

EARLY HEAD START
Home-Based
Parent Handbook



Nurturing, Equitable Beginnings



Child's Name

Important Information

Home Visitor: _____
Phone number: _____

Supervisor: _____
Phone number: _____

Join our community on
social media



Facebook



VISTAVILLAGELA
Instagram

Please note

In accordance with Vista Del Mar's confidentiality policy, staff are not permitted to follow any Vista Village clients on social media on their personal social media accounts and/or accept any follow requests from participants in our programs.

Please find us on the web at www.VistaVillageLA.org

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Director's Message

Welcome to the Home-Based Early Head Start (HB EHS) Program! We offer the highest quality family support to expectant families and families of infants and toddlers. Children grow and thrive in positive, loving relationships, so we honor the fundamental role you play in the lives of your children. Parenting is a difficult job, life can be challenging, and we want to support you in that process. We strive to treat all families and children with care and respect.

Our team of Home Visitors are early childhood and mental health professionals with a passion for supporting families during these earliest years of life. Through the relationship building process, you and your Home Visitor will work together to create and progress towards goals that meet your interests, needs, and priorities. We also encourage you to take an active role in our program and even help lead and guide our program in ways that feel comfortable to you.

We hope that you love our Home-Based Early Head Start program and look forward to working with you and your family!

Sincerely,



Deborah Kanegsberg

Early Head Start Director

Home-Based Early Head Start



Nurturing, Equitable Beginnings

About Vista Village

Vista Village Mission

Vista Village is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of young children by providing high quality learning experiences, strengthening parent-child relationships, and connecting families to communities.

We support nurturing, equitable beginnings for young children and their families. We believe that representation and culture matter. Our team comes from a variety of different backgrounds and lived experiences to meet the needs of diverse families. Our culture is one that respects, celebrates, and utilizes our diversity to unlearn biases and find common understandings.



Vista Village Commitment to Equity

We create safe and inclusive relationships so that even our youngest clients feel seen, heard, and understood. At Vista Village, we nurture equitable beginnings.

We understand that we live in a world rife with social injustices that creates many barriers for historically under resourced communities. To chip away at these barriers, we commit to providing access to high-quality education and social services.

We strive to bring together staff from different backgrounds and lived experiences to meet the diverse needs of our families. We value these diverse perspectives. We use this uniqueness to nurture, care for and support each other and the communities we serve. We also acknowledge that we are a part of this unjust system.

To keep us on track with nurturing equitable beginnings, we focus on 3 areas:

- **Hiring & Onboarding:** Welcome and retain team members that reflect the families we serve. Representation matters.
- **Embracing Culture:** Value our team's unique skills and lived experiences. Respect and celebrate the diversity of the families we serve. (Un)learning biases leads to common understandings.
- **Creating Access:** Create safe and inclusive environments for children and families that historically have not had access. Leverage the strengths and capacity-building of our team to meet these diverse needs.

Our actions will be louder than our words.

Welcome

Welcome to the Early Head Start Home-Based Program at Vista Village, a department of Vista Del Mar. This handbook will introduce you to our program and the services we offer!

What is Home-Based Early Head Start?

- A voluntary program, free of charge, where home visitors meet with your family (usually where you live) for support, parent education, counseling, and child development activities that focus on the relationship between infants, toddlers, and their parents.
- Initial screenings, ongoing assessments, and support for your child and family's development, health (physical, mental, and dental), and nutrition during home visits.
- Parent-child socialization groups in our beautiful classroom and play yard, that give you an opportunity to meet other families, give your child a chance to play with other young children, and learn fun activities to do with your child.
- Agency events that provide you with enriched opportunities to engage with and explore your community.
- Ongoing advocacy, case management, and referral services, including childcare and transportation assistance (for eligible families) to meet family needs.
- Ongoing parent engagement, workshops, and parent leadership opportunities that strengthen the partnership between you, our program, and our community.



