



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

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–2027
School Year

Community
Action
OF SOUTHEAST IOWA

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Grantee Agency:

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





WELCOME TO HEAD START!

We are officially part of your team! 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 engaged in your child's experience in our program this year. We realize that everyone has different interests and limitations on their time, but there are a variety of opportunities for you to get involved. There's something for everyone!

Remember, at Head Start, everything your child needs while they are 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 your commitment to get your child to school each day.** We are very excited to work with you and help you find just the *right* engagement activity for you!



WHAT IS HEAD START PRESCHOOL/EARLY HEAD START?

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

Part Day Head Start Preschool Classes

- Classes are open Monday – Thursday (3.5 hours per day).

Duration Head Start Preschool Classes

- Classes are open Monday – Friday (6.5 hours per day).

Early Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive child development program for infants and toddlers (birth – 3 years of age). It is also a prenatal education program for expecting families.

- Operating hours vary by classroom and are influenced by family work/school schedules.

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

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR PROGRAM

The Head Start program provides an individualized, relationship-based program for you and your child, based on the following components:

- 1) Family Engagement
- 2) Education
- 3) Health, Mental Health & Nutrition
- 4) Family & Community Partnerships



YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES AS A HEAD START FAMILY

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 family engagement and participation.	2. To accept the program as an opportunity through which you can improve your life and your 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 families 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 their total individual development.	7. To guide your own child with consistency and firmness 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 Associate(s).

Your Family Development Specialist:

- ✓ Works closely with you to identify your strengths, needs and goals.
- ✓ Helps you locate resources within the community to help you achieve your goals and meet your needs.
- ✓ Will meet with you three 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 ask for a visit or to 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.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

At Head Start, we know that parents are the most important influence on a child's development. That's why family engagement is such a big part of our programs. Research has shown, that children whose family members are involved in their learning and school experience, enjoy school more *and* do better in school.

Ways You Can Get Involved

You can participate in:

- ✓ Program decision-making process (Policy Council)
- ✓ Classroom and home educational activities
- ✓ Family surveys
- ✓ ReadyRosie/Home Connection Calendars
- ✓ Attend Parent Meetings/Trainings (Parent Group)
 - ✓ Meetings to plan special events at your center.
 - ✓ Classes/trainings on parenting skills, advocacy, budgeting, First Aid/CPR, etc.



Additional Ways to Be Involved During the School Day:

- ✓ Special classroom events
- ✓ Have a meal with your child in their classroom
- ✓ Spend time with your child at school
- ✓ Share an interest or hobby of yours, like:
 - ✓ Playing an instrument
 - ✓ Showing us how to use tools or put something together
 - ✓ Teach us how to play a game/sport
 - ✓ Teach us about recycling, gardening, fishing, etc...
- ✓ Share family traditions or recipes
- ✓ Help with classroom cooking experiences
- ✓ Read to the class
- ✓ Share what you do at your job
- ✓ Teach us sign language or how to say words in the language of your culture
- ✓ Help with a field trip
- ✓ Become a paid staff member!



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Home Education Activities

- Participating in home visits
- Attending parent–teacher conferences
- Working with Family Development Specialists to help you attain your goals and meet needs that will benefit your entire family.
- Support your child's learning at home by:
 - Toilet training (preferably by age 3)
 - Practicing self–help skills (getting dressed, washing their hands, brushing their teeth, blowing their nose, etc.)
 - Trying new foods
 - Consistently using silverware and regular cups (not sippy cups) at meal times
 - Having them express their feelings with words and facial expressions
 - Reading together every day
 - Having them follow directions and complete tasks as asked (put toys away, put away devices ex. 'phone, tablet, TV', get ready for bed, etc.)
 - Completing and turning in classroom Home Connection Calendars
 - Completing activities shared on ReadyRosie

Special Events

You have the opportunity to both plan AND attend special events that will take place throughout the school year. Special events might include the following:

