



# Early Learning

Child Development & Preschool

## Family Handbook

## YOUR CHILD & YOUR FAMILY

DEAR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS,  
YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND BEST TEACHERS!

This Family Handbook belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

### Center Staff

Head Start/EHS Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Start/EHS Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Start/EHS Teacher Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

Center Aide: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Advocate: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Service Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

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## WELCOME LETTER

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to a new year of early learning! Your child's success is our priority. It is an honor to partner with you and your child. Together we help your child gain the skills that support kindergarten readiness and long-term success in school.

Center For Family Services has a 100-year history serving children and families. Our broad range of services expand across New Jersey, and we are proud to offer a strong early learning program in both Camden and Burlington Counties.

Education is the first and most important step to a better future. Our Head Start services support positive outcomes for your child. We strongly believe in your child's ability to succeed and value your input as parents and guardians.

Your continued involvement in your child's early learning plays an important part in their success. We look forward to working together with you in a shared decision-making process that includes parents as partners.

As the Head Start/Early Head Start provider, we will continue to provide parenting education, parent leadership and family support services. Home visits and parent conferences will support your child and your family. Together we will help your child to advance in all areas of development.

We recognize you, the parents/guardians, as your child's primary and most important teachers. We welcome your involvement in activities and will work with you as partners. You are encouraged to visit your child's classroom throughout the year. You are invited to participate in parent meetings and activities that are specially designed to meet your needs. You can also have a voice in early learning services by serving on the Parent Committee or Policy Council.

As we work together to encourage the development of your child and promote school readiness, you have the opportunity to greatly increase your child's chances for success by reading aloud to your child each day. Preschoolers are especially ready to learn from adults reading to and with them. By reading with your child, you will greatly increase your child's ability to learn to read.

You are also encouraged to help your child with daily attendance, including arriving before 9:00am every day. Daily attendance will help your child advance in all areas of development.

Please review this Family Handbook to familiarize yourself with our early learning program and use this information as a reference throughout the year. The handbook provides helpful information, including the program's procedures and policies. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask your child's teacher or call 856-964-2100. We look forward to working together with you and your child!

Sincerely,

Clinton Connor, Director

Lois Bond, Assistant Director

## ABOUT CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES

Center For Family Services, Inc. is a strong and innovative non profit organization dedicated to improving lives. With a history dating back to 1920, we remain committed to uplifting individuals and families through our innovative continuum of care.

Headquartered on Benson Street in Camden City, New Jersey, Center For Family Services has office locations and programs across New Jersey.

Our vision is for all people to lead capable, responsible, fulfilled lives in strong families and healthy communities.

Our mission is to support and empower individuals, families, and communities to achieve a better life through vision, hope and strength.

Our 100-year history includes humble beginnings with programs that only scratched the surface of the challenges our community faced. Today, our continuum of care is strong, robust, evidence-based and ever-changing to meet the needs of each child, individual, family in our care across the State of New Jersey.

With a professional commitment to high quality services, our employees balance best practice and cutting edge approaches with personalized care to improve the lives of those we serve.

Center For Family Services is a force for positive in our community. We have a proven track record of accomplishments working with neighborhood residents, schools, government leaders, corporate partners, and social service providers across the community.

Recognized as a top workplace in the greater Philadelphia region for ten consecutive years, our network of more than 1400 staff are our most valuable asset and resource. Through a wide range of specialized services, Center For Family Services supports people in finding the vision, the hope, and the strength for a better life

Center For Family Services actively participates in numerous national, statewide, regional and other community alliances and coalitions. Center For Family Services is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children and has met national standards for quality of services.

*“To people in need or in crisis, to people who have had life-long challenges, or to people whose lives have changed in a second, we are support, help, counsel, food, shelter, a kind word...a sense of hope.”*

## ABOUT CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES

Center For Family Services is provides a comprehensive continuum of care and a strong ability to meet the community's changing needs. Specialized services are offered in the following key areas:

- Community Connections providing opportunities to directly impact the community through mentoring programs, volunteer efforts, neighborhood-based resource centers, ongoing partnerships with local neighborhoods, and internship experiences;
- Counseling & Behavioral Health offering counseling services focused on building self-sufficient families, encouraging strong parent/child relationships, increasing conflict resolution skills, providing crisis-intervention, and connecting individuals to resources;
- Early Child Education providing high quality early childhood education program for children age newborn to five years old to support school readiness.
- Family Support & Prevention teaching critical parenting skills, increasing problem solving abilities and decreasing high-risk behaviors through evidence based programs that strengthen families;
- Safe & Supportive Housing providing a safe home environment for children and youth who are homeless, abused, abandoned, or neglected; women who are victims of domestic violence; and young mothers who are homeless;
- Addiction and Recovery offering recovery support groups and specialized treatment programs for youth, adults, mothers, and the deaf and hard of hearing community, as well as a peer-driven, community-based center supporting multiple pathways to sustained recovery;
- Victim & Trauma providing 24/7 crisis intervention, counseling, and support to survivors of sexual and domestic violence, safe housing for survivors of domestic violence, and trauma response across the community.
- Workforce Development providing support in a path to employment including job readiness skill building.

## EARLY LEARNING GOALS

To ensure high quality early childhood education:

- All children will enter kindergarten healthy and emotionally, socially and cognitively ready to succeed in learning, school, and life.
- Parents will have support to be their children's first and best teachers and help their children "Learn to Learn."
- All children will be cared for in safe and healthy classrooms.

To work directly with children and help support families to ensure children receive necessary health, dental, vision, nutrition, and mental health care for positive developmental growth:

- Parents will strengthen their skills in making healthy choices and maintaining their family's health.
- Children will receive screenings and assessments to track your child's vision, hearing, growth, behavior, speech, language, and overall learning.
- Parents and staff will work together to address any concerns about your child's growth to support your child in meeting his or her full potential.
- Staff will support parents in ensuring children have a family doctor and dentist and are receiving regular exams.

To work with families and community partners to ensure community partnerships and services are accessible and appropriate:

- We will provide high-quality services by professionally trained staff.
- We will work with parents to provide smooth transitions into the Head Start classroom
- We will work with you and the local schools to provide smooth transitions from Head Start into kindergarten.