Home Visits

Home Visitors

- Home visitors are skilled in providing family support, parent education, counseling, and child development activities that support your child's natural curiosity and promote language, physical, learning, math, and social development.
- Home visitors are Masters-level mental health professionals, Bachelors-level professionals, and paraprofessionals with extensive experience working with families and young children. All Home Visitors have or are working toward a Home-Based Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent.
- Home visitors work with you to monitor your child's development and to track your child's medical & dental health, nutrition, and growth.



What to expect during a home visit

Visits are collaborative, where you and your Home Visitor partner to engage your child in diverse learning activities and experiences. Home visits are typically scheduled during the day Monday to Friday and last 90 minutes (1.5 hours).

If needed, some Home Visitors may have early evening or Saturday daytime availability.

You will actively participate in various activities designed to strengthen your relationship with your child.

You will enhance your parenting skills and expand your child's learning and development.

You will have an opportunity to discuss challenges in your home, family, and community and to set goals for yourself, your child, and your family.

Home Visitors will help you plan child development activities that you can do with your child between home visits and will check in with you about activities planned to happen between previous home visits (these are also referred to as in-kind activities, see [page 17](#)).



Program Curriculum

Vista Village's Early Head Start Home-Based program uses Partners for a Healthy Baby, a child development and parenting curriculum, to help support you, your child, and your relationships.

Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum focuses on helping you come up with practical ideas about how to have a healthy pregnancy, support your child's development and health, and support your goals as a parent and family. The curriculum provides suggested activities and written information to help you and your child learn and grow.



Program Screenings & Assessments

During the first few visits with your Home Visitor, they will conduct screenings to identify your family's strengths and needs. Here are screenings typically done with families:

- Ages & Stages and Ages & Stages: Social Emotional screenings or Gessel Developmental and Social-Emotional Questionnaire screening (depending on the age of your child): To understand where the child is developmentally as well as determine how to best support their development.
- Family Assessment: To explore your family's overall interests and needs (for example, diapers, housing, food bank referrals, etc.) as well as assess the family's circumstances overall.
- Hearing and Vision Screening: To screen for any optical or auditory concerns. This is completed by Home Visitors or health staff (depending on the age of your child).
- Labor and Delivery Information: To explore how your child's birth went.
- Nutrition, Sleep, and Dental Assessment: To assess children's nutritional, sleep, sensory and dental strengths and concerns.
- Pedestrian Safety Curriculum and Safety Assessment: To discuss and explore safety in your home and out in your community.
- PHQ-9 and/or Edinburgh depression screening: To screen adults in the family for symptoms of depression and explore the need for referrals including mental health counseling or consultation with the program's Mental Health Consultant.
- Prenatal Information: To explore how pregnancy went.

In addition, you and your Home Visitor will observe and discuss your child's development and family strengths and needs throughout your participation in the program.

- Child and Family Updates: Explore for any important changes that have taken place in your family, and to check in about your child's health, dental health, nutrition, sleep, social-emotional and sensory development as your child grows.
- Teaching Strategies GOLD: A tool for looking at your child's development over time. You and your Home Visitor will review reports from these assessments so that you share an understanding of your child's development.

You and your Home Visitor will use these screenings and assessments to set goals and plan activities for your child, and to set goals for yourself and/or your family.

What to Expect When you're Expecting-

For pregnant clients and their families, you will have the opportunity to discuss and learn about:

- Prenatal care
- Prenatal nutrition
- Prenatal development
- Health
- Dental care
- Mental health
- Birth
- Postpartum
- Chest feeding/infant feeding
- Safe sleep
- Reading baby's cues
- Infant care
- How to help siblings adjust to the new baby
- Your Home Visitor can provide you with referrals to birth and postpartum doulas, lactation educators, and infant massage consultants.
- Regular weekly home visits will resume as soon as possible after your baby is born.