- Family Game Night, Family Picnic, Bowling Night, etc.
- Local Sporting Events
- Scavenger Hunts
- Family Meals
- Build a Snowman Day
- Fly a Kite Day
- Dance Party/Kids Karaoke
- Family Picture Day
- End of the Year Celebration



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Decision-Making Process

Adults who are elected to serve on committees as decision-making members are a HUGE part of the Head Start program. Adults who are involved in these committees are advocates and “voices” for children and families. The following committees are available for your involvement:

	What They Do
Policy Council	Approve program, budget and personnel decisions
Board of Directors	Make and approve decisions that affect all Community Action programs
Health Advisory Committee	Express ideas about health concerns affecting children in the local community
Parent Meetings/Trainings	Plan special events or activities, keep up-to-date on happenings within the program, attend training on parenting skills, advocacy, budgeting, First Aid/CPR, etc.

If you would like to know more about these family engagement opportunities, please speak with your Family Development Specialist or classroom teacher. They are excited to meet with you and tell you more.

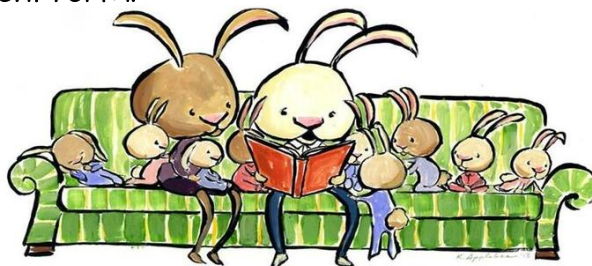


Volunteers are Vital to the Program

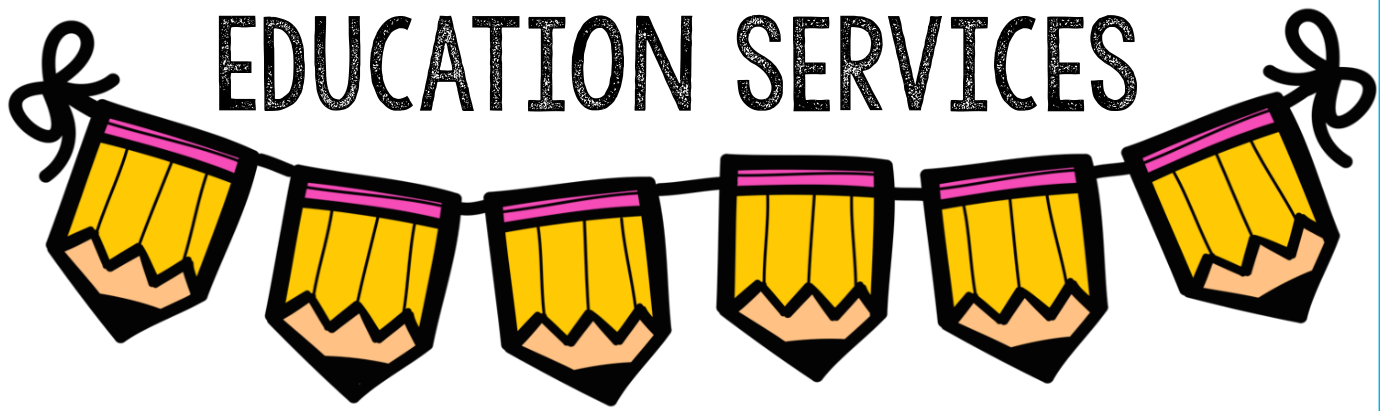
Your engagement in the program, such as your volunteer time and Home Connection Calendars, are vital to our program. Because our program is funded by a grant awarded by the Federal Government, we are required to “match” the funds that we receive. Twenty percent (20%) of the support we receive must come from the local community. We receive this through donated space, services, supplies, time, or monetary donations. We can also count the time you spend working on activities at home through your Home Connection Calendars.

Child Care Reimbursement

If you participate in Policy Council, 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



The Environment:

We believe that all activities are an opportunity for learning and growth!