## HEAD START VALUES

1. To respect the dignity and worth of each individual by providing professional services with compassion and humility.
2. To provide direct services to individuals and families through therapy, education, counseling, shelter, support, and advocacy.
3. To ensure ethical and moral conduct at all times and in all relationships.
4. To honor diversity and to provide services with sensitivity to differences in race, culture, gender, language, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.
5. To ensure access to services through overcoming barriers, vigorous outreach, and service delivery in homes, schools, and the community.
6. To take a leadership role with other community members in planning and advocating to improve social conditions on a local, state, and national level.
7. To hold ourselves professionally accountable for our effectiveness by measuring the outcomes and impact of agency services.
8. To create a work environment that honors staff as our most valuable resource.
9. To establish the agency as a continually learning, adaptive, and innovative organization that expands services to meet changing community needs.
10. To maintain quality and excellence in all agency activities.



## PROGRAM MODEL OPTIONS

Head Start provides a comprehensive program that meets the needs of children and families in Camden City, Camden County and Burlington County. In order to achieve this, Head Start provides a variety of program options. All families must meet the minimum income eligibility requirements for Head Start.

### Center Based – Full Day

This option provides services for children age three to five and operates from Monday through Friday, September through June from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Currently, CFS Head Start services are not available in the summer.

### Center Based – Extended Day

This option provides the same services as the full day program, but is open from 7:30 am to 5:30pm. The Extended Day services are only available at certain CFS Head Start locations. To be eligible, parents must be working or in school full time.

### Center Based – Wrap Services

This option is provided through a partnership with the state preschool program and Camden County. This option is available only at sites that are providing state preschool program services (formerly Abbott). This provides additional hours of services from 7:30am to 5:30pm. Parents must be working or in school full time.

Extended Day and Wrap services are provided on a limited basis at certain sites. Please contact your Family Service Advocate or teacher for additional information or to register for services.

\*In-classroom and virtual learning options are available for fall 2020.

## SCHOOL READINESS PLAN AND GOALS

Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. The CFS School Readiness Goals are developed in order to meet the Office of Head Start mandated school readiness goals, which are defined as "the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals" and that "appropriately reflect the ages of children, birth to five, participating in the program" (45 CFR Chapter XIII Head Start Regulation Part 1307.2 and 1307.3 (b)(1)(i), as amended).

Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. Head Start recognizes that parents are their children's primary teachers and advocates. Programs are required to consult with parents in establishing school readiness goals (45 CFR 1307.3 (b) (1) (iii), as amended). As Head Start programs and schools work together to promote school readiness and to engage families as their children make the transition to kindergarten, schools will be ready for children.

### Social/Emotional Development

Children will:

1. recognize their own feelings and manage them appropriately;
2. follow classroom rules, directions and routines;
3. be able to adjust to new situations;
4. exhibit appropriate emotional behaviors;
5. demonstrate self awareness, direction and independence; and
6. establish positive relationship with peers and adults.

## SCHOOL READINESS PLAN AND GOALS

### Approaches to Learning

Children will:

1. increase their listening skills;
2. display their creativity through art;
3. utilize dramatic roles to portray stories;
4. make discoveries and initiate learning on their own; and
5. demonstrate attentiveness cooperating in various curiosities with persistence.

### Language and Literacy

Children will:

1. have knowledge of the alphabet;
2. explore the world of reading;
3. acquire new words to enhance their conversational vocabulary;
4. understand following directions;
5. inquire as well as respond to questions;
6. have an understanding of story composition (beginning, middle, end, cover, publisher, author, etc.); and
7. write letters and words.
8. DLL children will have opportunities to engage in English reading.
9. DLL children will have opportunities to express themselves in English.

## SCHOOL READINESS PLAN AND GOALS

### Cognition and General Knowledge

Children will:

1. demonstrate knowledge of numbers;
2. have opportunities to utilize mathematical operations;
3. have the knowledge of measurements, patterns, and comparison;
4. use appropriate skills to solve problems;
5. learn life science through living things;
6. gain knowledge of physical science;
7. learn about the different type of families and community workers; and
8. learn about the physical world and how we move about the world.

### Physical Development and Health

Children will:

1. become self sufficient in their personal needs;
2. learn about healthy foods and how they grow;
3. demonstrate large motor skills; and
4. demonstrate fine motor skills.

How are we going to achieve these goals?

1. Partnerships with families and community.
2. Use a comprehensive evidence based curriculum ( Creative Curriculum Gold)
3. Implement Literacy focused program ( American Reading)
4. Increase exposure to books and increase small group and one on one reading with children (Born to Read)

## SCHOOL READINESS PLAN AND GOALS

5. Recruiting and retaining highly trained teachers and staff. Work with other staff to continue professional development.
6. Use a whole child approach that focuses on nutrition, health and classroom learning.
7. Provide comprehensive full day programming from 8:30am – to 3pm five days per week.
8. Increase availability of high quality ECE summer programming at Head Start.
9. Increase number of degree teachers and staff in the classrooms.
10. Reduce ratio amounts through dedicated volunteers to increase individualized attention for children in the classroom.

How are we going to know that children have accomplished these goals?

- 1) We will use The Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment system which measures the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are most predictive of school success. The tool has 38 objectives, including 2 objectives related to English language acquisition.
- 2) Teacher observations of each child will be conducted 3 times per year: the first will be completed by mid-October to gain a baseline for the student; the second will be done mid-year (approximately February) to measure progress and identify any areas of need; and the third in May to assess progress throughout the school year.
- 3) Review the American Reading Company Literacy program outcomes to measure the number of books read at home with the child throughout the year.

*\*\*Approved by Policy Council 1/15/2013*

## HEAD START SERVICES

Center For Family Services' Head Start program is a nurturing early childhood education program for children age three to five in Camden City and Camden County, New Jersey. The program provides eligible families with comprehensive services in the areas of:

### Education

Each classroom provides a safe and engaging learning environment that supports a young child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth and development and promotes kindergarten readiness. To make the CFS Head Start program a comfortable place for every child, we gear our classroom environment and activities to the community and the families involved.

We're eager to learn as much as we can about each child's family, cultural background, past experience and current circumstances. Children's individual interests, languages, cultural backgrounds and learning styles are taken into account. With this information, we work to create a program that fits the children and the families that we serve. CFS Head Start has your child's best interest in mind at all times.

Each classroom teaches using the award-winning Creative Curriculum, which promotes hands-on learning and is in line with many of the New Jersey State and local school districts.

The Creative Curriculum focuses on four areas of development: social/emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development. Teacher-planned activities are balanced with child-initiated learning that support active learning and promote progress in all child development areas. Parent/Teacher conferences and other meetings are scheduled throughout the year. Teachers and Family Service Advocates also schedule home visits several times each year to further child and family goals.