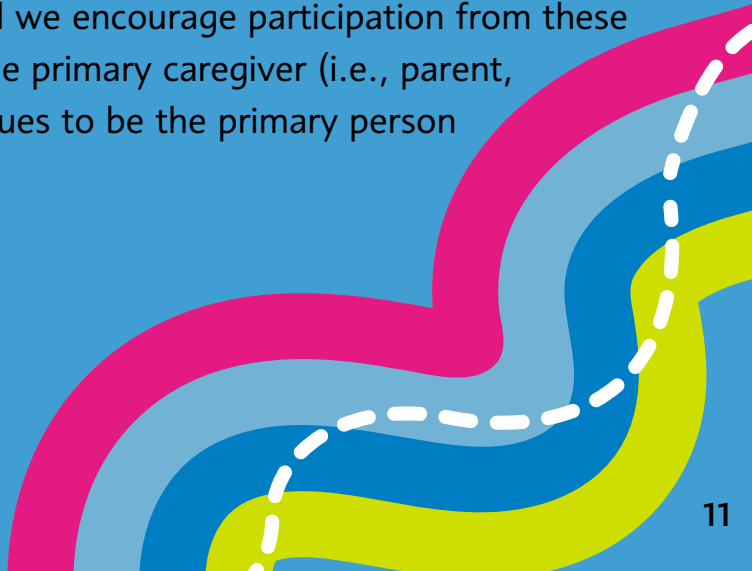
Home visitors will work alongside you to complete the following:

- Family Assessment: To explore your family's overall interests and needs (for example, doulas, housing, food bank referrals, etc.) as well as assess the family's circumstances overall.
- Prenatal Care Tracking: To check in about prenatal care.
- Prenatal Nutrition Assessment: To discuss strengths and challenges with the special nutritional needs of pregnancy.
- Birth Plan: To explore your hopes and plans for the birth process.
- Postpartum Visit: Within two weeks of giving birth, you will have a postpartum visit to support your recovery process and adjustment to having a new baby.



Attendance

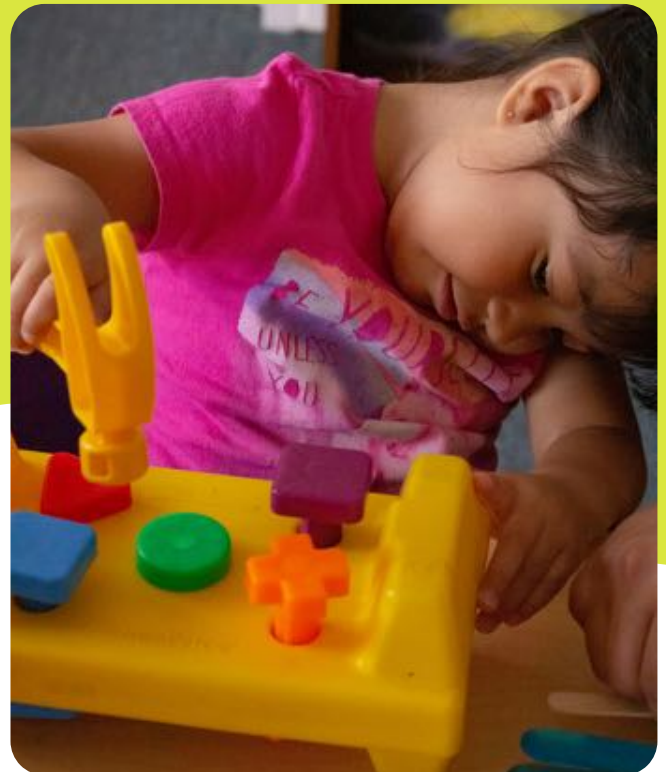
Your Home Visitor wants to work with you to facilitate your involvement in home visits. We believe that YOU are a vital part of your child's success and the more you participate by having consistent, weekly visits, the more you and your child will benefit. Please review the following information regarding expectations for participation and attendance:

