



# Parent Handbook

2021-2022  
School year



# Table of Contents

Page	Section
5-6	Head Start Program Information
7	Site Locations
8	Welcome Letter
9	What is Head Start & Early Head Start? The Foundation of Our Program
10	Your Rights & Responsibilities as a Head Start/Early Head Start Parent
11	Family & Community Partnership Services
12-14	Parent Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ways You Can Get Involved</li><li>• Classroom Activities</li><li>• Home Education Activities</li><li>• Special Events</li><li>• Decision Making Process</li><li>• Volunteers are Vital to the Program</li><li>• Child Care Reimbursement</li></ul>
15-16	Education Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curriculum Statement</li><li>• Assessment Tools</li><li>• Classroom Schedule</li><li>• The Environment</li><li>• Learning Centers</li><li>• Outdoor Play</li><li>• Interacting with Others</li><li>• Best Learning Experience Possible</li></ul>
17-20	Classroom Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Center Emergencies</li><li>• Class Cancellations</li><li>• Outdoor Play &amp; Weather</li><li>• Personal Belongings</li><li>• Dressing Appropriately for School</li><li>• Toilet Training</li><li>• Child Discipline</li></ul>

# Table of Contents

Page	Section
21-23	Classroom Information Continued. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Field Trip Procedures</li><li>• Parents are Vital to our Field Trips</li><li>• Neighborhood Walks</li><li>• Transitions</li><li>• No Food Brought From Home</li><li>• Special Diets</li><li>• Holiday Celebrations &amp; Parties</li><li>• Pets</li><li>• Screen Time</li></ul>
24-25	Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Screenings</li><li>• Washing Hands</li><li>• Breastfeeding</li></ul>
26-30	Health Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Well-Child Care</li><li>• Physicals &amp; Dentals</li><li>• Immunizations</li><li>• Disability Services</li><li>• Mental Health</li><li>• Head Lice</li><li>• Seeking Medical Help Immediately</li><li>• Release of Information</li><li>• Medication at School</li><li>• Illness Guide</li><li>• Symptoms Requiring Exclusion from Head Start/Early Head Start</li><li>• COVID-19 Precautions</li><li>• Applying Ointments, Creams, &amp; Special Soaps</li></ul>
31-33	Nutrition Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nutrition Services</li><li>• Mealtime at School</li><li>• Non-discrimination Statement</li></ul>
34	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Notes Sent Home</li><li>• Keeping Staff Informed of Changes</li><li>• Participant Grievance Procedures</li></ul>

# Table of Contents

Page	Section
35-37	Arrival And Departure Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrival &amp; Departure</li><li>• Child Safety</li><li>• Car Seat Concerns</li><li>• Children left alone in vehicles</li><li>• Youth Pick Up</li></ul>
38	Pedestrian Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What You Should Know</li><li>• Safety Tips for Young Children</li><li>• What You Can Do</li></ul>
39-40	Safety Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video</li><li>• Taking Photographs</li><li>• Weapons</li><li>• Visitor Conduct</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Tobacco-Free Environment</li><li>• Access to Children – Sex Offenders</li><li>• Cell Phone Free Zone</li></ul>
41-43	Parent Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance Policy</li><li>• Extended Leave Policy</li><li>• Mandatory Reporting</li><li>• Custody</li><li>• Gifts</li><li>• Confidentiality Policy</li><li>• Access to Records</li></ul>
44	Quick Info <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Day of Class</li><li>• Teacher's Name</li><li>• Classroom Phone Number</li><li>• Classroom Hours</li><li>• School Address</li><li>• Family Specialist's Name</li><li>• Family Specialist's Phone Number</li></ul>
45	Parent Signature Page

# Head Start Program Information

Leadership Team  
(319) 753-0193

Position	Staff Name
Program Director	Matthew LeClere
Family Services Coordinator	Jill Hulett
Health & Nutrition Services Coordinator	Leah Haberichter
Education Manager & Education Coordinator for Henry County	Dawn Cazin
Education Coordinator for Lee County	Kathy Scott
Education Coordinator for Des Moines County	Jackie Bietz
Facilities & Transportation Coordinator	Monte Hawley
Administrative Coordinator	Jessica Burnham
Education Coach	Heather Gadbow



**Head Start  
& Early Head Start**  
Community Action of Southeast Iowa

# Head Start Program Information

## **Grantee Agency:**

Community Action of Southeast Iowa  
2850 Mt. Pleasant Street, Suite 108  
Burlington, IA 52601  
(319)753-0193

## ***Non-Discrimination Statement & Federal Civil Rights Statement***

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family, or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX, Section 504(Rehabilitation Act of 1973), and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with the policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515-281-5295; or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, telephone number 312/730-1576, or email: [OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)

A federal grievance can be made by calling (866) 632-9992 to request a copy of the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form. The complaint form or a written complaint letter should be submitted to the following address: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.



# Site Locations

## Burlington:

### ***Burlington Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start***

Head Start Preschool  
& Early Head Start  
700 South Starr  
Burlington, IA 52601  
(319) 752-5692

## Fort Madison:

### ***Eichacker Community Action Center***

Head Start Preschool  
3433 Avenue O  
Fort Madison, IA 52627  
(319) 372-4471

## Mount Pleasant:

### ***Tolson Community Action Center***

Head Start Preschool  
& Early Head Start  
1303 W. Washington St.  
Mount Pleasant, IA 52641  
319-385-4523

### ***Richardson School***

Head Start Preschool  
& Early Head Start  
1023 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fort Madison, IA 52627  
319-372-5462 (Head Start)  
319-372-2038 (Early Head Start)

## Keokuk:

### ***Marie Tallarico Community Action Center***

Head Start Preschool  
& Early Head Start  
220 South 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Keokuk, IA 52632  
319-524-6383

## **Did you know that we are on Facebook?**

1. On the [Head Start and Early Head Start pages](#), we post about fun school events, parenting tips, creative ideas and activities to do at home, etc. Search for and like us at the following sites:

- Community Action of Southeast Iowa, Head Start/EHS (General Information for all sites)
- Burlington Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start (Burlington)
- Eichacker & Richardson Community Action Head Start (Fort Madison)
- Marie Tallarico Head Start (Keokuk)
- Tolson Community Action Head Start (Mt. Pleasant)



2. On the [Community Action of Southeast Iowa page](#) you can keep updated on many things, including job openings, for Head Start/Early Head Start and all of our agency's programs, along with information about WIC, LIHEAP Energy Assistance, FaDSS, Weatherization, etc.

**We are also on Twitter! @HeadStartCAofSEIA**





# Welcome!

To Head Start and Early Head Start

You are officially a part of our team! You are especially important in our Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms because no one knows your child as well as you do. After all, you are your child's first and most important teacher. Your support, can help us to design and carry out the best program of learning for your child. We really depend on you for our program to be a success.

We encourage and welcome you to be involved in your child's experience in the program this year. We realize that everyone has different interests and limitations on their time but there are a variety of ways and opportunities for you to get involved. There's something here for everyone!

Remember, at Head Start/Early Head Start, everything your child needs while she/he is at school will be provided by the program. That includes diapers, wipes, formula, baby food, nutritious meals and snacks, educational materials, etc. You don't need to provide anything. The only thing we need from you is your involvement in our program and getting your child to school each day. We are very excited to work with you and help you find just the *right* involvement activity for you!



# What is Head Start/Early Head Start?

Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive preschool and child development program for children 3-5 years of age.

## Part Day Head Start Classes

- Classes are open Monday – Thursday (3.5 to 4 hours per day).
- Limited transportation may be provided to families who live in Burlington.

## Duration Head Start Classes

- Classes are open Monday – Friday (6 hours per day).
- Transportation is NOT provided.