## HEAD START SERVICES

Your child will be learning in our Head Start classrooms in different ways. Here are some examples:

- Children learn through appropriate play
  - Pre-math skills are developed by working puzzles, using shape sorters, and recognizing and creating patterns.
  - Pre-writing skills are developed by scribbling with crayons, building with blocks, and tearing and cutting paper.
  - Problem solving skills are developed by participating in finger plays, while painting at an easel, and during play with classmates.
- Children learn best by doing hands-on activities
  - Cutting a ball of Play-Doh into parts is an understandable demonstration of fractions.
  - Using a ring sorter lets a child understand the concepts of large and small.
  - Cutting and pasting items on a collage develops the small motor skills needed to write their name.
- Social skills can also be learned through play
  - Dramatic play activities allow children to build greater success in relationships with others.
  - Higher self-esteem is developed when a child completes a block structure.
  - Respect for others is developed as a child takes turns in a game.

Head Start staff members are knowledgeable in Early Childhood Development and use information they gather on your child to continually plan activities that help them accomplish new skills. Our staff will be happy to share your child's progress with you during parent conferences and home visits.

## HEAD START SERVICES

### Special Education Services

Center For Family Services' Head Start welcomes children with disabilities, who are given enrollment priority points.

### Family Services

Each family is assigned a Family Service Advocate who will help the family identify strengths, define services and supports needed, set goals, and link families to social services referrals. Your family and the Family Service Advocate work together in a partnership to help the family progress toward achieving and attaining goals and services that support the positive development of your child.

### Family Involvement

Head Start is a great program because of you! Families are encouraged to be involved in many aspects of the program including individualized family services, special events, parent trainings, and volunteering. This participation may include serving on a variety of committees such as your center committee or the Policy Council.

### Mental Health

Center For Family Services Head Start provides mental wellness activities in the classroom and works with families around their child's mental health and behavior.

### Health

CFS Head Start advocates the importance of a child's health care and encourages good health care practices, including disease prevention, health maintenance, and early intervention. For these reasons, your child will participate in a comprehensive health care program. All children will receive screenings and children can receive additional support if necessary. Family Service Advocates assist families in getting health services for their children as needed. Children are required to have current vaccinations and physical and dental exams, as well as hearing and vision screenings.

- Head Start uses the State of New Jersey Universal Health Record Form for the three to five year old child.
- You will complete appropriate permission forms needed for your child to receive services that will ensure updated health care.
- Our staff will work with you to ensure every attempt has been made to obtain necessary medical services to meet the health needs of your child.
- You will always be notified of any and all appointments before the scheduled date.



## HEAD START SERVICES

**Vision Screenings:** Vision screenings measure your child's ability to see near and far objects clearly. Your child will be screened using the Lea Symbol Chart, which consists of pictures of a house, apple, circle and square. N.J. Commission of the Blind, Nursing Students from Rutgers University and Head Start staff perform visual screenings for children within 45 days of their start date.

**Hearing Screenings:** An audiometer is used for hearing screenings in Head Start. Screening measures the threshold of hearing for pure tone frequencies (pitch) and loudness. Nursing Students from Rowan University Medical School and Head Start staff perform hearing screening for children within 45 days of their start date.

### Dental Health

Dental care is essential to preserve primary teeth and teach good dental habits in preparation for the arrival of permanent teeth from about five to six years of age through adolescence. You are encouraged to take your child to your own dentist for regular exams. If you do not have a dental home, our staff will help you identify available dentists.

A dental exam is a painless procedure. Your child will be asked to open their mouth wide and the dentist will look into the mouth using a bright light. The dentist may use some tools with points to press on the teeth during the exam and x-rays may be taken.

Preventive care is an important part of your child's dental health. Cleaning and fluoride treatment are usually completed by a dental hygienist. A hygienist uses some tools to remove plaque from the teeth. This is a painless process and your child needs to hold his/her mouth open for the hygienist. Fluoride treatment is completed by placing liquid fluoride in a container shaped like your child's mouth for a few minutes. Your child should not swallow the fluoride.

We practice good dental habits in the classroom by:

- Having all children brush daily with fluoride toothpaste.
- Changing tooth brushes every 3 months.
- Involving students in dental health activities.

## HEAD START SERVICES

### Immunizations

An immunization (vaccination) is a way to trigger your child's immune system and prevent serious, life-threatening diseases. Immunizations expose your child to very small, very safe amounts of the most important diseases that your child is likely to encounter at some point in their lifetime. This mild exposure helps your child's immune system recognize and attack the disease efficiently. If your child is exposed to the full-blown disease later in life, they will either not become infected or have a much less serious illness.

Requirements for 18 months to five years of age to attend a pre-school include: (4) DTaP with six months between the third and fourth immunization, (3) Polio (1) Hib after the first birthday, (1) MMR after the first birthday and (1) Varicella after first birthday, (3) Pneumococcal 1 of which is needed after the first birthday, (1) Influenza 1 dose to be administered between September 1 and December 31 of each year. Our staff members will help you to make sure your child has the appropriate immunizations to attend school.

### Nutrition/Meal Services

Our Head Start program promotes healthy growth and good eating habits. Each day we prepare a variety of fresh foods to feed your child breakfast at 8:45am, lunch at 11:45am, and snack at 2:45pm through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Head Start Food Service Staff follow menus, based on United States Department of Agriculture guidelines, to supply your child's daily requirements for good nutrition. Copies of menus are posted in centers throughout the program year.

Meals are served family style and children and staff eat together sharing friendly conversation. Food served is high in nutrients and low in fat, sugars, and salt.

Head Start requires that a variety of foods be served to invite your child to experience the wide variety of food available to them. This also helps them to learn about the food groups. Staff will work with you to include your child's favorite cultural and ethnic foods into the menu selections.

We will offer educational opportunities for you to gain new skills and ideas for cooking nutritious meals at home. Share with us your ideas and questions about food, menus and nutrition activities. Please join us for the many nutrition activities that we have planned throughout the year.

*Let us know about your child's food restrictions or allergies that have been identified by his or her doctor. We can provide a special meal to meet your child's nutritional needs. A note from your physician must be presented. Please do not send food in with your child.*

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Attendance

Children are expected to be at the center every day. Regular attendance in the classroom is very important for the child to become comfortable with a regular and consistent schedule. If a child is continually absent or late from school he/she misses out on the activities designed to build connections to other children and transition into the classroom. Regular attendance is essential in the academic growth for all of the children. Literacy and math skills are taught daily, absence from the classroom interrupts the process of learning these skills. In addition, late arrival can also disrupt the flow of the classroom activities for other children.