- To maintain enrollment in the program, it is important that you participate in 90-minute (1½ hour) home visits, every week. We will aim to complete at least 46 home visits with you every program year.
 - We understand that sometimes cancellations may need to occur due to urgent matters or illness. Therefore, if you need to cancel and/or reschedule a home visit please notify your Home Visitor via phone call or text, right away.
 - Your Home Visitor will explore if another day/time in that week is possible and may offer a telehealth visit or attempt to schedule 2 visits the following week.
 - If you have difficulties meeting regularly, please let your Home Visitor know as soon as possible so you may work together to address barriers and come up with a plan to ensure consistent weekly visits.
 - If after working with your Home Visitor to address barriers, patterns of absences continue (e.g., no shows, multiple missed visits and/or cancellations) your services with the program may be closed.
 - Telehealth visits (by phone or Zoom video call) can replace in-person home visits temporarily depending on circumstances (see telehealth visit information below for further information).
 - The Home-Based Program welcomes caregivers who play important roles in a child's life (grandparents, aunts, etc.) and we encourage participation from these caregivers; however, it is required that the primary caregiver (i.e., parent, legal guardian, foster parent, etc.) continues to be the primary person participating in each home visit.
- 

Family Health and Safety

Conditions of Short-Term Exclusion

To help keep Early Head Start children, families, and staff healthy, please do not participate in any in-person program activities (like home visits, parent-child socialization groups, or special events) if you, your child, or a person in your household has a short-term injury or an acute or short-term contagious illness (for example, pink eye, strep throat, cold & cough, fever, vomiting, skin rashes). Home Visitors will also cancel in-person visits if they have a contagious illness. In some instances, we may request that you or your child be medically cleared by your doctor before in-person activities start again.



Telehealth Visits

The primary method of service delivery for the Home-Based EHS program is in-person visits conducted in the family's home. We recognize, however, that under certain circumstances in-person visits may not be possible. To minimize disruption to regular family visits, we allow for visits to be conducted by video call (or when this is not possible, by voice call) in certain situations. This ensures you can continue to receive program services in case of emergencies, illnesses, and/or time out of the service area (i.e., due to travel). We may offer telehealth visits if:

- There has been a major local emergency (for example, fire, floods, or earthquake) that makes conducting an in-person home visit impossible or unsafe;
- Your family and/or Home Visitor have been quarantined due to a public health emergency (for example, covid-19);
- One or more members of your family have a contagious illness, but you and your enrolled child are healthy enough to participate in the visit;
- Your Home Visitor has a mild illness or is caring for a sick relative that causes them to be unable to conduct an in-person visit, but they are well enough to work;
- You will be out of the area for more than one week (for example, due to travel), and are not able to participate in an in-person visit for that week.
- Other reasons for use of telehealth visits will be considered on a case-by-case basis with consultation with and approval from the Home Visitor's supervisor and program director.

If participating family members and/or staff are experiencing severe illness, the focus should be on health care, rest, and recovery. Home Visitors may not conduct telehealth visits when they are sick, on leave, or on vacation.

Video calls are conducted using Zoom to ensure HIPAA compliance (which makes sure that you, your child, and your family's information stays private).

Home Visitors will continue to use Partners for a Healthy Baby to plan and implement home visits. Handouts may be provided to families by email or text.

Home Visitors will collect any needed parent signatures (for example, for home visit verification) at the first in-person home visit following a telehealth visit or signatures will be collected through an electronic signature request.

Telehealth visits will be scheduled for 90 minutes (1½ hours), just like in-person home visits.

In the event of large-scale local emergency and/or quarantine, parent-child socialization groups may take place on Zoom, with 30-45 minutes for facilitators to consult with parents and 30 minutes for facilitators to guide parents and children through a shared child development activity.



Confidentiality

The privacy of your information and your child and family's information is very important to us!

Please note that all Vista Village employees are considered mandated reporters, which means that we have a legal obligation to report certain safety concerns. The only time we would share information without your written permission is if we become aware of a significant danger to yourself or others, including suspicion of child abuse, neglect, risk of suicide, and/or suspicion of abuse of adults 65 and older.

We value transparency and trust in our work, so if we do need to report possible child abuse or neglect concerns, we inform parents before contacting the Department of Child and Family Services, when safe and possible.

Other than these specific safety issues, we will not share any information about you unless we have your permission in writing on a "Release of Information" form.