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 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 Schedule:

Children thrive when there are set routines for them at both home and school. 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/Dual Schedule:

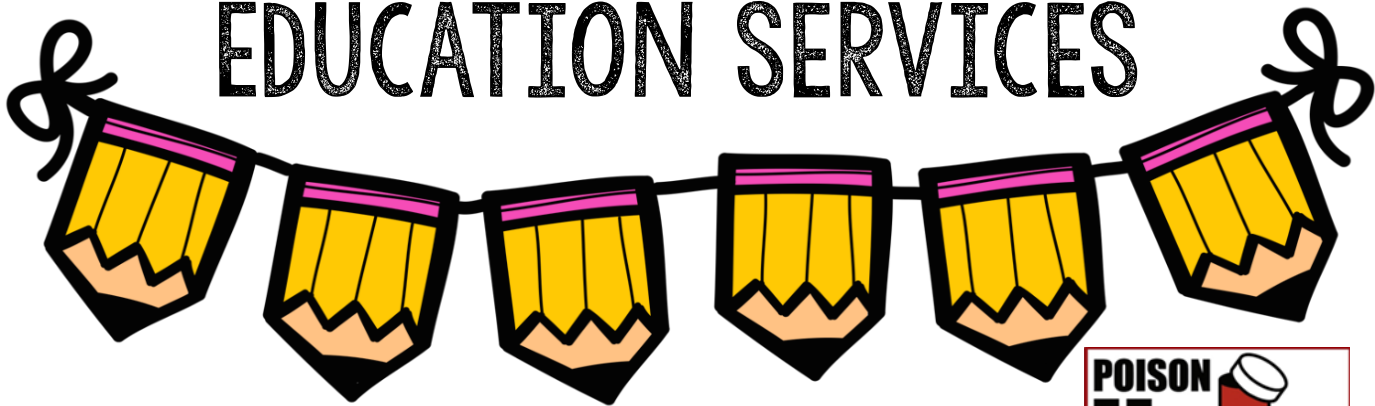
8:30 - Arrival/Sign-in/Wash Hands
8:35 - Breakfast/Clean-up
9:15 - Brushing Teeth/Bathroom Break
9:30 - Journaling/Mighty Minutes
9:40 - Large Group Activities (Story, Music & Movement, Discussion)
9:55 - Free Play/Learning Centers/Bathroom Break
10:55 - Small Group Activities (Art, Math, Science)
11:05 - Outside Play/Gross Motor
11:35 - Wash Hands/Lunch/Clean-up
12:00 - Prep for Departure

Sample Duration Schedule:

8:15 - Arrival/Wash Hands
8:20 - Breakfast/Clean-Up,
8:45 - Brush Teeth/Bathroom Break
9:00 - Check-In/Question of the Day
9:10 - Large Group (Story, Music & Movement)
9:25 - Outside Play/Gross Motor
9:55 - Small Group (Math, Science Literacy)
10:00 - Free Play/Learning Centers/Bathroom Break
11:00 - Journaling/Mighty Minutes
11:20 - Wash Hands/Lunch/Clean-Up
12:00 - Individual Reading/Bathroom Break
12:15 - Rest Time
1:15 - Bathroom Breaks/Wash Hands
1:20 - Snack/Clean-Up
1:45 - Outside Play/Gross Motor
2:15 - Large Group (Story, Discussion, Science)
2:30 - Prep for Departure



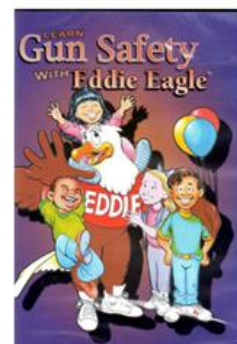
EDUCATION SERVICES



Early Childhood 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 unique and are at varying levels of development.



In the classrooms we use the following:

- Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies for all ages
- ReadyRosie - a parenting curriculum designed for all families
- Second Step - Social Emotional curriculum for Head Start Preschool only
- Eddie Eagle - Gun Safety curriculum for Head Start Preschool only

Required lessons:

- Weekly: Second Step (Head Start Preschool only)
- Monthly: Pedestrian Safety & Fire and Tornado drills (all ages)
- Quarterly: Hands-On Nutrition experience (Head Start Preschool only)
- Yearly: Gun Safety, Poison Prevention, Happy Bear Body Safety (Head Start Preschool only)

HAPPY
BEAR



Prenatal Program for Enrolled Pregnant Mothers:

We use Partners for a Health Baby Curriculum.