Early Head Start is a child development program for infants and toddlers (birth – 3 years of age). It is also a prenatal education program for pregnant mothers.

- Operating hours vary by classroom and may be determined by parent work/school schedules.

There is **NO COST** for children and families who qualify for and participate in the Community Action Early Head Start or Head Start program.

## The Foundation of Our Program

The Head Start/Early Head Start programs are made up of four major components. These four components provide the foundation upon which we are able to provide an individualized, strong and relationship based program for you and your child.

These four components are:

- 1) Education
- 2) Health
- 3) Parent Involvement
- 4) Family & Community Partnerships



# Your Rights & Responsibilities as a Head Start/Early Head Start Parent

Your Rights	Your Responsibilities
1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operating of the program.	1. To learn about the program and take part in major policy decisions.
2. To work with teachers and other staff to plan activities at the local center and in your child's classroom to promote parent involvement and participation.	2. To accept the program as an opportunity through which you can improve your life and you child's life.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom.	3. To take part in the classroom as an observer, a volunteer or a paid employee. To contribute in any way to enrich the program.
4. To choose whether or not to participate, without fear of endangering your child's right to be in the program.	4. To take part in elections, to explain the program to other parents and encourage their participation.
5. To be informed regularly about your child's progress in school.	5. To discuss ways to help your child develop and progress with teachers and staff.
6. To always be treated with respect and dignity.	6. To cooperate with and be respectful of all program staff.
7. To expect guidance for your child from teachers and staff to help his/her total individual development.	7. To guide your own child with firmness and consistency that is both loving and protective.
8. To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.	8. To offer <u>constructive</u> criticism of the program (to defend against unfair criticism) and to share in evaluating it.
9. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase your job skills and parenting skills.	9. To take advantage of programs and information designed to increase your knowledge about child development and skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To be informed about <i>all</i> community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of family life.	10. To be involved in community programs which help to improve health, education and recreation for all.

# Family & Community Partnership Services

The Family and Community Partnership Services component operates under the belief that the welfare and development of a child cannot be separated from circumstances that may affect the family at home. For this reason, we focus not only on the child, but the whole family.

Each classroom has a team designated to work closely with each family. The team consists of a family development specialist, lead teacher and teacher associates.

## Your Family Development Specialist:

- ✓ Works closely with you to identify your needs, strengths and goals.
- ✓ Helps you to locate resources within the community to help you achieve your goals and meet your needs.
- ✓ Will meet with you two or more times a year.
  - At the beginning of the year they will help you to identify your goals and talk about steps to achieve them.
  - They will follow up with you throughout the school year to see what progress you are making towards your goals and if you need additional assistance or resources.
  - At the end of the school year they will meet with you to make a final determination of what progress you've made towards your goals.

You can request to visit or meet with your family development specialist at any time and as often as you would like throughout the school year. As we work with you to reach your goals, our goal is to help you strengthen your family and give your child (and family) the best possible chance for success.





# Parent Involvement

## Home Education Activities

- Participating in home visits
- Attending parent–teacher conferences
- Attending trainings of interest to you that are offered by the agency.
  - **Example:** classes or trainings on child discipline, parenting, family budgeting, First Aid, CPR, etc.
- Working with family development specialists so they may help you attain your goals and meet needs that will benefit your entire family.
- Supporting your child’s learning at home by:
  - Completing classroom/home connection forms
  - Participating on Class Dojo
  - Helping your child with letter recognition
  - Teaching him/her to roll over
  - Toilet training
  - Learning shapes and colors
  - Trying new foods at home
  - And more...

## Special Events

You not only have the opportunity to attend special events that take place throughout the school year, but to help plan them too. Special events might include the following:

- Parent Group Meetings
- Guy’s Night or Gal’s Night
- Family Game Night
- Family Picnic, Bowling Night, Skating Party, etc.
- Ball Games
- Scavenger Hunt
- Snowman Building Day
- Kite Flying Day
- Dance Party/Kids Karaoke
- End of the Year Celebration



# Parent Involvement

## Decision-Making Process

Parents who are elected to serve on committees as decision making members are a HUGE part of the Head Start/Early Head Start program. Parents who are involved in these committees are seen not only as advocates and “voices” for children, parents and families, but as a key part of the success of our program. Parents can get involved in the following committees:

Committee	What They Do
Parent Group (local Center Committee)	Planning special events or activities, keeping up-to-date on happenings within the program, etc
Personnel Committee	Providing feedback for personnel policies
Policy Council Representative	Approving program, budget and personnel decisions
Board of Directors	Making and approving decisions that affect all Community Action programs, not just Head Start/Early Head Start
Menu Planning Committee	Help plan and make suggestions for menus
Health Advisory Committee	Express ideas about health concerns affecting children in the local community

If you would like to know more about other parent involvement opportunities, please speak with your family development specialist. They are excited to meet with you and tell you more.

## Volunteers are Vital to the Program

“In-Kind” is a term you will hear often! It means “donation”. Because our programs are funded by a grant awarded by the federal government, we are required to “match” the funds that we receive. One out of every five dollars that we receive, must come from the local community through donated space, service, supplies, cash, or time. This is where you come in! The **TIME** that you volunteer in the program is converted into a dollar amount. For every hour you volunteer, we receive a credit equal to one hour of the current beginning wages of our program. We may also count the time you spend working on activities at home through your home connection forms.

## Child Care Reimbursement

While you participate in Policy Council, the Board of Directors or other committee meetings, you may be reimbursed for child care expenses incurred while attending those meetings. Child Care Reimbursements are **not** available for attending local Parent Committee meetings. **Your family development specialist can help you complete your Child Care Reimbursement Form.**

# Education Services

## Curriculum Statement

Our Curriculum supports the theory of play-based learning.

1. Research has shown that children learn best while actively engaging in play.
2. Play-based learning can set your child up for success in school.
3. Children learn best in an atmosphere of care, trust *and* respect in which they develop positive relationships with peers and adults.
4. All children are different and are at varying levels of development.

## Assessment Tools

We use a variety of assessment tools to help us learn more about your child's developmental level, areas of success and areas to focus on. These tools help us not only to individualize our curriculum, to better meet the developmental needs of your child, but to assess what progress she or he is making, throughout the year. Our assessment tools cover objectives for development and learning in the following areas:

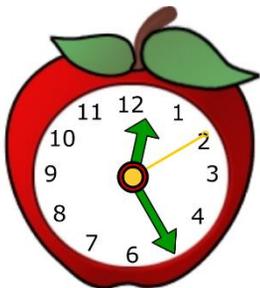
- Social & Emotional
- Cognitive
- Physical
- Language & Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts



We have Parent/Teacher Conferences (two times per year) to discuss your child's progress in each of the developmental areas. This is also a great time for you and your child's teacher to share ideas and set goals for your child to ensure that she/he is successful in school and gains the skills necessary to become kindergarten ready.

## Classroom Schedule

Children thrive when there are set routines for them at both home and school. We provide a daily schedule that is followed every day. This teaches children what to expect from their environment, how to deal with change, learn the concept of time, learn self-confidence, etc.



### Sample Part Day Schedule

- 8:30 am – Arrival
- 8:45 am – Breakfast
- 9:15 am – Journaling
- 9:30 am – Brush Teeth
- 9:40 am – Large Group Activity (Songs, Movement, Discussion or Story)
- 9:55 am – Small Group
- 10:05 am – Free Choice
- 11:05 am – Outside Play
- 11:35 am – Lunch
- 12:00 pm – Return Home

# Education Services

## The Environment

We believe that all activities are an opportunity for learning and growth! Children learn best through engaging in play with skill building materials, engaging with adults, and building positive peer relationships.