We will request a "Release of Information" form at the time you apply for the program and then once each year while your child is enrolled to allow our health staff to contact your child's medical home to get information about your child's health, well-child exam history, and dental health. If you are experiencing a medically high-risk pregnancy, we will also request a "Release of Information" form to best support you to have a healthy pregnancy.

If additional information is needed from other agencies, schools, childcare, Regional Centers, or anyone else, your Home Visitor will not communicate with them until after you have signed a "Release of Information" form.

If at any time during our work together, you wish to revoke the "Release of Information," you may do so, by putting your request in writing and submitting it via email to the Program Manager:

Sheryl Huezo-Meshack
sherylhuezomeshack@vistadelmar.org

Health. Dental Health. & Nutrition

We want you and your child to be as healthy as possible.

- If you or your child do not have medical insurance or a continuous source of ongoing medical care, or if further diagnostic testing, examination, or treatment is needed, your Home Visitor can provide you with referrals.
- Trained staff will conduct a hearing and vision screening of your child within your first 45 days (about 1 and a half months) in the program. A referral will be provided if follow-up is needed.
- If your child does not have a dentist, your Home Visitor will provide you with referrals to pediatric dentists.
- If your child is diagnosed with a chronic or serious health condition, such as asthma, dental cavity, high lead level, seizures, serious allergy, etc., you will be contacted by the Health Services Manager to provide you with extra support.
- You will complete a nutrition assessment with your Home Visitor. If you would like additional support with nutrition or chest feeding, Vista Village's nutritionist and lactation educators are available for consultations.
- Your Home Visitor will bring Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum information on health, dental health, and nutrition topics and can tailor information to your specific needs and interests.



Mental Health

We want you and your child to be as socially and emotionally healthy as possible.

- Your Home Visitor will work with you to support you, your child, and other close family members in regulating and expressing emotions in healthy ways and building secure and close relationships.
- If you or anyone in your family would like additional support with mental health, your Home Visitor can provide you with referrals, including referrals to our Master of Social Work (MSW) Intern Program (if available), community counseling referrals, or to schedule a consultation with the program's mental health consultant.
- Family, individual, and couple's counseling may be available through an MSW Intern or through one of our community partners. Let your Home Visitor know if you are interested.



School Readiness & Child Development

School readiness starts before birth with a healthy pregnancy and with children's experiences in the first three years of life. You are your child's first and most important teacher.

- You and your Home Visitor will help your child build the skills and knowledge necessary for success in school, learning, and life.
- You and your Home Visitor will work together to make sure your child is ready for school, and you are ready to support your child's learning.
- You and your Home Visitor will focus on all areas of school readiness and child development, including approaches to learning, language, literacy, math, physical, cognitive, perceptual, social, and emotional development.

You and your Home Visitor will spend a lot of time focused on social-emotional development because that is the foundation for all other learning.

In-Kind Activities

Your Home Visitor will talk with you about child development activities you can do in between home visits to support your child's developmental goals and school readiness. Some examples of activities that can be done with your child as in-kind include:

- Reading to your child
- Playing with your child
- Doing art activities with your child
- Singing to your child

Your Home Visitor will check in with you at each visit to gather this information and have you sign the in-kind forms to document these activities.



Parent-Child Socialization Group

Parent-child socialization groups are held each month. Please look for scheduled socialization groups on the calendar and flyers you will receive monthly. Parent-child socialization groups include:

- Fun and educational group activities, including singing, story time, and arts/crafts
- Opportunities for children to socialize and practice vital skills with other children their age, such as sharing and turn taking
- Opportunities to meet other parents and make friends
- Child and adult-led play
- Nourishing snacks offered family style
- Discussions on topics including child development, self-care, communication, nutrition, health, positive discipline, and limit setting.
- Transportation is available upon request for groups.
- Please contact the staff listed on socialization group flyers to confirm your attendance and/or arrange for transportation at least two days before the group. Groups usually fill up fast, so please RSVP as early in the week as possible.
- In certain circumstances, socialization groups may be offered through Zoom calls.
- We provide transportation to and from each socialization group via Lyft. Parents must have a car seat for each child and should make every effort to be prepared at the designated times provided by their Lyft, so as to not miss their ride. If a Lyft is requested and missed 3 times within the program year, the program will NOT be able to offer said services for the remainder of the year.