- Staff help connect your family to prenatal/postnatal care and services.
- Lead Teachers meet monthly with your family to offer prenatal education and support during the pregnancy.
- Our Nurse and Lead Teacher conduct a postnatal visit within 10 days of the birth.
- A childcare slot will be held in Early Head Start for your child.



Ready
Rosie

EDUCATION SERVICES

Assessments

We use a variety of assessment tools to help us individualize our curriculum, to better meet the developmental needs of your child, and assess what progress they are making, throughout the year. Our assessment tools cover the following areas:

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



Ongoing Comprehensive Assessment

- DRDP (Desired Results Developmental Profile)

Screenings

- BRIGANCE - Developmental Tool
- ASQ-SE - Ages and Stages Questionnaire - Social Emotional

Parent/Teacher Conferences

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 for both home and school, to become kindergarten ready.

Learning Centers/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.

Centers may include:

Library Center
Writing Center
Block Center
Art Center
Math Center
Science Center

Quiet Area
Music Area
Dramatic Play
Sensory Play
Sand & Water Table



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

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.

CLASSROOM INFO

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/guardians. If we are unable to notify by phone, we will reach out through phone call/text **or through the ChildPlus Communication App (you will receive sign-up information at your first home visit)**. Families may also check ~~the radio~~, our Facebook pages and Class Dojo for information and updates regarding the situation. They 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 our program's Emergency Preparedness Plan, posted in every classroom.

Class Cancellations

Unforeseen circumstances may happen where classes are delayed, dismissed early or cancelled. Please make sure you can be reached and have back-up childcare for times such as these.

You will be notified of the cancellation **through the ChildPlus Communication App, Class Dojo** **or** by phone/text to the number we have on file. Please let us know when you change phone numbers so we can update our system. We understand that your child may be disappointed about school being cancelled, but the health & safety of our staff and the children is very important to us.

You may also check our Facebook pages and Class Dojo for information on cancellations, however, we may not always be able to post there immediately.

Search for and like us on Facebook at the following centers:

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



CLASSROOM INFO

Outdoor Play & Weather

Play is an important part of our day - inside and outside. 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.

Child Care Weather Watch

Additional information can be found at:

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

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

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph									
	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 out door play Caution Danger										

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
Air Temperature (F)	Relative Humidity (Percent)													
	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 personal items (particularly backpacks, 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 DO NOT send it to school!

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. Example: pants that pull up and down easily.
- 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. Example: 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 they 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 Preschool at 3 years old. 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 underwear for your child every day, or leave an extra set in their cubby/locker.

If your child has a toileting accident at school, their 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. If your child comes home in any spare classroom clothing, please wash it and return it to the classroom as soon as possible.

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, consistency, 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 family member use physical punishment on any child who is attending or visiting the 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 is a pleasant, safe and caring place where they can grow and learn.

Classroom Behavior Management

Our goal is to promote children's success through building positive relationships and creating a supportive environment. Head Start believes that all behavior is communication and that all people should be treated with respect, dignity, and kindness. Adults are encouraged to model and help children learn to choose appropriate behavior. Head Start works together with families to create an environment where every child feels good about coming to school. The classroom environment promotes child engagement by teaching expectations and routines, as well as skills that children may use in place of challenging behaviors. Head Start utilizes Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), and teaches social/emotional skills through the Second Step curriculum. The staff maintains realistic expectations of children's behavior based on current knowledge of child development.

Biting

Biting may be a typical behavior for young children, therefore, incidences of biting may be unavoidable in group care. When biting occurs, it can be scary and frustrating for everyone involved. While there are various reasons why a child may bite, teachers, parents, and children should not be blamed when it occurs. Strategies for dealing with biting will be administered based on the individual needs of the child. Head Start staff will work closely with families to look for additional supports and strategies when biting takes place.