Teachers do understand that illnesses occur and that a student may be absent from school. It is important that you call the center when your child will not be attending class. If your child is absent three (3) or more days at one time without a phone call, a Family Service Advocate will conduct a home visit. If your child is absent for 2 consecutive weeks without notification, your child may be dropped from the program. If your emergency contact phone numbers change please notify us as soon as possible.

- The Head Start program hours are from 8:30am - 3:00pm. Parents should arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day and should plan to wait with his/her child until the 8:30am sign in.
- If your child is enrolled in the Full Day/Full Year or State Funded Preschool/Head Start program (formerly Abbott), the classroom will open at 7:30am and close at 5:30pm for families who need the early or later hours and are working or in school.
- Please be prompt in dropping off and picking up your child at the start and end of each school day.
- For half-day sessions, dismissal time is 12:30pm unless otherwise notified.
- Only an individual who is authorized by you on the Authorized Release/Emergency Contact Form may pick up your child.
- Please call us when your child will be absent or arrive after 9:00am. Children need to have a regular routine as part of their growth and preparation for kindergarten.
- If a child misses a meal due to late arrival, a bowl of cereal or a sandwich may be supplied. When possible, parents are asked to stay until the child is settled.
- If you plan to have your child out for vacation or a long period of time, you MUST let your child's Teacher and Family Advocate know. Depending on the situation of the absence your child may have to be placed back on the waiting list.

Please refer to your registration packet for complete details regarding the CFS Head Start attendance policy.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Signing In and Out

Classrooms require children to be signed-in and signed-out each day. Only parents or persons listed on the authorized release form are allowed to sign-out/pick up children. Programs providing wrap/extended day services may require additional procedures.

### Late Pick-Up

If an adult fails to meet a child at the bus stop or is late picking up the child at school staff will attempt to contact the parent or authorized emergency contacts. If a child is not picked up within a reasonable time, social services will be called. Please see the “Responsibilities of Parents” section of this handbook for more information.

### Illness

As your child’s teacher greets children he or she will conduct a daily health inspection. If it is determined that your child is ill or has a health condition that requires temporary exclusion from the center you or your emergency contact will be notified to pick up your child. Please see the “Health/Nutrition” section of this handbook for more information.

### Medication

No medication is given without a Medication Demonstration, parent/legal guardian permission, a doctor’s note, and prescribed medication labeled by a pharmacist. Over the counter medication must be in the original container and requires parent/legal guardian permission as well as a doctor’s note. A meeting with the parent/legal guardian, teacher, Family Service Advocate or the Health Coordinator is required to develop a medication plan. For the Medical Demonstration, parents/guardians explain the signs/symptoms that indicate the child needs his/her medication, and they demonstrate how to give the prescribed medication.

### Emergency/Snow Closing Policy

Head Start classrooms may close if there is bad weather or an emergency situation. Announcements about school closings due to bad weather may be made by local TV and radio. You will receive an automated call to tell you if Head Start is closed. ***It is your responsibility to keep your contact information updated to make sure you receive these phone calls.***

### Accidents

If your child has an accident requiring medical treatment you will be notified. If your emergency contact information changes, it is your responsibility to inform the staff. If we are unable to reach you, your child will be taken to get medical help.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Clothing

The preschool experience is a time of discovery. Children run, jump, hop, glue, paint, and play in the sand on a daily basis. Please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothing and sneakers (closed toe shoes). Jewelry is discouraged as it may become tangled or lost during active play.

Since we like to play outside (everyday according to the weather) and take walks and trips throughout the year, please dress your child to suit the weather. It would be helpful if you would put his/her name on his/her clothing and place them in a bag. (E.g. jackets mittens, boots, hats, etc.)

### Extra Clothing

We encourage children to take care of their personal needs during bathroom times; however, accidents do occur. Please provide your Head Start Center with a complete change of clothes marked with your child's name.

### Toys

Please leave toys and other similar items at home. Head Start cannot be held responsible for their safe return if brought in. Also at this age children are just beginning to learn about sharing. The skill of sharing is better taught through materials provided by Head Start.

### Party/Snack Foods

No outside food is permitted in the classrooms.

### Visitation

Volunteers are welcome in our classrooms. We encourage family/community members to volunteer. All visitors must report to the Site Supervisor or Head Teacher before going to the classroom. Volunteers may not bring additional children into the classroom.

### Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for those students who have special needs and/or families that have special needs and are therefore unable to provide transportation. If your family qualifies for bus transportation a detailed description of responsibilities will be provided.

### Field Trips

Permission slips will be sent home before your child's class goes on a field trip. Each child must have a permission slip signed by a parent/legal guardian before going on a field trip. Only enrolled Head Start children are allowed on field trips. We encourage parents to volunteer to supervise field trips!

## INFORMATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In accordance with the Manual of Requirements for Childcare Centers (N.J.A.C.) 10:122) and prepared by Office of Licensing Child Care and Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/ life safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJ Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center maybe in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

## INFORMATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the Office of Licensing's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the Office's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the Office for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

## INFORMATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Our center is required to periodically review the Department of Law and Public Safety (DLPS), Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA), unsafe children's products list, make the list accessible to staff and parents, and ensure that items on the list are not at the center.

The list is available at [www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recali/recalls.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/lps/ca/recali/recalls.htm). Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the DLPS, DCA, toll-free at 1 (800) 242-5846.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Child Abuse Hotline, toll free at 1 (877) NJ ABUSE. Such reports may be made anonymously.

Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.nj.gov/dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf) and select Publications.



## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Tobacco Use Policy

The use, distribution or sale of tobacco on Head Start premises, at Head Start sponsored events (on or off premises), in Head Start-owned, rented or leased vehicles or otherwise while on duty on or off Head Start premises is prohibited. For the purposes of this policy, “tobacco” is defined to include any lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, and any other smoking product, spit tobacco, also known as smokeless, dip, chew, snuff, in any form.

Program staff, parents, volunteers, and others must also avoid bringing clothing that smells of smoke into the classroom, site or playground. Staff will request that parents not smoke during home visits. Parents will be informed of the smoke-free request prior to the home visit.

### Cell Phone Policy

We ask that parents refrain from using their cell phone while at the Head Start Centers. Allowing communication between staff and parents while they drop off or pick up their children provides a positive school experience for the children.

### Child Abuse Policy

New Jersey State Law requires everyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Call the State Child Abuse Hotline, toll free at 1 (877) NJ ABUSE to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Please refer to the following Information to Parents from the Department of Children and Families.

### Center’s Violence Policy

It is a Center For Family Services policy that every child, family, and employee be treated fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect. We strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment that assists in the positive development of those we serve. There is no room or tolerance for harassing, threatening, or violent behavior either in the center or on the grounds of the center. Violent acts of third parties on the agency premises will be reported to the proper authorities.