Parent. Family. & Community Engagement

We want you to grow, succeed, and be a leader — in your family, in our program, and in the community. We recognize the importance of your own and your family's goals.

In addition to setting goals to support your child's development, you will set family goals in collaboration with your Home Visitor that can include many different types of goals.

For example:

- Family well-being: saving money each month to put towards a car, eating more nourishing meals, moving your body regularly
- Parent-child relationships: engaging in developmentally appropriate activities with your child, having more family outings
- Families as lifelong educators: helping your child learn in different areas of development
- Families as learners: taking classes to get your GED, high school diploma, job training, college classes/degrees, or ESL classes
- Family connections to peers and community: participating in activities in your community, like parent-child groups, library story times, and cultural events
- Families as advocates and leaders: Leading an activity at socialization group, participating in Policy Council (our leadership group), getting involved as a leader in other community activities
- Families in transition: supporting your child as they move toward aging out of our program and transition into preschool

Once goals are set, your Home Visitor will support you to work towards and reach your goals.



Disabilities

We welcome all families into the program, including families with different abilities.

- Your Home Visitor will talk with you about any concerns about your child's development.
- Vista Village has a Disabilities Specialist available for consultations.
- If needed, your Home Visitor can help you connect to the Regional Center or Los Angeles Unified School District and provide support as you access these resources (see below for more information).
- Regional Center: Services offered by a Regional Center may include speech therapy, physical therapy, behavioral therapy, etc. for children 0-3. Additional services are offered to children over the age of 3 if they meet certain criteria (i.e., Autism, Cerebral Palsy, etc.). These services can take place in the home. The formal document that includes the service plan and specific goals for the child is called an Individual and Family Services Plan, or IFSP.
- Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD): Like Regional Center, LAUSD provides support services for children 0-3 with significant vision, hearing, or orthopedic needs. They also have services for children with developmental delays who are 3 years or older. Services for children 0-3 years typically take place in the family's home, while services for children over 3 years of age usually take place at a school. The formal document that includes the service plan and specific goals for children over 3 years old is called an Individualized Education Plan, or an IEP.
- Your Home Visitor can also provide support to families with older children or adults with disabilities.



Parent Engagement Opportunities

There are many opportunities to be involved in the program, including:

- Home visits
- Parent Committee: meetings that give you the opportunity to learn about different things going on in the program and to give us feedback; these meetings usually take place once each month, right after a socialization group
- Socialization groups
- Parent surveys
- Parent workshops and trainings
- Outreach to help new families learn about our program
- Health Services Advisory Committee: meetings of a group of staff, parents, and community members who discuss and advise our program on health topics
- Policy Council: our leadership group, with parent and community representative members who are elected by program parents

For more information about parent engagement and leadership opportunities, speak to your Home Visitor.

Vista Village sometimes hosts special events. These may be for all enrolled families (like a parent workshop) or for a specific group (for example, those children/families graduating from our program). You will be informed about these events through flyers via text/email and directly by your Home Visitor. Furthermore, Home Visitors may sometimes provide families with special distributions of items that may include admission to special activities, toys, books, and/or gift cards. Please note that these distributions are often dependent on donations received by our program and cannot be guaranteed.



Transitions

Early Head Start serves families with children until around three years of age (under certain circumstances, children may be able to stay past 3 years of age but must finish our program before their 4th birthday). We want to make sure you and your child have a smooth transition.

- When your child turns two years old, your Home Visitor will start to talk to you about your transition options and share transition resources with you.
- Six months before your child's third birthday you will work together with your Home Visitor to develop a transition plan for your child.
- Your Home Visitor will work with you to identify the transition plan that best fits your child and family's needs, including a Head Start program, preschool, or other education programs.