If a behavior occurs, the parent/guardian will be notified by an Incident and/or Behavior Report that will be shared at the end of the day.

Please note: It may be necessary for everyone to meet for a "support meeting" and develop a **safety plan** for the child.

If a child continually endangers themselves or others, it will be necessary to evaluate the type of 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. Details and procedures will be shared with families if they are scheduled.

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.
- First Aid Kits and emergency numbers will be taken by staff whenever they leave the Head Start center.
- Families will be notified of any emergency situations that may occur, as quickly as possible.
- Staff will post a note to let you know they are on a walk so that you will know where to find them.



Transitions

Children are provided with various transition opportunities. Children may transition from Early Head Start to Head Start Preschool, from one Head Start Preschool classroom to another and from Head Start Preschool to Kindergarten/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 their 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. 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 they have a food allergy, food sensitivity or medical condition as specified by their doctor. Special diets can be accommodated for those with religious preferences.

Holidays & Celebrations

- 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 additional ideas and help in planning for these special days, so please come to Center Committee (Parent Group) meetings or see your Family Development Specialist about volunteering.
- We know birthdays are special and fun for all of us, while we acknowledge them in the classroom, we **cannot** accept any treats or goodie bags.
- **No outside food is allowed at our 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.

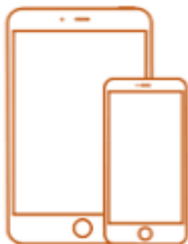
Children and staff will wash hands **before and after** any contact with animals. Children **will not** be forced to interact with any animals.



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. Therefore, recreational screen time is a very limited part of our classrooms.

It is recommended that children have **no more than 2 hours** of “screen time” each day while at home. We encourage children to be active and explore their classroom, environments and build relationships with peers and staff. **Screen time at Head Start is very limited.**



HEALTH SERVICES

Our Health Services Component operates under the belief that a "healthy child is a happy child". When a child is not healthy, their ability to learn is hindered. At Head Start we monitor each child's comprehensive health care to ensure that they are healthy and given the best opportunity possible to learn and grow.

Health Services includes the following:

- Physical & Dental Health
- Mental Health
- Nutrition



We require up-to-date physicals and immunizations be on file, in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensing standards.

Health Screenings

We recognize the importance of prevention, early detection and treatment of any health problems, and well-child care.

The following health screenings are a regular part of our program:

- 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 necessary resources in order to address those concerns. We follow up on referrals made and treatment received to ensure that your child's needs are being met. We may also be able to help with transportation to your child's appointments. Please talk to your Family Development Specialist if you have questions.

HEALTH SERVICES

Washing Hands

We wash our hands a lot! We wash upon entering the classroom, before and after eating, after using the restroom, before & after going outside, before & after sensory play, etc. We strive to make our classrooms a healthy place to learn.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, handwashing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness to others.

Please continue to practice good handwashing and good hygiene at home too!

HOW TO Wash Your Hands



HEALTH POLICIES

Well-Child Care

Our goal is to make sure each child is as healthy as they can be and are 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

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensing requires that each child have a current physical. Head Start families must submit a current physical exam within 30 days after a child's first day of school. If one is not received, the child will be excluded from the program until the exam is completed. Enrolled children should also maintain current physicals during their enrollment in the program. If an updated physical exam is not received, a child may be excluded from the program until the updated exam is completed.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT TIMELINE	
Program	Physical Requirement by Age
Early Head Start (under 3 years old)	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 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. They can help you locate a doctor in the area.

HEALTH POLICIES

Immunizations

We require that immunizations are up-to-date before a child comes to school. 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. This ensures that your child is healthy and ensures the well-being of the other children and staff.

Medical and religious exemptions may be granted with documentation.

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 our Health/Nutrition Coordinator.

Disability Services

All children, regardless of disability, may be eligible for the 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 their development, please speak with your child's teacher or Family Development Specialist. We can develop a plan that will enable us to provide your child with the appropriate services while they are in the program.