### Discipline and Social Practices

Staff will discuss and formulate clear, age appropriate, and consistent rules with children. There should be three to five, basic rules. Rules are written in sentences that are less than five words long and state the desired behavior, such as:

- Use walking feet.
- Use inside voices.
- Put toys away.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Children are reminded of rules and the behavior that is expected of them. We never assume that a child should know the rules.

Staff members watch the children as they interact with the environment, the other children, and adults. They ask themselves and the children questions to gain understanding of the child. They adapt schedules, the environment, and the adult interaction styles to the children in the classroom to achieve a supportive, learning environment.

Head Start staff assists children in developing self-control, loving attitudes, security, trust, independence, and overall competency through:

- Developing an environment that sends the right messages;
- Being involved with the children, on the floor, making eye contact and smiling often;
- Responding quickly to possible problems;
- Respecting a child's choice and individuality;
- Encouraging self-help skills;
- Listening to children and repeating back their words;
- Avoiding the use of why questions, and focusing on what and how questions;
- Assisting with problem solving. Not requiring a child to say sorry; but assisting a child in being responsible for their behavior;
- Redirecting children;
- Helping children to express their feelings in safe ways.

Head Start staff members use time away, not time out, to help children regain control of their behaviors (This method should be used by a trained staff member). This method is used only when the child is a danger (emotionally or physically) to him/herself or to others:

- Find a quiet place where the staff person and the child can be away from the rest of the children (this does not have to be sitting); a corner of the classroom, just outside the door of the classroom, another area of the building or an outside area.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

- On rare occasions, the child will be so out of control that you must gently restrain (in a gentle hug) the arms and sometimes the head (to avoid bites). You need to remain calm and feel very strong inside while you do this, because you want to protect the child's safety as well as your own.
- Stay with the child until the child is calm. Rubbing the hair or back can help or getting a drink of water.
- Respect the child's choice's as to how and when the child will return to the group. Sometimes resting can feel good.

Staff and volunteers will not discipline children for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves.

Staff and volunteers will not use hitting, shaking, or any other form of corporal punishment of children. Staff and volunteers will not use abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children.

Staff and volunteers will not require a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time for the child's age, nor should they ever be seated alone or placed in a corner.

Staff and volunteers will not withhold from children food, emotional responses, stimulation, or opportunities for rest or sleep.

If there is an ongoing problem with a behavior of a child, behaviors are recorded (with the time and setting) in the narrative section of the child's file. A conference will be scheduled with the parents, staff, and a management team member. A plan will be developed to assist the child in functioning in the classroom.

### Removal of Children Policy

The removal of children from the classroom occurs only when the nature or severity of circumstances is such that education in the classroom setting with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The Head Start referral process to the Mental Health/Disabilities Specialist will be specifically followed and documented. Under no circumstances will a Teacher, Teacher Assistant, Classroom Aide, Family Worker or Site Supervisor make a determination to have a child removed from the Head Start Center. The Head Start Director, a multidisciplinary team, and the child's parent will partner to develop a plan to meet the needs of the child, which may include assisting the family in finding another setting in which the child may be served. There will be detailed documentation in the child's file explaining the removal of the child from the Head Start center setting, including an Individual Program Plan (IPP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). All children and families will continue to be served through Head Start services.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Release of Children Policy

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) 18 or older authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child. This information is listed on the Authorized Release/ Emergency Contact form.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access to a child by court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick-up a child by the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/ her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Division of Youth and Family Services' 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/ or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child may not be released to such an individual;
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the Division of Youth and Family Services' 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-792-8610) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Health Information

*Per NJ State Child Care Licensing laws, the following health information is needed in order to enroll your child in the Head Start program:*

### Up-to-Date Medical/Physical Exam

The medical exam is a thorough check up of the child's overall health and development. It is done by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant. This exam should include:

- Height/Weight/BMI
- Blood Pressure
- Hearing & Vision Screening
  - Both screenings check the child's basic ability to hear and see.
  - Many times the physician will do these at the well check.
- Anemia Screening (Hemoglobin/Hematocrit)
  - Our bodies need oxygen for energy and growth. Red blood cells, hemoglobin, and iron carry oxygen through the blood to the body. Anemia is when the body does not have enough red blood cells, iron, or hemoglobin. It can slow a child's energy, growth, and development. Anemia is screened through a blood test, often at the same time as lead. The screening is done at 12 months and often yearly, when a physician feels it is necessary.
- Lead Screening
  - This screening measures the level of lead in the blood. Lead is a poison that is very dangerous for young children because of their small size, rapid growth, and development. It can cause anemia, learning difficulty, and other medical problems. Lead also is determined through a blood test and should have been completed at 12 months and 24 months of age.
- Updated immunization record
  - Flu vaccine for the current school year must be completed before returning to school after the Winter Break each January.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Up-to-Date Dental Exam

The dental exam is a full check-up by a dental professional. It includes:

- Discussion of diet, tooth brushing, use of bottles, and thumb sucking.
- Exam of mouth for tooth decay, bite, and gum infections and all related work identified
- Information on good oral hygiene and nutrition, and fluoride applied to prevent tooth decay.

If any problems are identified during the medical or dental exam, then timely follow up is needed. Some children may also need:

### Medication Administration Plan

Only if your child takes medication during the school day or has allergies or asthma individualized care plan must be in the child's file by the time they enter the classroom. A medication demo must also be completed. Please see your Family Services Advocate or Health Advocate with any questions.

### Sick Procedures:

Your child must remain home if any of the following illnesses are present:

- Fever of 101 degrees F or accompanied by a rash
- Symptoms and signs of possible serious illness, such as lethargy, uncontrollable coughing, or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea or blood in stools
- Vomiting illness
- Persistent abdominal pain with fever or other signs/symptoms
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Pink Eye or redness and discharge from eyes
- Head lice, body lice or scabies
- Tuberculosis, Impetigo, Chicken Pox, Pertussis, Mumps, Hepatitis A virus, Measels, Rubella, respiratory tract illness, shingles, Herpes Simplex

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Treatment with antibiotics is not to be required or otherwise encouraged as a condition for attendance of children with mild respiratory tract infections unless directed by local health authorities;

Children should also remain home if:

- The illness has a specified cause that requires exclusion, as determined by the local health department or health provider;
- The illness limits the child's comfortable participation in activities; or
- The illness results in a need for more care than that staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- They have not been fever free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medications (Tylenol, Motrin) before returning to school.
- They have gone less than 24 hours after experiencing any vomiting or diarrhea.