## Learning Centers

We provide your child with a well-rounded education by providing opportunities for him/her to explore numerous interest areas. During free choice time, children are able to choose what activities they want to do and whether they want to do an activity on their own or with their classmates. Free choice time enables children to build self-confidence and encourages them to learn how to communicate effectively with others.

### **Activity centers may include:**

Music Area  
Writing/Journal Center  
Block Area  
Sand & Water Table  
Math Center

Science Center  
Library Center  
Dramatic Play  
Art Center  
Quiet Area



## Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, we go outside **every day** to play and learn about the world around us. We're not only learning about nature and the outdoors, but we're also making sure we develop healthy, strong bodies. Children also need that time daily to "burn off a little energy."

## Interacting with Others

Each child must learn to use their body just as effectively as their mind. Through varied group activities and learning experiences, children learn to interact appropriately with each other. Children are encouraged to "use their words" when in conflict with others and are encouraged to resolve conflicts appropriately on their own. Staff use proven methods to help children learn appropriate problem solving techniques. Children learn to respect others *and* themselves.

## Best Learning Experience Possible

Each child deserves the best possible learning experiences and chances to be successful. We do this by:

- Maintaining low child-to-staff ratios.
- Providing individualized attention and a curriculum designed to meet a child's individual developmental needs.
- Ensuring that staff receive training specific to child development and early childhood education throughout their employment.

# Classroom Info

## EMERGENCY PLAN

### Center Emergencies

In cases of extreme emergency, such as an evacuation from the facility or the need to lock down the building, the first priority is to ensure the safety of the children and staff. The next priority is to notify parents and/or guardians. We will notify parents by phone, if possible. If we are unable to notify parents by phone, we will then text them. Parents can check the radio or Facebook for information and updates regarding the situation. Parents can also call our Central Office (319-753-0193) for information. When such emergencies arise, we follow the direction and guidance of local Emergency Services. We also follow the Emergency Procedures Guide that outlines our procedures to follow if/when an emergency occurs. This guide is posted in every classroom.

### Class Cancellations

Unforeseen circumstances will occasionally happen and classes may be delayed, dismissed early or cancelled. Please make sure you have back-up childcare for times such as these. You will be notified of the cancellation by phone, at the number we have on file. We understand that your child may be disappointed about school being cancelled, but the health of our staff and the children is very important to us.

Tune into the following radio stations for cancellations:

- ✓ KBUR am 1490
- ✓ KGRS fm 107.3
- ✓ KBKB am 1360
- ✓ KBKB fm 101.7 (The Bull)
- ✓ KILJ am 1130
- ✓ KILJ fm 105.5
- ✓ KOKX am 1310



You may also check our Facebook pages for information on cancellations, however, Facebook may not always have that posted immediately.

Search for and like us at the following sites:

- Burlington Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start (Burlington)
- Eichacker & Richardson Community Action Head Start (Fort Madison)
- Marie Tallarico Head Start (Keokuk)
- Tolson Community Action Head Start (Mt. Pleasant)

# Classroom Info

## Outdoor Play & Weather

Play is an important part of our day – inside and outside. “Children who regularly play outdoors are healthier, play more creatively, have more active imaginations, report lower stress levels and demonstrate greater respect for themselves and others (NAEYC 2014)”. Outdoor play allows children to play freely with peers, expand their imagination beyond the restraints of indoor activities, release energy, explore their senses and develop an understanding of, and appreciation for, nature.

Unless it is too cold or too hot for the children to play outside safely, we will go outside to play every day. We follow the *Child Care Weather Watch* chart developed by the *Iowa Department of Public Health, Healthy Child Care Iowa* to guide us in determining whether it is safe to play outside for the day.

### Understand the Weather

#### Wind-Chill



- 30° is **chilly** and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is **cold**
- 0° to 15° is **very cold**
- -20° to 0° is **bitter cold** with significant risk of **frostbite**
- -20° to -60° is **extreme cold** and **frostbite** is likely
- -60° is **frigid** and exposed **skin will freeze** in 1 minute

#### Heat Index



- 80° or below is considered **comfortable**
- 90° beginning to feel **uncomfortable**
- 100° **uncomfortable** and may be **hazardous**
- 110° considered **dangerous**

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

## Child Care Weather Watch

Additional information can be found at:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/Files/HCCT/weatherwatch.pdf>

		Wind-Speed Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)									
		Wind Speed in mph									
Air Temperature		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	
	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27	
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13	
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1	
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15	
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29	
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43		

Comfortable for outdoor play
  Caution
  Danger

		Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)												
		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
Air Temperature (F)		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
104	119	124	131	137										

## Personal Belongings

Occasionally, children’s belongings will be misplaced. Please follow these guidelines:

- All articles of clothing (particularly coats, hats and gloves) should be clearly marked with your child’s name.
- Please have your child leave toys at home unless it is requested by the teacher for a special activity (e.g. Show & Tell).
- \*If an item is too valuable to lose, please don’t send it to school with your child.

# Classroom Info

## Dressing Appropriately for School

Please do the following:

- Have your child wear comfortable clothing to school that can be easily managed for bathroom needs.
- Send a change of clothes to school each day, or leave a set in their cubby/locker (remember to replace these clothes as your child grows).
- We do “messy” activities so please don't send your child to school in an outfit that you will be upset about getting stained.
- Dress your child appropriately for the weather. e.g. jackets, hats, gloves, boots, winter coats, etc.
- Send your child in a jacket and layers (morning can be chilly but the afternoon can become hot).
- Have your child wear shoes that they can run, climb and safely play in. Please think twice before sending your child to school in sandals, especially “flip flops”. **Children often trip and fall when trying to run outside in their sandals and we want your child to be safe!**
- Send a regular pair of shoes with your child if she/he will be arriving in snow boots.
- Dress yourself and your child “for success” by not wearing pajamas to school.



## Toilet Training

We highly recommend that children be toilet trained *before* enrolling in Head Start. If your child is still mastering toilet training, we ask that you and your child's teacher work closely with each other **so the same routine is done at both home and school**, to encourage toilet training success.

It is normal for preschool aged children to have occasional toileting accidents. We do our best to respect your child's privacy and dignity and for this reason, we ask that you send a change of clothes and change of underwear for your child every day, or leave an extra set in their cubby/locker.

If your child has an accident at school, his/her clothing will be removed and placed in a plastic bag to be returned to you. Please understand that due to health and safety guidelines, we are not able to rinse or wash your child's clothing. If your child has a bowel movement accident, underwear and clothes will be sent home dirty in a plastic bag. In order to protect your child, the other children and our staff from possible contamination, there must be as little contact as possible with the soiled clothing. Soiled clothing must be taken home daily, as accidents occur.

# Classroom Info



## Child Discipline

DISCIPLINE is helping a child change random and impulsive, behavior into controlled, purposeful, informed behavior. This is a long, slow process which requires communication, patience and understanding from the adults in the child's life.

It is our policy that, **under no circumstances**, will a staff member, a program volunteer, or a parent use physical punishment on any child who is attending or visiting the Head Start/Early Head Start program. Actions such as hitting, grabbing, pinching, yanking, pulling, shaking, or spanking are not allowed.

In addition, punishment that is humiliating or frightening will not be used and a child will not be subjected to verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about themselves or their families. Children need to feel that Head Start/Early Head Start is a pleasant, safe and caring place where they can grow and learn.

On occasion, a child may not be able to control his/her own actions. Head Start staff will physically intervene only when a child is in immediate danger of hurting him/herself or another individual. Occasionally, interventions may include "body wrapping", (i.e. a staff member sits with the child on their lap and wraps the child in their arms until the child calms down). Staff are mindful that this intervention must be done on the floor and away from furniture, due to the safety needs of the child.