Mental Health/Mental Wellness

Mental health is an important part of overall health and well-being throughout every stage in life. For young children this means having; the ability to develop secure and meaningful relationships, the ability to play and interact with others, and the ability to express emotions appropriately. The promotion of mental wellness is incorporated into daily activities in our centers. We work to encourage healthy emotional and social development. We partner with local mental health professionals who visit each of our classrooms and centers throughout the year. Two times per year These mental health professionals collaborate with staff and parents to implement preventative methods, intervention strategies, and provide supports as needed. This person is available to provide mental health consultation or training to staff to make them more aware of the importance of early attention to the special problems that young children may face.

If you have questions regarding disability or mental health related concerns or services, please speak with your child's teacher or Family Development Specialist. They can help you Locate local community services.

HEALTH POLICIES

Seeking Medical Help Immediately

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

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/guardians 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/guardian) 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



Head Lice

When a child is found to have head lice, the family will be contacted. The child can remain in school that day but before the child can return to school the next day, the family must administer a medically approved, over-the-counter treatment for head lice. All medicines for treatment of lice should be used with care and only as directed, with some requiring a follow-up application. Close contacts should be checked for lice for three weeks after treatment. The "comb out" method does not work well to treat lice, but it is low cost and can be useful after other treatment to finish removing lingering nits. ~~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 upon arrival by the classroom staff. If live bugs are found, the child will not be able to stay at school that day. The child can return to school after treatment and no live bugs are found in the hair.~~ When a case of head lice occurs in the classroom, a note and resources will be sent home and the exposure notice will be posted for all families. Please check the classroom door and Parent Board frequently for important exposure notices.

Applying Creams, Sprays & Special Soaps

Creams, sprays and special soaps (other than zinc-based diaper cream) are considered medications and cannot be put on your child without medical consent from your child's doctor. Sunscreen and zinc-based diaper cream are provided by Head Start. If you wish for your child to have bug repellent put on, you will need to put it on your child before they come to school for the day. We cannot put bug repellent on your child.

Illness Guide

At 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*. Please make sure you have back-up child care for times when your child is ill and unable to attend Head Start.

- Children will be visibly screened when they arrive at school (Daily Health Check).
- In the event that a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent/guardian will be called. If they 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 them to school. If a child needs any medicine (cough medicine, Tylenol, etc.) the child is too sick to be at school.
- 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 described in the health exposure notices, as to whether your child is contagious and when they 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 by posting exposure notices, which can help us and others take precautions to prevent the illness from spreading in the center or at home. (The ill child's name will not be shared with others.)

HEALTH POLICIES

Symptoms Requiring Exclusion from Head Start:

Exclusion means a child will not be able to attend Head Start Preschool or Early Head Start and should be kept at home to get better and/or to see a doctor **before** returning to school. Staff will make the final decision about whether ill children may attend, based on the programs guidelines, and their ability to care for the ill child while not taking away from the other children.

Symptom	Explanation
Fever (100.4° or above)	Exclude for a temperature of 100.4° F or above in infants and children with behavior change. For infants younger than 2 months, a temperature of 100.4° F or above with or without a behavior change or other symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea) needs exclusion and immediate medical attention. A child needs to be fever free <u>without</u> the use of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
Diarrhea	Exclusion is needed for children who have more than 2 loose stools per day above normal for that child while the child is in the program. • Children whose stool contains blood or mucus • Diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper • Toilet-trained children when diarrhea causes “accidents” or when increased number of bowel movements are a risk for accidents and soiling of classrooms and toileting areas. A child can return to school as long as there have been no more than 2 loose stools for 24 hours <u>without</u> the use of medication.
Vomiting	Exclude if the child vomits two or more times within 24 hours. If a child with a recent head injury vomits, get emergency medical care. A child can return to school as long as no vomiting has occurred for 24 hours <u>without</u> the use of medication.
Other Symptoms	• Difficulty breathing • Hacking, rattled cough or continuous coughing • 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 A doctor's note <u>may</u> 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.