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Policy on the Management of Communicable Disease

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the classroom, and you will be called to take him/her home.

Severe pain or discomfort	Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
Blood in urine	Red eyes with discharge
Acute diarrhea	Infected, untreated skin patches
Stiff neck	Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
Episodes of acute vomiting	Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
Swollen joints	Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
Sore throat or severe coughing	
Difficult or rapid breathing	

Once the child is symptom-free, or has a physician's note stating that he/she no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or other, he/she may return to the center.

### Table of Excludable Communicable Diseases

A child who contracts any of the following disease may not return to the center without a physician's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others:

<u>Respiratory illnesses</u>	<u>Gastrointestinal illnesses</u>	<u>Contact illnesses</u>
Chicken Pox**	Campylobacter*	Impetigo
German Measles	(Food Poisoning)	Lice
Hemophilus Influenzae*	Escherichia coli* (E. Coli)	Scabies
Measles*	Giardia Lamblia*	Shingles
Meningococcus* (Meningitis)	Hepatitis A*	<u>Other</u>
Mumps*	Salmonella*	H1N1- (Swine Flu)
Strept throat	Shigella*	MRSA
Tuberculosis* (TB)		
Whooping Cough*		

\*Reportable disease that will be reported to the health department by the center immediately.

\*\* Within 24 hours

Note: If your child has chicken pox, a doctor's note is not required for re-admitting the child to the center. A note from the parent is required, stating either that at least six days has elapsed since the onset of the rash, or that all sores have dried and crusted. If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, you will be notified in writing.



## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### Prohibited Actions

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Injuring another person physically;
- Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person;
- Engaging in behavior that subjects another individual to extreme emotional distress;
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon while on agency premises or engaged in agency business;
- Intentionally damaging property;
- Threatening to injure an individual or to damage property;
- Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to domestic violence and or sexual harassment;
- Retaliating against any employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy; and
- Use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products on Head Start premises.

# PARENT COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Positive relationships between home and preschool give your child/ren a better chance of success. Our parent complaint policy provides information about avenues of communication, which strengthens the partnership between parents and our preschool program. It acknowledges the importance of the relationship between guardians/parents, the teachers, and other staff.

Your concerns may relate to:

- The type or quality of service rendered
- The behavior and decisions of staff
- A policy, procedure, or practice

Procedures for Raising Concerns

Issues concerning children, parents, and/or staff relationships should be raised at the center level with the Family Service Advocate/ Site Supervisors. There may be times when you feel for a variety of reasons that you are unable to speak to those staff because they may be persons involved. In this case, please contact the Family and Community Partnership Manager (FCPM) directly at 1-856-964-2100.

Procedures to be followed:

1. Parent/Guardian will complete the Parent Concern Form and submit it to the Family Service Advocate at your child's center location. The Family Service Advocate (FSA) will meet with you to discuss your concern.
2. The FSA will inform the Site Supervisor (SS) of the concern, and provide them with the completed Parent Concern Form. The Site Supervisor will then speak to all parties involved. The Site Supervisor will gather all the necessary information, and the SS will follow-up with the parent/guardian within 48-72 hours. (Note: If this is an urgent matter, immediate follow-up will occur.)
3. The Site Supervisor will schedule a convenient time for the parent/guardian to meet and/or call to discuss the concern. The Site Supervisor, Family Service Advocate, and all parties involved will be invited to attend the meeting to respectfully communicate and resolve the issue.
4. The SS will complete the follow-up section on the Parent Concern Form, and forward a copy to the Family and Community Partnership Manager, Education Manager, and Quality Improvement Manager (QI). QI will follow-up with the parent to ensure the effectiveness of this process.
5. If a resolution has not been reached at the center level, the Site Supervisor will make a referral to the Family and Community Partnership Manager (FCPM).
6. Further Meetings, mediation, and/or an action plan may be needed to reach a resolution, if so, this process will be facilitated by the FCP Manager. The FCP Manager will follow-up with the parent, and include Content Area Managers, and/or the AVP/Head Start Director as deemed necessary and/or appropriate.

Parents Rights and Responsibilities

When raising a concern with staff, parents can expect to:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy, consideration, and maintain confidentiality
- Have the concern dealt with in a confidential and timely manner
- Have the concern considered impartially and in accordance with due process and the principles of equal and fair justice
- Be kept informed about the process and outcomes of their grievance

We request that when filing a concern parents will:

- Treat other parties with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality
- Raise the concern as soon as possible
- Provide complete and factual information about the concern
- Ask for assistance or further information as needed
- Act in good faith to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties
- Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve the concern.

*Center for Family Services Head Start is consistently working on improving and strengthening our parent-staff partnership within the program. We are committed to ensuring that your encounters are always respectful, decent, and objective. Our Quality Improvement Manager will be in contact with you to survey your experience regarding this process. We want to make certain that your concern was addressed appropriately, swiftly, and most importantly, resolved.*

*(If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please contact your Family Service Advocate)*

# PARENT COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES



## Parent/Guardian Concern Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians, please **PRINT** and complete this form in its entirety so that we can provide the most appropriate and effective resources to support your concern. If you should need any assistance with completing this form, please see your Family Service Advocate.

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the concern/complaint:

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Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Reprint: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**[Please submit this form to the Family Service Advocate at your child's center location]**

**Site Supervisor Follow-Up (Please complete the following section):**

**Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Which method/s were used to follow up with parent/guardian: Face-to-Face Meeting Phone Call Before/ Sent Home:**

**Parties Attended/Present:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of follow-up:**

**Resolution and/or Next Steps:**

*After completing this form, please scan and email this document to the following people: Family and Community Partnership Manager, Education Manager, and the Quality Improvement Manager.*

**Site Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

*If the center has not reached all the center level, please make a referral to the Family and Community Partnership Manager, and include this form. Make referral to Family and Community Partnership Manager \_\_\_\_\_. (Note: Please provide copies of this form to the Education Manager and Quality Improvement Manager.)*

## STAFF AND PARENTS AS PARTNERS

We the Head Start staff will do our best to:

- Make you feel welcome at all times. We have an open door policy.
- Provide a warm, friendly atmosphere for you and your child.
- Keep you posted of all happenings in the Head Start program and your child's progress through the program.
- Make regular follow-up calls to address your child's absence where there is no prior notification.
- Always be willing to answer any questions that you might have or direct you to someone who can answer your questions.
- Partner with you and provide guidance to help you reach your goals.
- Inform you of community resources that may be helpful to your family.
- Encourage you to share your ideas to improve our Head Start program.
- Work together to ensure that there is a quality program.
- Make our program-area service plans available for you to read.
- Visit you in your home.
- Send notices home in advance with explanations.
- Avoid asking anything of you that staff wouldn't feel comfortable doing.
- Respect your family's right to confidential services.