If Head Start staff must intervene, the parent/s will be notified by an **Incident and/or Behavior Report** that will be given at the end of the day. It may be necessary for the staff and parent/s to meet and develop a **safety plan** for the child. If a child continually endangers himself/herself or others, it will be necessary to evaluate the type of Head Start/Early Head Start services (and other services) that are appropriate for the child and family.

# Classroom Info

## Field Trip Procedures

Field trips may be taken periodically throughout the school year by Head Start staff and children. These trips are planned as *enrichment* experiences for the children. Parents will be notified of field trips in advance and will need to notify staff if they wish to accompany their child or if they do not want their child to participate in them.

Parents are a vital part of our field trips! We require that four adults (per classroom) are in attendance on field trips. Only Head Start children and staff, along with adult volunteers, are allowed to ride in the school buses. Parents who chaperone will not be able to bring siblings or other children along.

Iowa laws and Head Start regulations regarding safe transportation of children and adults will be followed. We will do the following:

- We will use child restraints and seat belts while on the bus.
- Leadership staff will be notified when all staff and children are on a walk or field trip.
- First aid kits and emergency numbers will be taken by staff whenever they leave the Head Start center.
- Parents will be notified of any emergency situations that may occur, as quickly as possible.



## Neighborhood Walks

There will be occasions when your child will go on a neighborhood walk or activity. Extra adults will be recruited to assist with the children and provide for their safety. Staff will post a note to let you know they are on a walk so that you will know where to find them. The note will tell you what time they left and what time they plan to return.

## Transitions

Children are provided with various transition opportunities. Children may transition from Early Head Start to Head Start, from one Head Start classroom to another and from Head Start to kindergarten or to other programs (such as the Developmental Preschool, Pre-K or private school). Our goal is to do whatever we can to help your child feel as comfortable as possible in his/her new classroom.

# Classroom Info

## No Food Brought from Home

The only food that can be served to the children is food that has been prepared by our cooks or program staff. We have many children with food allergies and food sensitivities and this is the only way that we can ensure the health and safety of each child. Please do not allow children to bring food into the building or send any treats to school with them, as we cannot serve them.

## Special Diets

We serve a wide variety of very nutritious foods. We understand that some children are “picky eaters”, but we can only change what your child is served if she/he has a food allergy, food sensitivity or medical condition as specified by his/her doctor. Special diets can be accommodated for those with religious preferences.

## Holiday Celebrations & Parties

We wish to respect the different religions and faiths of our families and thus *do not* celebrate holidays in our classrooms. Some examples of celebrations we may observe, however, include the following: a Fall Festival, Winter Wonderland, Spring Fling, Beach Day, Art in the Park, Pajama Day, etc.

Children love to celebrate and teachers would like the parent’s ideas (and their help) in planning for these special days, so please come to parent group meetings or see your family development specialist about volunteering for the Event Planning Committee.

No outside food is allowed at celebrations or special events. If food is served, it will be provided by the Head Start program. Nutritious suggestions are always welcome!



# Classroom Info

## Pets

On rare occasion, staff may organize a time when animals may be brought to the classroom for a visit. Ferrets, reptiles (including turtles), and birds of the parrot family will not be allowed at any time due to licensing regulations.

Staff will ensure that visiting animals are healthy and that documentation of all current vaccinations are available. Owners will be asked to ensure that their animal has a gentle nature and is familiar with children.

Prior to the visit, children will receive instruction about how to appropriately greet and interact with the animals. Children and animals will be closely monitored to prevent mishaps.

Children and staff will wash hands *before* and *after* any contact with animals. Children **will not** be forced to interact with any animals.



## Screen Time

Head Start recognizes that “screen time” with television, tablets, computers, cellphones, etc. is a favorite past time of children (and adults) in the United States. However, recreational screen time is not a part of our classrooms.

We encourage the children to be active and explore their classroom, environments and relationships with peers and staff.

Research has shown that if children spend too much time watching television, playing on tablets or computers, playing video games, etc. that their risk of obesity rises greatly. **It is recommended that children have no more than 2 hours of “screen time” each day.**

# Health Services

Our Health Services Component operates under the belief that a “healthy child is a happy child”. When a child is not healthy, his/her ability to learn is inhibited. At Head Start/Early Head Start, we provide each child with a comprehensive health care program to ensure that each child has the best opportunity possible to learn *and* grow.

## Health Services includes the following:

- Physical & Dental Health
- Mental Health
- Nutrition

## Health Screenings

We recognize the importance of prevention, early detection and treatment of any health problems, and well-child care. Health screenings are a regular part of our programs.

Each child is provided the opportunity to participate in the following screenings:

- Physical
- Dental
- Vision
- Hearing
- Social-Emotional
- Routine Height & Weight measurements
- Lead & Hemoglobin
- Nutrition
- Development



These screenings may detect any possible health concerns. We can then help you locate the necessary resources in order to address those concerns. We also follow up on referrals made and treatment received to ensure that your child’s needs are being met.



# Health Services

## Washing Hands

We wash our hands a lot! We wash upon entering the classroom, before and after eating, after using the restroom, when we leave the classroom for the day, etc. We strive to make our classrooms a healthy place to learn.



## Breastfeeding

At Early Head Start, we strongly support a mother's desire to breastfeed. Our Early Head Start program supports breastfeeding mothers by encouraging them to supply breastmilk when their infants are in our care. We can also make arrangements for you to have a separate nursing area available to use.



# Health Policies

## Well-Child Care

Our goal is to make sure each child is as healthy as she/he can be and is developing appropriately. In order to do this, each child is required to have a physical **and** dental exam completed by a physician and dentist.

### Physicals

DHS Licensing requires that each child have a current physical. Head Start/Early Head Start children must submit a current physical exam within 30 days after a child's first day of school. Head Start/Early Head Start children must also maintain current physicals **during** their enrollment in the program. If a current physical exam is not received, a child will be excluded from the program until the exam is completed. Due to DHS licensing, children cannot attend school if they are not current on their physical.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT TIMELINE	
Program	Physical Requirement by Age
Early Head Start (under 3 years old)	2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months and 24 months
Head Start Preschool (3-5 years old)	Each year (every 12 months)

### Dentals

Contrary to what many may think, a child's primary teeth (baby teeth) are just as important as permanent teeth. These teeth begin to appear when a baby is 6-12 months old. Primary teeth help children chew and speak and they also hold space in the jaws for permanent teeth that are growing under the gums. Early examination by a dentist can help us to identify whether a child is high-risk for dental disease and/or tooth decay. If there are concerns, these early dental exams help to get a treatment plan in place so no further disease or decay takes place. This also helps to prevent any permanent teeth from becoming damaged.

DENTAL REQUIREMENT TIMELINE	
Age of Child	Dental Requirement
1-3 Years Old	Yearly Dental Exams are recommended. If a dental exam is not completed, a physician can check the teeth and gums at the physical exam. If a dentist or physician doesn't check a child's teeth/gums, Early Head Start Staff will perform a "lift the lip" check.
3-5 Years Old	Dental exam each year (with a dentist)

**Please remember that our staff are here to help you! If you have any difficulty locating a physician or dentist for your child, please speak with your child's family development specialist. She/he can help you locate a doctor in the area and can even help with transportation to the appointment.**

# Health Policies

## Immunizations

We require that immunizations are up-to-date before a child comes to school. This ensures that your child is healthy and ensures the well-being of the other children and staff. Head Start/Early Head Start children must also maintain current immunization schedule during their enrollment in the program. If a current immunization schedule is not kept up-to-date, a child will be excluded from the program until the immunizations are completed.

### Immunization Schedule:

Vaccine	Newborn	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	12-18 Months	4-6 years.
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis		X	X	X	X	X
Polio		X	X		X	X
Measles, Mumps, Rubella					X	X
HIB, Bacterial Meningitis		X	X	X	X	
Hepatitis B	X	X			X	
Varicella					X	X
Pneumococcal		X	X	X	X	

**If you have questions regarding the immunization schedule or any health related concerns or issues speak with your child's physician or family development specialist.**

## Disability Services

All children, regardless of disability, are eligible for the Head Start/Early Head Start program. Our staff work in partnership with local agencies that provide services to children with disabilities, as well as doctors and Child Health Specialty Clinics. If your child has a disability, or you are concerned about a certain area of his/her development, please speak with your child's teacher so we can develop a plan that will enable us to provide your child with the appropriate services while she/he is in the program.

## Mental Health

We work to encourage healthy emotional and social development. A mental health professional visits each of our classrooms at least two times per year. This person is available to provide mental health consultation or training to staff **and** parents to make them more aware of the importance of early attention to the special problems that young children may face.



# Health Policies

## Head Lice

When a child is found to have head lice, the parent will be contacted. The child can remain in school that day but before the child can return to school the next day, the parent must administer a treatment for head lice. We suggest the treatment be with a commercial product such as Rid or Nix. A child may return to class after treatment and will be checked by the classroom staff to make sure there are no live bugs in the hair. If live bugs are found, the child will not be able to stay at school that day. The child can return to school after no live bugs are found in the hair.

When a child's hair is being combed to get rid of lice nits, it needs to be done with a special nit comb. A regular comb will not get all of the nits out.

When a case of head lice occurs in the classroom, a note and resources will be sent home with the children and posted at the center for parent notification.

## Seeking Medical Help Immediately

If your child becomes seriously ill or injured, first aid will be administered by Head Start/Early Head Start staff. A parent/guardian will be notified as quickly as possible. If immediate medical attention is required, the staff will call 911.

Some things that are considered a "medical emergency" include:

- The child has difficulty breathing, is having an asthma attack, or is unable to speak.
- The child's skin or lips look blue, purple or gray.
- The child has rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and a loss of consciousness.
- The child is unconscious.
- The child is less and less responsive.
- The child has any of the following after a head injury: decrease in level of alertness, confusion, headache, vomiting, irritability, or difficulty walking.
- The child has a cut or burn that is large, deep and/or won't stop bleeding.
- The child is vomiting blood.
- The child has a severe stiff neck, headache and fever.
- The child is significantly dehydrated: sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, nor urinating.
- Multiple children affected by injury or serious injury.



## Release of Information

All parents must sign a general Medical Release Form during the application/intake process. Additional releases are necessary for any further individual evaluation or information to be exchanged between programs/agencies.

## Medication at School

Please give all medications at home, if possible. Doctors can sometimes adjust medications to fit your child's schedule. If medicine must be given at the center, **ask the pharmacist to put the medicine in two containers:** one for Head Start and one for home. Iowa law and Head Start policy require:

1. Medicine must be in the original container and the label must have the following information included:

- NAME OF CHILD
- NAME OF MEDICINE
- DIRECTIONS FOR USE
- NAME OF DOCTOR
- NAME AND ADDRESS OF PHARMACY
- DATE OF PRESCRIPTION AND HOW LONG TO BE TAKEN

2. A signed statement from the doctor (and parent) with directions for the administration of the medication.

3. **Before** medication will be administered, the parent/guardian must talk with the classroom teacher and family development specialist. A support meeting may also need to be held.

If more than one medication needs to be administered at school, the parent/guardian must submit separate Medication Permission Forms. Different or multiple medications **cannot** be included on the same Medication Permission Form.

# Health Policies

## Illness Guide

At Head Start/Early Head Start, we must have safe and healthy classrooms. This means that sick children cannot be at school because illness can spread to other children and staff. The health policies listed below are in place for the health, well-being, and safety of all children and staff. We follow the recommendations issued by the *Department of Public Health* and the safety standards for child care programs developed by the *American Academy of Pediatrics and Public Health*.

- Children will be visibly screened when they board the bus and/or arrive at school (Daily Health Check). In the event that a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called. If the parent cannot be reached, an emergency contact person will be called and asked to pick up the child.
- **Do not** give your child medicine and then send him/her to school. If a child needs any medicine (cough medicine, Tylenol, etc.) the child is too sick to be at school. Please make sure you have back-up child care for times when your child is ill and unable to attend Head Start or Early Head Start.
- It is important that children stay at home and do not come to school when they are ill. Sick children can expose other children and staff at school. Children who are ill also need time to fully recover.
- If you are unsure whether your child is sick, please contact your child's doctor. We may require a doctor's note as to whether or not your child is contagious and can return. We appreciate your cooperation.
- If your child contracts a contagious illness, please call your child's teacher. We will notify other families of an illness in the classroom which can help us and other parents, take precautions to prevent the illness from spreading in the classroom or at their home. Your child's name will not be shared.



# Health Policies

## **Symptoms Requiring Exclusion from Head Start/Early Head Start:**

*Exclusion* means a child will not be able to attend Head Start or Early Head Start and should be kept at home to get better and/or to see a doctor **before** returning to school.

Symptom	Explanation
Fever (100.4° or above)	A child needs to be fever free <u>without</u> the use of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
Diarrhea	A child can return to school as long as there have been no more than 2 loose stools for 24 hours ( <u>without</u> medication).
Vomiting	A child can return to school as long as no vomiting has occurred for 24 hours ( <u>without</u> medication).
Runny Nose	Yellow or green drainage/snot. Non-clear drainage is <u>not</u> associated with allergies or teething. A doctor's note will be required before returning to school to show that the child does not have a contagious illness.
Rash and/or Blisters	Child can return to school after a doctor has determined the child is non-contagious. A doctor's note will be required before returning to school.
Other Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty breathing</li><li>• Hacking, rattled cough or continuous coughing</li><li>• Drainage from eyes or ears</li><li>• Child is extremely irritable, continually cries or requires more care and attention than we can provide while still fully caring for the safety and well-being of the other children</li></ul> A doctor's note will be required before returning to school to show that the child does not have a contagious illness.

**If you have any questions about when you need to keep your child at home with an illness, check with your doctor or your child's teacher or family development specialist.**

### **COVID Precautions:**

Specific precautions will be put into place at the discretion of the program, in consultation with the local health department, to protect the health and safety of our children, families and staff. Guidelines in such an event will be posted on our website and communicated with our parents through the ChildPlus portal.



### **Applying Ointments, Creams & Special Soaps**

Ointments, creams and special soaps are considered medications and cannot be put on your child without medical consent from your child's doctor. If you wish for your child to have bug repellent (or spray) put on, you will need to put it on your child before she/he comes to school for the day as we cannot put bug repellent on your child.

# Nutrition Information

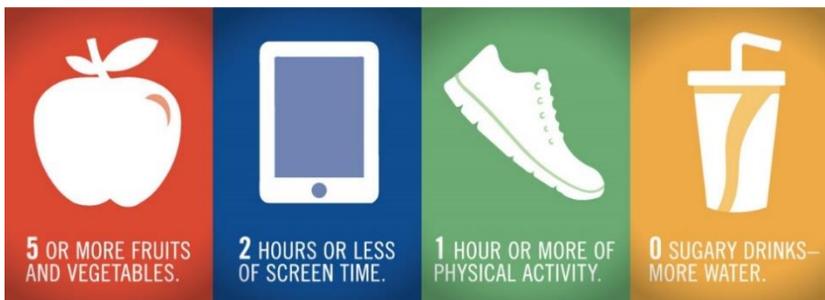
## Nutrition Services

We focus on the importance of proper nutrition. Children pay attention and learn best if they have a well-balanced diet. In our programs, children are served at least one healthy meal and snack each day. Foods and drinks with added sugar are not provided. We also individualize nutrition plans for those children with special dietary needs.