A complete list of exclusions is available upon request from the Health Coordinator.



NUTRITION INFORMATION

Nutrition Services

We focus on the importance of proper nutrition. Children are served at least one healthy meal and snack each day. We also individualize nutrition plans for those children with special dietary needs.



Head Start follows the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program's (CACFP) nutrition standards for all meals and snacks provided to the children. Menus include a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein with less added salt, sugar and fats. Drinks with added sugar are not provided. Infants are served breast milk or iron fortified formula. The CACFP program provides an opportunity for children to develop healthy eating habits.

Breastfeeding

In Early Head Start, we 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 during the time your child is with us.



NUTRITION INFORMATION

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) sit together and pass 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 mealtime. They aren’t bribed to eat and are not forced to eat. Food is not kept from children as punishment, or given as a reward.
- 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 both their teachers and you at home.
- Adults eat the same foods as children and join children in serving, passing and eating foods. Be a good role model and encourage your child to try new things.
- 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, and more.
- After the meal/snack, all foods that have been placed on the table must be thrown away per CACFP regulations.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

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

fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442

email: Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The statement is available in Spanish:
<https://educate.iowa.gov/media/2943/download?inline>

(Revised 2-15-23)





COMMUNICATION



Notes Sent Home

Please remember to check the classroom door, Parent Board, your child's backpack, cubby, locker, and/or folder for notes from the staff each day.

- Check your child's backpack as soon as they get 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.
- Information may also be shared on the Class DOJO page, so please join when you are sent the invitation.
- Sign up for email and text notifications.

Keeping Staff Informed of Changes

It is your responsibility to:

- Notify your Family Development Specialist and teacher 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.
- Contact your child's teacher, in the classroom, within 1 hour of their scheduled time every time your child will be absent or late. We are required to reach out to you if we have not heard from you, please make sure you respond!

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 concern 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. *Please include the date, location and explanation of the incident including all individuals involved, and what you have already done in an attempt to resolve the issue. (You may request a form to help you.)*
4. *If the conflict involves an allegation of discrimination, the concern will be submitted to the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer and the Executive Director by the Program Director. The process will then proceed to step 6 and be handled by the Executive Director.*
5. The Program Director will meet with you and the person(s) the grievance is against *within 5 working days* and inform all parties in writing of the decision *within 5 working days.*
6. If the decision does not satisfy you, may send a written appeal to the Program Director and Community Action's Executive Director who will meet with all parties involved *within 5 working days of receiving the appeal. A written decision will be made within 5 working days of the meeting.*
 - As Head Start participant, you may submit a written appeal to the Policy Council within 5 working days of the decision. The Policy Council will review the appeal at the next regularly scheduled meeting, *and prepare a written decision within 5 working days.*
7. If either party is not satisfied with the decisions of the Policy Council, the final step is to take the grievance to the Community Action Board of Directors. Members of the board will meet with those involved *within 10 working days to hear the grievance* and render a final decision within *5 working days.*

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE



Arrival Policy

- Every child is required to be escorted into the building and classroom by an 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 an 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 Pick-up & 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 Health and 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 children and families.

For that reason, the following rules are in place:

- Everyone must observe the NO PARKING/fire lanes 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, 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).

Iowa Law	Best Practice
Children must ride in an appropriate rear-facing safety seat until one year of age and at least 20 pounds.	Children should ride in an appropriate rear-facing child safety seat until the maximum weight limit of the safety seat is reached – this can be up to 40 pounds depending on the seat.
Children must ride in a child safety seat or booster seat through the age of 5 . (Seats must be used in accordance with manufacturer's directions.)	A child should be restrained in a 5-point harness system until the maximum weight limit for the seat is reached. This is usually 50–65 pounds, although some 5-point harness seats are now rated up to 80–90 pounds



Children Alone in Vehicles

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. It is especially important when the temperature is very hot or cold outside.

The chart below 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, we are required to notify the proper authorities. Please remember that your child's safety depends on you!