## STAFF AND PARENTS AS PARTNERS

### Parent/Guardian Involvement

As parents/guardians, you have the greatest influence on your child's development. All parents have the opportunity to be involved in the Head Start program. Children may attend the Head Start program even if parents choose not to take part in program activities, but parent participation is welcomed and encouraged in many ways:

- Volunteer in the classroom.
- Attend Center workshops and other planned activities.
- Visit your Head Start Center and meet with your family advocate.
- Assist the bus driver by riding on the bus.
- Chaperone field trips.
- Assist with setting up Parent Corners at Head Start Centers.
- Assist with laundry (Head Start blankets and sheets)
- Help prepare materials for classroom activities.
- Develop and plan parent activities.
- Attending Parent Committee meetings.

Parents can also be involved by attending Parent Committee meetings to plan activities for the families in your center. This is also an opportunity to attend workshops and access opportunities in the community.

Parents can also share in making decisions about the program by serving on the CFS Head Start Policy Council. This group of parents and community representatives approves or disapproves Head Start policies. *Policy Council is the link that connects local parent committees to broader program-wide issues.*

Parents may, when qualified, be considered for employment in positions in the Head Start program. Former and current parents are encouraged to apply for vacant positions, and their Head Start background will be given consideration. Positions are listed on the CFS website, [www.centerffs.org](http://www.centerffs.org), and are posted in each center location.

## STAFF AND PARENTS AS PARTNERS

### Parent/Guardian Involvement Benefits

Parent/guardian participation benefits you the parent, your child, your family, and the Head Start Center your child attends. You are your child's primary teacher and you play a major role in shaping what and how your child learns. Your involvement will provide the opportunity to:

- Learn ways to reinforce your child's learning outside of the classroom.
- Enhance your parenting skills and gain leadership experience.
- Learn about educational opportunities for yourself and your child.
- Receive community resource information that may be helpful to your family.
- Receive health, mental health, and nutrition information.

### Male Involvement

Head Start is committed to fully involving males in every aspect of the program and provide, either directly or through partnering organizations, activities that foster the importance of males in your child's life. Ask the staff at your center for information about current fatherhood initiatives.

### Family Literacy

Reading aloud to your child is a very important part of preschool development. It encourages children to read, helps word pronunciation and creates a positive self-image. Head Start values and addresses family literacy. Children love being read to by family members. It only takes 10-20 minutes each day and it becomes some of the best time you can spend with your child!

For those family members who would like to improve their reading skills, obtain a high school diploma, or simply want to continue their education, we offer a referral service to provide the resources needed to obtain your educational goals. Please talk to your Family Advocate for more details.

## STAFF AND PARENTS AS PARTNERS

### Family and Community Partnerships

The Family Partnership Program Area links the center, the home and the community through the following activities:

- Screening and selecting children to attend Head Start.
- Offering your family the opportunity to become aware of the resources in your local community and how to use them.
- Conducting meaningful home and center visits. Family Workers will visit you in your home to talk to you about your child and/or Head Start happenings. We encourage parents to visit the Head Start Center whenever possible.
- Identifying strengths and needs of families so that staff and families will work together to meet the family's goals. The Family Worker can refer you to supportive community resources that will help you accomplish your goals.
- Family workers also provide informational workshops with support from various community resources on a variety of topics that help to educate Head Start families.
- Listening when there is a need to talk. The Family Worker is trained to deal with the different obstacles Head Start families face and will keep information confidential.
- Sincerely trying to improve the quality of life for Head Start families.



## PARENT CORNER

### Tips for Parents and Guardians

We want you to learn as much as possible about your child's Head Start program! Here are some tips we have to make the most of your child's time in Head Start:

- Accept Head Start as an opportunity for family growth and a foundation for you to play a major role in your child's educational success.
- Offer your time in whatever way you can to be involved in your child's education.
- Welcome teachers, health and family service staff into your home.
- Work with our staff in a cooperative way – they are here to help you!
- Offer your ideas to improve our Head Start program.
- Take advantage of programs designed to increase knowledge about child development and skills.
- Become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education, and recreation for your family.
- Read aloud to your children because it is the most important activity for building the knowledge needed for future success in reading.

### Reading with Your Child

Reading aloud with your child each day is the most important way you can help to prepare your child for school success. Here are some suggestions for reading aloud to children:

- Make reading books an enjoyable experience. Choose a comfortable place where the children can sit near you. Help them feel safe and secure. Be enthusiastic about reading. Show the children that reading is an interesting and rewarding activity. When children enjoy being read to, they will grow to love books and be eager to learn to read.

## PARENT CORNER

- Read to children frequently. Read to the children in your care several times a day. Establish regular times for reading during the day, and find other opportunities to read:
  - Start or end the day with a book.
  - Read to children after a morning play period which also helps settle them down.
  - Read to them during snack time or before nap time.
- Help children to learn as you read. Offer explanations, make observations, and help the children to notice new information. Explain words that they may not know. Point out how the pictures in a book relate to the story.
- Ask children questions as you read. Ask questions that help children connect the story with their own lives or that help them to compare the book with other books that they have read. Ask questions that help the children to notice what is in the book and ask them to predict what happens next.
- Encourage children to talk about the book. Have a conversation with the children about the book you are reading. Answer their questions. Welcome their observations, and add to what they say. Ask them to talk about their favorite parts and encourage them to tell the story in their own words
- Read many kinds of books. Children need to be read different kinds of books. Storybooks can help children to learn about times, cultures, and peoples other than their own; stories can help them understand how others think, act, and feel. Informational books can help children learn facts about the world around them.
- Reread favorite books. Children love to hear their favorite books over and over again. Hearing books read several times helps children understand and notice new things.

## PARENT CORNER

### Tips from your Preschooler

Be positive! Don't tell me that I'll have a great time at childcare and then tell grandma that you feel guilty about enrolling me. I pick up on your feelings very easily! If you feel great about leaving...I'll feel great about staying.

Don't mind me if the first day I love it and the second day I hate it! It's a new place, new kids, new adults and new schedule. Keep my schedule consistent and I will be fine.

When you drop me off in the morning, give me a kiss and a hug and tell me you'll see me later. When you do, I feel secure and know when you'll come back. If I cry, my teachers will hold me. They love me too and want the best for me.

Please take time to look at my artwork. I work long and hard at it all day while you are at work. If you do not care, I will not be excited about creating it.