Head Start follows the Child and Adult Food Care Program's (CACFP) nutrition standards for all meals and snacks provided to the children. All food habits, thus creating a foundation for healthy food and diet choices. menus include a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein with less added salt, sugar and fats. The CACFP program provides an opportunity for children to develop healthy eating habits.

At Head Start we promote healthy lifestyle choices for the children and their families at school **and** at home. In partnership with the **5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count** statewide initiative, we educate families about the importance of making healthy food choices and being physically active each day. The 5-2-1-0 message is simple and easy for us all to remember.

***Four little numbers – one awesome way to stay healthy!***



## Mealtime at School

- We believe that children learn best from role models and that is why we serve **every** meal “family style”. Eating “family style” means that everyone (children, teachers and parents) sits together and passes food to one another.
- Children are seated while eating *all* meals/snacks.
- Small tables, chairs and child-sized silverware are used so children can eat comfortably.
- All children are encouraged to “join in” at meal time. They aren’t bribed to eat and are not forced to eat. Food is not kept from children as punishment.

# Nutrition Information

## Mealtime at School Continued

- Children learn independence by serving themselves and cleaning up after themselves. They also enhance their decision making skills by choosing which foods to eat and how much to serve to themselves.
- Children choose to eat from what is offered. Substitute foods are not given unless a **Diet Modification Form** from the child's health care practitioner is on file.
- Children look to see what adults are eating – so they will be looking at you. Be a good role model and encourage your child to try new things.
- Adults eat the same foods as children and join children in serving, passing and eating foods.
- Mealtime allows children to practice manners and work on social skills as they engage in conversations with one another and the adults.
- Mealtime is another opportunity to learn. Children learn by trying to identify foods on their plate that are a certain color or start with the same letter, the difference between salty and sweet, about the food groups, etc.
- After the meal/snack, all foods that have been placed on the table must be thrown away per CACFP regulations.



See next page for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nondiscrimination statement.

# Nutrition Information

## U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nondiscrimination statement

"In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and organizations participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal

Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992."

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This organization is an equal opportunity provider.

The statement is available in Spanish.

Where Healthy Eating Becomes a Habit



**CHILD & ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**

# Communication



## Notes Sent Home

Please remember to check your child's backpack, cubby, locker, or folder for notes from the staff each day.

- Check your child's backpack as soon as she/he gets home so an important note doesn't get misplaced.
- Please alert your babysitter or other adults caring for your child that it is important for you to receive these notes.
- Notes from the classroom may be given to the bus monitor to give to you.

## Keeping Staff Informed of Changes

It is your responsibility to:

- Notify your family development specialist of any change to your address or emergency contact numbers.
- Complete new releases when emergency information has changed.
- Notify staff of any changes at home that may affect your child's behavior at school.
- Call your child's teacher, in the classroom, within 1 hour of their scheduled time every time your child will be absent or late.

## Participant Grievance Procedures

If you have a grievance or complaint, please follow the procedure listed below:

1. Go directly to the person involved to try to work it out.
2. If you cannot get the problem resolved, take the grievance to that person's supervisor.
3. If no satisfactory decision is reached, you may put the grievance in writing and submit it to the program director.
4. The program director will meet with you and the person(s) the grievance is against and inform (in writing) all parties of the decision.
5. If the decision does not satisfy you, you may submit a written appeal to the Grievance Committee or the Policy Council within 5 days.
6. If either party is not satisfied with the decisions of the Grievance Committee, they may send a written appeal to the program director and Community Action's Executive Director who will meet with all parties involved and make a decision on the complaint.
7. If that decision is not satisfactory, the final step is to take the grievance to the President of the Grantee Board of Directors. Members of the board will meet with those involved and render a final decision.

# Arrival & Departure



## Arrival Policy

- Every child is to be escorted to the building by a parent or authorized adult.
- No child should be dropped off in front of the building.
- Upon arrival to the door/classroom, the child must be “signed in” by the parent or authorized adult.

## Departure Policy

- Children will only be released to authorized adults (i.e. persons listed on the Child Release Form).
- All individuals picking up your child should have a photo I.D. with them, to show to staff before your child will be released to leave.
- If the child is not picked up, attempts will be made to contact you.
- If you cannot be reached, efforts will be made to contact other persons on the Release Form.
- If we are unable to reach anyone, the family development specialist and leadership staff will be notified of the situation.
- The Department of Human Services or the police may then be contacted to care for your child until you can be located.
- Each situation will be handled on an individual basis.
- If this becomes a continual problem (happens 3 or more times), a meeting will take place with you to discuss the concern.

## Child Safety

Our primary concern is the safety of all Head Start/Early Head Start children and families. For that reason, the following rules are in place:

- Parents/guardians must observe the NO PARKING areas and the bus loading zones at your child’s school.
- No child should be left unattended/unsupervised in a vehicle.
  - This is against the law and we are required to report such instances to the proper authorities.

# Arrival & Departure

## Car Safety Restraints (or car seats)

At Head Start/Early Head Start, we have major concerns when we see children that are not buckled in their car seats. Please remember that the state of Iowa requires that all children are properly restrained whenever they are riding in a motor vehicle (this includes taxis and cabs).

	Under 1 year old	1-6 years old	6-18 years old
Under 20 pounds	Rear facing car seat	Rear or front facing car seat	X
20-40 pounds	Rear or front facing car seat	Rear or front facing car seat	Booster seat
Over 40 pounds AND 4'9" tall	X	Booster seat	Booster seat or seatbelt

## Children Alone in Vehicles

Every year, hundreds of young children are hurt or injured while left alone in the car. It's understandable that you might not want to wake a sleeping child or take a child out in the rain or the freezing cold, but accidents can happen in the blink of an eye.

It may seem like there is no harm leaving a child in the car for "just a few minutes", but young children should never be left alone in a running car especially when the temperature is very hot or cold outside. Please take a look at the chart below that shows how quickly a car heats up on a warm, summer day.

Outside Temperature	Inside Temperature (in the car)	
	10 Mins.	30 mins.
70 °	89 °	104 °
75 °	94 °	109 °
80 °	99 °	114 °
85 °	104 °	119 °
90 °	109 °	124 °
95 °	114 °	129 °

\*If a young child is not in an appropriate child restraint, or if a young child is left in the car alone, we will notify the proper authorities. Please remember that your child's safety depends on you!



# Arrival & Departure

## Youth Pick Up

In rare instances, a parent may wish to authorize a Head Start child's older, non-adult sibling to pick him or her up from school. An example of this might include a parent who wishes for an older sibling to walk his/her younger, Head Start sibling home when the sibling is already walking home from a nearby school. Another example might be a parent with a physical injury who is unable to walk into the building or to the bus to pick up the child from school and wishes for an older sibling to get the child. In these instances, we are sensitive to the needs and requests of the family as well as the safety of the Head Start child.

Our program must carefully consider and discuss such arrangement with the parent or guardian. As a part of that discussion, a **Parent Authorization & Request for Youth Pick Up & Release Form** must be completed and submitted to the family services coordinator for approval. The form will outline the specific details about the arrangement that should be considered before approval is given to allow the child to exit Head Start care without an adult caregiver.

If the request is approved, the parent will then be able to add the older sibling to the Parent Permission & Consent Form which then authorizes him/her to pick up the younger, Head Start child from school (or the bus). Once the child has left the classroom/bus with an authorized, minor sibling, Head Start holds no further liability regarding the safety of the child. All responsibility for the child's safety will reside with the parent/guardian that has authorized the minor sibling to pick up the Head Start child.

# Pedestrian Safety

## What You Should Know

- Although some children seem to cross streets carefully, they don't always remember to stop, look both ways, and listen.
- Children less than 6 years old should not cross a street alone.
- Being hit by a vehicle is the leading cause of death for children 5–9 years old.
- Young children often make decisions on what they can see, hear and touch. They may believe that if they can see the car, then the car can also see them and will stop.
- Young children cannot judge distances and speeds of a vehicle.
- A child may hear the vehicle, but cannot tell if it is coming closer or going away.
- The **stop, look and listen skills** needed to safely cross a street do not develop until **after** the age of six.
- Approaching vehicles **cannot** see children due to their height.

## Safety Tips for Young Children

- Always stop, look and listen.
- Before crossing, **look left, then right and then left again**.
- Cars and trucks cannot see you. You have to watch out for *them*.
- **Never** go into the street after a ball or toy.
- Stand **away** from the street while waiting to cross.
- Cross the street **at** the corner.
- Watch for “walk” and “don't walk” signs and traffic signals.
- Children should hold an adult's hand when crossing the street.

## What You Can Do

Talking about pedestrian safety with your child is **very** important. The best thing you can do as a parent is to **lead by example**. If your child sees you using proper pedestrian safety procedures, she/he will follow in your “safe” footsteps.



# Safety Policies

## Video

We ensure that children, families and staff are safe and may utilize video cameras to promote and monitor their safety. Cameras may be used on the buses, in the hallways, classrooms, meeting rooms, playgrounds, parking lots, etc.



## Taking Photographs

We ensure the confidentiality of the children and their families at all times. We welcome parents (and other family members) to join us on field trips and to visit in the classroom, but **personal cameras and cell phones cannot be used for taking pictures of the children, staff or classroom**. If you would like to have a photo of your child at school, your child's teacher will take a photo for you with the classroom equipment.

## **NO WEAPONS**

## Weapons

Under no circumstance are weapons such as guns, knives, etc. allowed on school premises. Toys resembling such weapons are also not allowed.



## Visitor Conduct

All family members and other visitors are expected to behave in an appropriate manner when visiting our classrooms and centers. Behavior such as yelling, intimidation and threats will not be allowed. The center is a safe place for the children, families and the staff. If someone causes a disturbance, is unable to act in a safe and appropriate manner, or is not authorized to be there, their access to the center will be restricted. If necessary, the police department will be called.



## Cursing

Parents and other visitors will use appropriate language at our facilities, during field trips, during family events, etc. Cursing/swearing is not allowed. If it occurs, a staff member will speak with the individual regarding the concern. If the cursing/swearing continues, you may be asked to leave the premises and/or the event. Appropriate language will be used at all times when in front of the children, on agency property, and when speaking to the staff in person or over the phone.



## Tobacco-Free Environment

We are a tobacco-free environment. No smoking or use of any tobacco products is allowed by staff or parents in any of our facilities, on our property, or in agency vehicles. Cigarette butts are toxic to children so remember to discard your cigarette before arriving on our property. We do not allow tobacco products at any of our events that may take place away from our facilities. Help us to keep Head Start/Early Head Start a tobacco-free environment!

# Safety Policies

## Access to Children – Sex Offenders

Center staff are responsible for ensuring the safety of children at the center. Registered sex offenders are not given access to the children.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor and who is required to register with the Iowa Sex Offender Registry:

- Cannot be employed by the agency.
- Cannot act as a volunteer within the child care center.
- Cannot be on the property of the child care center without the written permission of the program director.
- Before written permission is given, the program director will first consult with the center licensing consultant. The written permission will be signed and dated by the program director **and** the sex offender and kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.

If a Head Start parent, guardian or custodian is a registered sex offender, she/he can be on the property for the time that is reasonably necessary to transport his/her own child to and from the center. Written permission will still need to be given by the program director.

If anyone other than the parent, guardian or custodian is a registered sex offender (such as a step parent, someone a parent is dating, or another friend or family member) they will not be able to transport the child to or from school.



## Cell Phone Free Zone

Ensuring that each child is safe is the most important part of our day. We do not allow staff to use their personal cell phones at work, while they are responsible for the supervision and safety of the children. Our facilities are a “Cell Phone Free Zone” not just for staff, but for **parents too**. We ask that you do not use your cell phone when you’re dropping your child off and when you are picking him/her up from school (or from the bus). An accident can happen so quickly in the parking lot or while crossing the street even when we aren’t distracted by our cell phones. It is important for your child’s safety that you are fully aware of what she/he is doing and are aware of your surroundings.

We ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during the entire pick up and drop off time. Pick up and drop off times include the entire time that you are walking with your child to and from the bus, to and from the school building, to and from your car, to and from the classroom, and while you are in the classroom signing your child in and out for the day. Again, we want your child (and you) to be safe!

Cell phones can not only be a safety concern, but they can also be very loud, distracting and disruptive to the classroom. As adults, sometimes we forget that some words or conversations that we have on our cell phones are not appropriate for young children to hear. Pick up and drop off times are a great chance for you and your child’s teacher to visit about the events of the day, to ask each other questions and/or to share concerns with each other. So, remember to put your cell phone away until you get home or back to your car. Also, remember that it can be distracting to talk on your cell phone while you are driving. It is best to have cell phone conversations while your vehicle is parked. Consider completing your phone call before driving away or waiting until you are parked again.

# Parent Information

## Attendance Policy

Unless your child is ill, your child should attend every scheduled class day. Children not only need schedules and routines – they *thrive* on them! It is very important that your child attend on a regular basis.

It is our goal to give your child the best education possible. Regular attendance is one way in which we can monitor the education your child is receiving. Federal Performance Standards require that Head Start/Early Head Start programs must maintain a monthly average daily attendance rate of 85% or higher. This means ***your child can miss no more than 2 days per month*** to meet the requirement.

**Chronic absenteeism is when a child has 3 consecutive unexcused or 5 excused or unexcused absences within a two week period.** It may be considered chronic absenteeism when a child has 5 absences within a two week period depending on the circumstance. We realize that certain circumstances may make it necessary for your child to be absent from school (for example, extended illness or a family emergency). **Family vacations do not count as excused absences**, so we suggest you take vacations during times when Head Start is not scheduled to be in session. **If your child will be absent from school, please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible, within *one hour* of their scheduled time.**

When absenteeism turns into chronic absenteeism, the following process will begin:

### 1. Effort to Establish Regular Attendance

- You may be contacted by phone or mail to determine the cause of the absences.
- You may be visited at home by your family development specialist to determine the cause of the absences and to provide any support necessary to the family and the child. The importance of regular attendance and the importance of notifying staff if a child is going to be absent will also be discussed.
- If the attendance becomes regular and/or parent notification is consistent, no further action is necessary.
- Documentation of absences, contact with parents and results of home visits are kept in the child's file.

### 2. Failure to Establish Regular Attendance

- If attendance does not become regular within two weeks, contact cannot be made with the parents, or the parents fail to cooperate with the attendance policy, further action will be taken:
- The family development specialist will send a letter to the family stating the problem and give the parents 10 days from the date of the letter to assure regular attendance of the child.
- If attendance does not change within the time limit set, the parents will be sent a letter notifying them that the child will be dropped from the program. Head Start/Early Head Start has a waiting list for each center and other parents are anxious to enroll their children. We must serve another child if your child is not attending school regularly.
- We are concerned when your child is not at school. Parents must call the school within one hour after their child's scheduled arrival time to let us know why their child is absent for the day. If we have not received a call within that hour, parents will be contacted regarding their child's absence to make sure that the child and family are safe and not in need of any assistance from the program.