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Pedestrian Safety:

- All Head Start children should not cross a street alone.
- The stop, look and listen skills needed to safely cross a street do not develop until after the age of 6.
- Being hit by a vehicle is the leading cause of death for children 5–9 years old.
- Young children cannot judge distances and speeds of a vehicle.
- 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.
- Stay off your cell phone and remain alert!



What You Can Do:

Talking about pedestrian safety with your child is very important. The best thing you can do as an adult is to lead by example. If your child sees you using proper pedestrian safety procedures, they will follow in your “safe” footsteps.

Youth Pick Up

In rare instances, a family may wish to authorize a Head Start child’s older, non–adult sibling to pick them up from school. 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 discuss this arrangement with the parent/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’s care without an adult caregiver.

If the request is approved, the parent/guardian will then be able to add the older sibling to the Parent Permission & Consent Form which then authorizes them to pick up the younger, Head Start child from school. Once the child has left the classroom 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.

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 bus, 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 family members to join us during classroom activities, but photos cannot be taken by families at these activities. 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 may be restricted. If necessary, the police department will be called.



Cursing

Families 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.

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, they can be on the property for the time that is reasonably necessary to transport their 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

Our facilities are a “Cell Phone Free Zone” not just for staff, but for ALL adults. We ask that you do not use your cell phone when you are dropping your child off and when you are picking them up from school. An accident can happen quickly in the parking lot or while crossing the street. It is important for your child’s safety that you are fully aware of what they are 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 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. 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. Again, we want your child (and you) to be safe!



Tobacco-Free Environment

We are a tobacco-free environment. Smoking, vaping or use of any tobacco product is NOT allowed by staff or family members 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 a tobacco-free environment!

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 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.

We are concerned when your child is not at school. **Families must contact 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, families 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.**

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 text, 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 family notification is consistent, no further action is necessary.
- Documentation of absences, contact with the family 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 family, or the family fails 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 family 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 family will be sent a letter notifying them that the child will be dropped from the program. Head Start has a waiting list for each center and other families are anxious to enroll their children. **We must serve another child if your child is not attending school regularly.**

FAMILY INFORMATION

Extended Leave Policy

There are 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 are 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 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, and 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.

FAMILY 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 release signed by the parent(s) or legal 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.



HEAD START PROGRAM INFORMATION

Thank you and welcome again from all of us at 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!

Head Start Leadership Team
(319) 753-0193

Position	Staff Name
Program Director	Matthew LeClere
Family Services Coordinator	Jill Hulett
Education Manager	Dawn Cazin
Education Coordinator for Lee County	Mallory Lopez
Education Coordinator for Des Moines & Henry Counties	Francis Junio
Coach and Disabilities Coordinator	Randi Waterman
Health and Nutrition Coordinator	Amy Vandiver
Professional Development Coordinator	Angela Raid
Instructional Coach	Lexi Deppe
Facilities Assistant	Michelle Stafford



Head Start Preschool
& Early Head Start

Community Action of Southeast Iowa

CENTER LOCATIONS

Burlington:

Burlington Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start

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

Update w/ new name, address and phone

Mount Pleasant:

Glenwood Head Start

Head Start Preschool
& Early Head Start
302 W. Madison St.
Mount Pleasant, IA 52641
319-201-1560

Fort Madison:

Eichacker Community Action Center

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

Richardson Site

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

Keokuk:

Marie Tallarico Community Action Center

Head Start Preschool
& Early Head Start
220 South 22nd St.
Keokuk, IA 52632
319-524-6383

Did you know that we are on Facebook?

1. On the 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 centers:

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



2. On the Community Action of Southeast Iowa page you get updates, including job openings, along with information about WIC, LIHEAP Energy Assistance, FaDSS, Weatherization, etc.

QUICK INFO.



Head Start Preschool
& Early Head Start

Community Action of Southeast Iowa

THIS HANDBOOK BELONGS TO:

Name: _____

First Day of Class:

Teachers Name:

Classroom Phone Number:

Classroom Hours:

School Address:

Family Development Specialist's Name:

Family Development Specialist's Phone Number: