizer to school.
- A child may not return to school until he/she is fever free without medication for at least 24 hours.
- A child must remain at home after vomiting and/or having diarrhea for at least 24 hours after the last episode and without medication.

It is very important that you provide us updated phone numbers whenever you have a change in your contact numbers.

Clothing

Clothing should allow movement and play. Be sure that your child's clothing is

- comfortable, washable, allows for self-dressing, and self-toileting,
- appropriate for arts and crafts (paint aprons are provided at school), and
- abides by CCS and school dress code policies.

We get **INVOLVED** in activities and should not have to be too concerned with staying clean. Dresses with ruffles and bows and pants with difficult belts and fastenings should be avoided.

When the weather is cold, always

- send in mittens or gloves, a hat, and a sweater to layer over clothes. **We go outside every day.**
- provide pants or tights for girls who wear dresses; those little legs get cold without protection.

When it rains, always

- send in a raincoat
- **leave umbrellas at home**

We follow the DCDEE Child Care Weather Watch chart when going outside. Unless we are in the “Red Zone”, we will go outside to play.

Parents are asked to send a complete change of clothing to school including socks and underwear. Place the clothing in a Ziplock bag. Label the clothing and bag with the student’s name. The clothes will be kept in the child’s individual cubby and will be available for your child to change into in case of accidental soiling or wetting. If your child brings home soiled clothing, **please send another set the next day.**

Toileting

It is developmentally appropriate for children ages 2-6 to be working towards complete bathroom independence. Our teachers and teacher assistants will work with your child towards independence through coaching, regular practice, and encouragement. We want your child to complete these tasks independently in the bathroom. If your child has an accident, we will assist as needed but we will be “hands off” to build on independent practice. If your child wears a pull up, they will need to be able to change themselves. We will work towards transitioning away from a pull up as soon as possible. If your child has unique toileting needs, please let your teacher know so that we can work towards bathroom independence.

Meals

The Pre-Kindergarten school day is a full school day. Students will be provided breakfast, lunch, and snack. As noted above, meals are typically served family style in the classroom. All meals follow CCS Child Nutrition Services regulations and NC Child Care rules. Students may pack meals or eat from the cafeteria. Please make your teacher aware of any unique dietary needs. Also, your teacher will have further information about free and reduced meal eligibility.

Transportation

Our first concern is the child's safety as he/she travels to and from school. Please make sure your child's teacher knows who is authorized to receive your child. Also, please make sure that your child's teacher is aware of any changes to the normal drop off/pick up routine. Only the parent/guardian may designate or change authorized persons on the pick up/drop off list at the front office.

School Bus Transportation

Pre-kindergarten students **may be** provided with bus service if they live within the assigned school district. This information is available via the [CCS Find My School](#) website. Listed are the duties and responsibilities for riding the bus:

- An authorized adult is required to be at the designated bus stop, on time, in the morning and again to meet the child in the afternoon. Allowing a minor sibling or another child to meet the bus is not acceptable.
- If an authorized adult fails to meet the bus, the child will be brought back to the school and the parent called (**three failures to meet the child may result in loss of bus privileges**).
- Students are required to sit correctly in their seats, obey the bus driver, and assistant, concerning conduct on the bus. **Inappropriate behavior on the bus may result in loss of bus privileges.**

Parent Transportation

Pre-kindergarten children should be under adult supervision at all times. This includes traveling to and from school and moving to and from the classroom.

- Drop off/Pick up is a school specific plan. Your child's teacher will give you information at the parent meeting about procedures.
- Your child will be released only to his/her parent or other persons authorized by a parent to pick up the child. **ID is required.**
- Be prompt in dropping your child off in the morning and picking up your child (follow school bell times) at the end of the day. Every minute counts!

Withdrawing from the Program

If you are planning to move, please inform the pre-kindergarten teacher of your plans. We appreciate knowing ahead of time that you will be withdrawing from the program. If you anticipate a move within the county, the Pre-K office will help facilitate your transfer to another school or center but cannot guarantee placement.

Transfers

Once a child is placed in a class we are generally unable to transfer the student to another school. This ensures your child has a smooth, successful school year. If you are anticipating a move, please communicate with your child's teacher. If there are extenuating circumstances, please communicate with your child's teacher and the Pre-K office so that we can assist.

Change of Information

If you change your address, phone numbers, email addresses, or people listed as emergency contacts, please send the information to your child's teacher and the school office immediately. Accurate records help to ensure your child is safe and successful in school.

Parent Involvement

It is important that we, parents and school personnel, work together to ensure the best possible experiences for your child. Parents are encouraged to volunteer a minimum of 2 hours per semester. Parents are encouraged to complete the CCS Volunteer application, located on the [CCS Community Engagement Opportunities website](#).