**Attendance  
Matters**

Every student. Every day. <sup>41</sup>

# Parent Information

## Extended Leave Policy

There are several times throughout the school year when classes are closed due to holidays or breaks. This is when it would be best for families to plan their vacations if possible. However, we do understand that things come up at the last minute for families or there might be circumstances involved where your child needs to be gone from school for an extended period of time. If you plan for your child to be gone for more than 5 class days (in a row) an Extended Leave Request Form *must* be completed with your Family Development Specialist. Please understand that we may not be able to hold your child's spot indefinitely, and family vacations do not count as excused absences. At Head Start, your child's attendance is very important and the program *must* meet attendance and enrollment guidelines!

## Mandatory Reporting

All Head Start/Early Head Start staff members are Mandatory Reporters of child abuse/neglect as defined by Iowa law. *Any suspected* incidents of child abuse and/or neglect must be reported to the proper authorities. As staff, we do not investigate any suspected child abuse concerns. Our responsibility is to make a report when there is a concern.

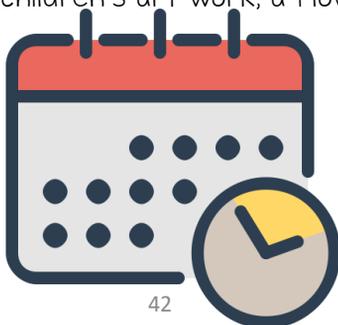
## Custody

- **Both** parents have full rights to the records of their child unless the agency has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes these rights.
- **Both** parents have full rights to pick up their child from school, to visit the classroom, participate in the program, unless the agency has been provided with legal documentation stating that those rights have specifically been revoked for the parent.

We do not make any judgments about the parenting abilities of one parent over the other. Our goal is to make each parent feel welcome and to provide the best services possible to the children and families we serve.

## Gifts

Our regulations state that our staff *cannot* accept gifts from the children (or the parents) that cost money. Thank you notes, children's art work, a flower from your garden, etc. are priceless.



# Parent Information

## Confidentiality Policy

All family and child records are safeguarded to assure confidentiality.

- Files are kept in the classroom as well as the family development specialist office, in a locked file cabinet at all times.
- Only those people who are authorized will have access to the files.
- Information is only shared with another agency or designated person after receipt of a Consent Form signed by the parent/s or official guardian.
- Volunteers and substitutes do not have access to these files.

## Access to Records

All records are the property of the agency, but are available in a timely manner to parents and legal guardians when a request of information has been made.

The following procedure will be followed when a **request to view a file** has been made:

- The parent/guardian will complete a Client Records Request Form.
- The parent/guardian will be contacted within 5 business days to set up a time to view the file.
- Review of the file by the parent/guardian will be conducted during normal business hours and a staff member will be present.

The following procedure will be followed when a **request to obtain copies of documentation within the file** has been made:

- The parent/guardian will complete a Client Records Request Form.
- The requested information will be compiled for the requester.
- The parent/guardian will be contacted within 10–14 business days to set up a time to receive the requested information.
- Receipt of the information will be conducted during normal business hours.



*Thank you and welcome again from all of us at Head Start & Early Head Start!*

We want to say thank you for taking the time to read through the handbook and for making sure you are well informed about the program, our policies, etc. We hope that the handbook will be a useful tool for you to refer back to throughout the school year. If you ever have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call. We enjoy hearing from you!

We hope that this year will be an exciting and fun time for you, your child and the rest of the family. If you have ideas, please share them! We want to hear from you!



# Quick Info.

THIS HANDBOOK BELONGS TO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

First Day of Class:

Teachers Name:

Classroom Phone Number:

Classroom Hours:

School Address:

Family Specialist's Name:

Family Specialist's Phone Number:

# Signature Page

I have received a Parent Handbook and staff took the time to review it with me and answer any questions I may have. I have contact information for any additional questions.

Please sign below acknowledging that you have read the Community Action of Southeast Iowa Head Start and Early Head Start Parent Handbook.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

---

Staff Signature

---

Date

Thank you for reviewing the handbook. We look forward to having your family in the program!

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy for Family

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy for File



# Signature Page

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\_\_\_\_\_ Copy for Family

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy for File

# Transportation Policies

## Difficulties on the Bus

Should a child have behavior difficulties while riding the bus, parents will be notified.

If problems continue, a meeting will be held with you to see if the matter can be resolved by the development of an action plan.

## Changes to Pick Up & Drop Off Locations

Families who need to change their pick-up or drop-off location need to contact their family development specialist.

A new Child Release Form will need to be filled out by the parent.

It can take up to 7 working days to implement any changes to the bus route.

## Apartment Complexes, Dead End Streets & Alleys

The bus will not pick up children *within* apartment complexes that do not provide a drive thru or if buses are restricted by apartment management. You will be notified by your family development specialist if we will not be able to pick up your child *within* the apartment complex.

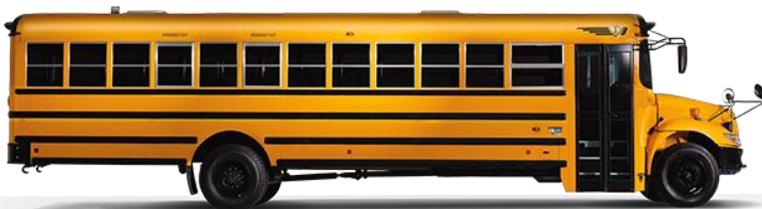
The bus will not pick up children on dead end streets as they do not provide enough space for the bus to turn around. Your family development specialist will work with you to determine another pick up location. Typically, parents who live on dead end streets walk their children to a bus stop.



# Transportation Policies

## 10 Bus Rules

1. A child cannot cross the street by him/herself to enter the bus.
2. Children must be escorted to and from the bus.
3. The bus monitor is responsible for fastening the child into the safety restraint and taking him/her out of it.
4. Children must wear a safety restraint at all times.
5. The driver must wear a safety restraint when the bus is moving.
6. The driver is not authorized to wait more than 1 minute for the child to get on & off the bus.
7. An authorized parent/guardian must be at home when the child is returning from school.
8. Parents and children will receive bus and pedestrian safety training during the school year.
9. It is against our policy for the bus driver to drive down alleys that do not have an alternative exit or to put the bus in reverse.
10. It is illegal for the bus driver to honk the horn upon his arrival to bus stops.



## Being Ready!

Your child must be ready for the bus when it arrives.

- Watch for the arrival of the bus 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after the scheduled times (pick-up *and* drop-off).
- The driver cannot backtrack to pick up children who have missed the bus.
- If your child misses the bus, you are responsible for bringing your child to school.
- Parents/authorized adults are required to escort children to and from the bus.

## If Nobody's Home

If an authorized adult does not meet the bus when your child is taken home, the following procedure will be used:

1. The child will be returned to the center where you will pick him/her up.
2. Attempts will be made to contact you after returning to the center.
3. If you cannot be reached, efforts will be made to contact other persons on the Child Release Form.
4. If we are unable to reach anyone, the family development specialist and central office will be notified of the situation.
5. The Department of Human Services or the police will be contacted to care for your child until you can be located.
6. Each situation will be handled on an individual basis.
7. If this becomes a continual problem (happens 3 or more times), a meeting will take place with you to discuss the concern.