Program Communication

- At the beginning of each month, you will receive a monthly calendar and flyer that includes information about socialization groups and program events.
- We also periodically send a newsletter with information about program activities, community events, health, developmental, social-emotional wellness and/or nutritional information.
- If you have opted in to receive communication from our program, these calendars, newsletters, and flyers are usually provided by text or email.



What to Do if You Have Concerns

We hope you have a great experience in the program. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns:

- Please talk with your Home Visitor. We understand that sometimes it may be hard to give direct feedback, but your Home Visitor wants to provide high quality services and would like to know if there is something they can do to improve your visits and services.
- If you are unable to resolve your concerns with your Home Visitor or feel as though you cannot discuss your concerns with your Home Visitor, you may speak to their direct supervisor (please reference [page 2](#) to obtain the supervisor's name and phone number)
- If the supervisor is unable to resolve your concerns, you may speak with the Program Manager or Program Director by calling the Vista Village office at 323-934-7979.



Other Vista Village Programs



In addition to our Home-Based Early Head Start program, Vista Village has the following programs:

- Early Head Start Childcare Partnership: skilled family childcare providers and an infant center that offer high-quality learning through meaningful interactions, fostering creativity and critical thinking. Monthly family visits from Family Engagement Specialists enhance the home-school connection by supporting overall family well-being.
- Childcare Program: integrates childcare, child development and support services for families meeting income eligibility criteria through a network of state-licensed family childcare homes for children 6 weeks to 4 years old.
- MSW Intern Program: provides opportunities for parents, children, and family members to access mental health counseling through Masters of Social Work student interns. Each student intern is under the supervision of a skilled Licensed Clinical Social Worker, to ensure the highest standards of care and support.

Vista Village is a department of Vista Del Mar. To learn about other programs available through Vista Del Mar, please visit www.vistadelmar.org.

Case Management & Referrals

Your Home Visitor will talk with you about the needs of your family to make sure you know about and connect with community resources.

211 is a 24-hour resource line that can provide you and your family with information about resources in Los Angeles County, including housing, food banks, childcare, health care, and mental health services.



Meet Our EHS Home Based Team



DEBORAH KANEGSBERG
Early Head Start Director



SHERYL HUEZO-MESHACK
Program Manager
Mental Health Consultant



SOMMER WARE
Program Supervisor



RUTHY ESCOBEDO
JEDI Manager
Supervisor
MSW Field Instructor



HEIDI COTA
Home Visitor



LIZA GRAMILLO
Home Visitor



MONIQUE HOWARD
Professional
Development Coach



MARLENE MANZANARES
Home Visitor



SONIA MONTERROSO
Home Visitor

Meet Our EHS Home Based Team



BRISLEY MORAN
Home Visitor



JOANNA PLUMMER
Home Visitor



JOCELYN ROCHIN
Home Visitor



FAVIOLA VARELA
Home Visitor



ROSIE BOSTON
Health Services Manager



HEISSEL FISCHMAN
ERSEA Manager



GUADALUPE GALVEZ
Disabilities Specialist



IVAN RODRIGUEZ GARCIA
Administrative
Coordinator



YAMILET GUERRA
ERSEA Supervisor

Meet Our EHS Home Based Team



SHARON LOVI
Quality Assurance Director



MARIA MANZANO
ERSEA Associate



RON PORTILLO
Operations Manager



JOSE TONY RODRIGUEZ
Facilities Coordinator



MONICA ROLLINS
Education Manager



SHOBA SINGH
Health Services Associate



ALINA VEGA
Chief Program Officer

One final note

We trust that you and your child will find joy in our program and make the most of the available services. Please contact your Home Visitor for help accessing the program services and resources described in this handbook. As your child's first teacher, your role in their learning is essential. We want to support you in that incredibly important role. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to work with you and your family on this lovely journey!



*Thank you for being a part of our Early
Head Start Home-Based Program!*

6926 Melrose Ave. Los Angeles CA 90038

Office: (323) 934-7979

vistavillagela.org

A division of Vista Del Mar