Volunteer activities include:

- attending parent workshops
- helping with classroom activities
- helping with school activities
- attending PTA meetings

Parents can help their child in school by

- making sure the child attends daily and on time
- attending parents/teacher conferences
- speaking with your child's teacher frequently
- keeping your child's teacher informed of his special interests and needs
- asking about your child's day with specific questions, such as:
 - “Whom did you play with today?”
 - “What was in the art center?”
 - “What choices did you make at playtime?”
 - “What was your favorite activity today?”

Activities at Home

Children live in homes; big homes and small homes, apartments and trailers, cottages and single rooms. HOME is where the FAMILY is, and children are a part of FAMILIES. No other environment is more important. For this reason, the home environment should be one in which adults

- talk with children about everyday experiences
- listen to children and value what children have to say
- participate with children in activities
- read for their own pleasure
- read to children
- show affection for children
- provide for children's health, safety, and well-being
- use every day experiences such as cooking, playing games, and shopping as learning opportunities for children
- use common materials such as rocks and leaves to help children appreciate the natural environment

Examples:

- **Preparing Meals and Baking**
 - Washing vegetables and fruits; tearing lettuce for salads
 - Greasing cookie sheets or cake pans
 - Mixing juices; pouring cereal
- **Laundry**
 - Pouring detergent
 - Matching socks; sorting clothes
 - Putting clothes away; folding washcloths
- **Cleaning House**
 - Dusting
 - Polishing
 - Cleaning the sink
- **Shopping**
 - Helping to make a list
 - Finding items on the list at the store
 - Putting away groceries
- **Gathering trash**
 - Gathering waste baskets from each room
 - Replacing new trash bags in baskets
 - Picking up paper and sticks in the yard
- **Table Setting**
 - Placing plates and silverware
 - Setting out napkins

Discipline and Behavior Management

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
10. DO explain things to children on their level.
11. DO use short supervised periods of time-out sparingly.
12. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
13. DO use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on a child's development.
14. DO use best practices to include Preschool Pyramid Model and Calm Corner strategies.
15. DO adhere to the CCS Student Code of Conduct, the CCS Board of Education Policies, and NC Child Care Law and Rules.

“Time-Out”

"Time-out" is the removal of a child for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes) from a situation in which the child is misbehaving and has not responded to other discipline techniques. The "time-out" space, usually a chair, is located away from classroom activity but within the teacher's sight. During "time-out," the child has a chance to think about the misbehavior which led to his/her removal from the group. After a brief interval of no more than 5 minutes, the teacher discusses the incident and appropriate behavior with the child. When the child returns to the group, the incident is over and the child is treated with the same affection and respect shown the other children.

Adapted from original prepared by Elizabeth Wilson, Student, Catawba Valley Technical College

Fours Can... List

From 48 to 54 months, some things Fours can do are:

- stand on one foot for ten seconds
- name three shapes
- use many words (more than 1500)
- remember some things seen in a picture or in a group of objects
- ask lots of questions
- test adults limits frequently
- enjoy playing with other children more than playing alone
- walk on a balance beam
- ask for help when needed
- tell what their artwork is
- repeat rhymes, songs, or dances
- get dressed without much help
- jump backward
- try to imitate someone who draws a square
- draw a person with three parts
- know some prepositions, such as *in front of*, *under*, *behind*, or *on top of*
- walk downstairs, alternating feet
- recognize some colors
- catch a bounced ball
- play alone for 20-30 minutes
- know the name of a penny, nickel, dime
- fasten buttons quite well
- eat well with fork, cut easy foods with knife
- usually stay dry through the night
- jump over things
- recognize own name in print

From 54 to 60 months, some things Fours can do are:

- hop on one foot at least five times
- cut out a big circle
- tell you what some words mean
- brush teeth quite well
- draw a person with six parts
- ask permission to use things that belong to others
- do well in small groups of three or four
- lace shoes
- show correct number of objects, up to five
- taunt others by calling names
- play cooperatively in small groups often

- say “I’m sorry” to others
- do a somersault
- behave well in public most of time
- cut and paste simple shapes
- say when a sound is loud or soft
- say whether two words rhyme
- usually manage all toileting skills alone
- use four or five words in a sentence
- count to ten
- recognize a few printed words
- tell on others who do naughty things
- jump over knee-high obstacles with both feet together
- print own name but not clearly
- print a few capital letters

ATTACHMENTS

Summary of North Carolina Child Care Laws and Rules

Revised September 2023

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
333 Six Forks Road Raleigh,
NC 27609

Child Care Commission <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/ChildCare-Commission>

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in employment or provision of services. The following requirements apply to both centers and homes.

What Is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis - at least once a week
- for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is done through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110.

The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

Family Child Care Homes

A family child care home is licensed to care for five or fewer preschool age children, including their own preschool children, and can include three additional school-age children. The provider's own school-age children are not counted. Family child care home operators must be 21 years old and have a high school education or its equivalent. Family child care homes will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Licenses are issued to family child care home providers who meet the following requirements:

Child Care Centers

Licensure as a center is required when six or more preschool children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose to meet the standards of the Notice of Compliance rather than the Star Rated License. Recreational programs that operate for less than four consecutive months, such as summer camps, are exempt from licensing. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a family child care home or center at any time while their child is present.
- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

The laws and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. Check the telephone directory or talk with a child care provider to see if there is a Child Care Resource and Referral agency in your community. For more information, visit the Resources page located on the Child Care website at: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/> For more information on the law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919 814-6300 or 1-800- 859-0829 (In State Only), or visit our homepage at: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/>

Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, appropriate discipline, or when a child is abandoned. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.** Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith.

The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any maltreatment complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility. **North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report the case to the county department of social services.**

Transportation

Child care centers or family child care homes providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratios must be maintained.

Record Requirements

Centers and homes must keep accurate records such as children's, staff, and program. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma policy must be developed and shared with parents of children up to five years of age.

Discipline and Behavior Management

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in the discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers and family child care homes. Religious- sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

Training Requirements

Center and family child care home staff must have current CPR and First Aid certification, ITS-SIDS training (if caring for infants, 0 to 12 months), prior to caring for children and every three years thereafter. Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training is required and each facility must create an EPR plan. Center and home staff must also complete a minimum number of health and safety training as well as annual ongoing training hours.

Curriculum and Activities

Four- and five-star programs must use an approved curriculum in classrooms serving four-year-olds. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to get a quality point for the star-rated license. Activity plans and schedule must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet, and indoor and outdoor activities. A written activity plan that includes activities intended to stimulate the development domains, in accordance with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore, use materials on their own and have choices.

Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed family child care home and center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. For Centers and FCCHs, meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care.

Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed centers to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather permitting) for at least an hour a day for preschool children and at least thirty minutes a day for children under two. Children must have space and time provided for rest.

Two through Five Star Rated License

Centers and family child care homes that are meeting the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one- star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five-star license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet and the program standards met by the program, and one quality point option.

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background qualification is a **pre-service requirement**. All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every five years thereafter. This requirement includes household members who are over the age of 15 in family child care homes.

Space and Equipment

There are space requirements for indoor and outdoor environments that must be measured prior to licensure. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well maintained, and developmentally appropriate. Indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

Licensed centers must also meet requirements in the following areas.

Staff Requirements

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must complete a minimum number of training hours, including ITS-SIDS training for any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. All staff who work directly with children must have CPR and First Aid training, and at least one person who completed the training must be present at all times when children are in care. One staff must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training and create the EPR plan. All staff must also undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter.

Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. The minimum staff/child ratios and group sizes for single-age groups of children in centers are shown below and must be

posted in each classroom. The staff/child ratios for multi-age groupings are outlined in the child care rules and require prior approval

Age	Teacher: Child Ratio	Max Group Size
0-12 months	1:5	10
12-24 months	1:6	12
2 to 3 years old	1:10	20
3 to 4 years old	1:15	25
4 to 5 years old	1:20	25
5 years and older	1:25	25

Additional Staff/Child Ratio Information:

Centers located in a residence that are licensed for six to twelve children may keep up to three additional school-age children, depending on the ages of the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff- child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group.

Reviewing Facility Information

From the Division’s Child care Facility Search Site, the facility and visit documentation can be viewed.

A public file is maintained in the Division’s main office in Raleigh for every licensed center or family child care home. These files can be viewed during business hours (8 a.m. -5 p.m.) by contacting the Division at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859- 0829 or requested via the Division’s web site at www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov.

How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a licensed family child care home or child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be issued an administrative action, fined and/or may have their licenses suspended or revoked. Administrative actions must be posted in the facility. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the requirements described in this pamphlet, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919- 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.



NC Child Care Required Information

The information linked below is required to be presented to parents in licensed child care centers in North Carolina. A signed receipt is required to be placed in your child's student record. This receipt is contained within your child's LetsGetEnrolled application.

- CCS No Smoking/Tobacco Use Policy
- Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Trauma Policy
 - Policy Code: 4301 Authority of School Personnel
 - Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abuse Policy-DCDEE Sample Edited for Use by CCS
 - CCS doesn't work with students under the age of 3; however, DCDEE still requires CCS to provide information on Shaken Baby Syndrome.