Spend time with me after we get home at night. I know that you are tired and I'm full of energy because I took a nap! Let's go for a walk after dinner. I need time with my family too.

Sometimes I would like it if you would talk to me and explain to me what is going to happen to me before it happens. Tell me what day I am going to start school and what I will do there during the day. It would help to lessen my fears. Point out the center to me as we ride by so I can be excited about it.

Give me the choice to do things by myself. I'm littler and slower than you are but I can do things all by myself. I can dress myself and I can pick what breakfast cereal I want to eat. Making decisions can make me feel very important.

Sometimes I do not want to go to school. Sometimes you do not want to go to work. But after we both get there, we are fine.

Do not be mad at me if, after I pass that "adjustment period," if I don't want to go home when you come to pick me up. Be glad that my teachers are wonderful people who make me want to stay.

Please do not feel guilty about leaving me! I know that you love me and that you will do what's best for me! I also know that when I start kindergarten I will be well adjusted socially and mentally. I will be asking questions way ahead of the other children. Why? *Because you had the insight to put me with other children at a young age where I could learn new things and meet new friends.*

## PARENT CORNER

### Ways to Encourage Good Behavior

You are your child's first teacher! Here are some ways you can help your child to learn good behavior:

- **Rules:** Children behave better when they know what's expected of them. Rules set limits for children and keep them safe. Set clear rules. When you are unhappy with your child's behavior talk about what your child has done and why you are unhappy. Your child will learn that you will be firm but fair when rules are broken.
- **Consistency:** Be consistent when enforcing rules and making your child's daily schedule/routine. Your child will behave better when they know their schedule. Morning and bedtime routines will help ease the transition from home to school and from dinner to bed.
- **Responsibilities:** Give your child responsibilities. Have your child clean up toys, set the table, or help with laundry. Simple chores will make your child feel important.
- **Praise and Attention:** If you see your child making good choices, praise him/her. Go beyond saying "good job" and tell your child what he/she did that was good, such as "Good job! You picked up your toys off the floor! That was helpful!" This will help your child learn and encourage he/she to repeat good behavior.
- **Distraction/Redirection:** Remove your child from a situation where bad behavior is about to or has just occurred. Help your child to focus on an acceptable activity.

### Try some of these 101 ways to praise your child!

Wow \* Way to go \* You're Special \* Outstanding \* Excellent \* Great \* Good \* Neat \* Well done  
Remarkable \* I knew you could do it \* I'm proud of you \* Super star \* Nice work \* Looking good \* You're on top of it \* You're catching on \* Now you've got it \* How Smart \* Good job \* That's incredible \* Hot dog  
Remarkable job \* You're beautiful \* You're a winner \* You make me happy \* Hip Hip Hooray \* You're important \* Magnificent \* Beautiful \* Fantastic \* You're on target \* You're on your way \* How nice  
You're spectacular \* You're darling \* Super \* Super job \* Beautiful work \* Good for you \* Nothing can stop you now \* Dynamite \* You're fantastic \* Awesome \* You're precious \* Fantastic job \* You've discovered the secret \* Bingo \* Great discovery \* You are responsible \* You are exciting \* You are fun \* You're a real trooper \* Marvelous \* Terrific \* You're growing up \* Outstanding performance \* You tried hard \* You figured it out \* What a good listener \* You're a treasure \* You mean a lot to me \* You're a good friend  
That's correct \* A big hug \* What an imagination \* You learned it right \* You're incredible \* Now you're flying \* Bravo \* Beautiful \* I like you \* I respect you \* You're sensational \* Phenomenal \* A+ job \* Hooray for you \* You're unique \* You care \* Creative job \* You belong \* You brighten my day \* Super work \* That's the best \* You made my day \* Say I love you \* Beautiful sharing \* You mean the world to me \* You're important \* You've got a friend \* You're a joy \* You make me laugh \* You're A OK \* My Buddy \* I trust you  
You're perfect \* You're wonderful \* A big kiss \* Exceptional performance

### Pedestrian Safety

Always walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk and you have to walk in the road, always walk FACING traffic, so you can see any car that might go out of control.

Dress to be seen. Brightly colored clothing makes it easier for drivers to see you during the daytime. At night, you need to wear special reflective material on your shoes, cap or jacket to reflect the headlights of cars coming towards you.

Teach your children never to run out into the street after a ball, pet, or for any other reason.

### Tips for Crossing the Street:

- Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks.
- Stop at the curb or the edge of the road.
- Stop and look left, then right, then left again, before you step into the street.
- If you see a car, wait until it goes by. Then look left, right and left again until no cars are coming.
- If a car is parked where you are crossing, make sure there is no driver in the car. Then go to the edge of the car and look left-right-left until no cars are coming. Keep looking for cars while you are crossing, and remember, walk. Don't run.
- Always ensure that your child(ren) are holding an adult's hand. Never allow children under age 10 to cross the street alone.
- Make sure your child knows to cross the street 10 feet in front of a school bus, never behind.

### Car Safety

Always make sure your child rides in a car seat that is appropriate for their weight and height. Check twice to make sure they are properly buckled in their car seat. When helping your child get out of the car, try to do this on the sidewalk side of the road. Make sure you hold your child's hand in parking lots when they get out of the car!

### Going to the Doctor

Going to the doctor may be a scary experience for your child. An exam with the doctor is a painless procedure; however items used in the exam may be stressful for the child, such as:

- Blood pressure cuff- tight around arm
- Ear exam fear of item placed in ear
- Mouth fear of tongue depressor, may cause some children to gag
- Pressing on the abdomen child may fear being hurt or what will happen
- Stethoscope- cold metal as the physician listens to the heart and lungs

Being present for the exam supports your child emotionally. Prepare your child for the exam in advance by explaining to them what to expect during the examination. This will help to decrease their anxiety, promote their cooperation, support their coping skills, and facilitate a feeling of mastery in experiencing a potentially stressful event. Children should never be threatened with a “needle” for bad behavior during doctor visits or in anticipation of a visit to the doctor.

### Transition to Kindergarten

Head Start staff will help you make your five-year-old’s transition to kindergarten as easy as possible. Ask your teacher early on in the school year about ways to help your child with this transition.

Try to visit the new school with your child and meet your child’s future teacher to make the first day less scary. Talk about kindergarten often and read books about going to kindergarten with your child.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

### (Disagreements and Complaints)

In a Head Start Center, where staff and parents work closely together, there are sometimes disagreements and conflicts. If you have a conflict with a staff member, please approach them first. They might not be aware there is a problem. Try to work together to resolve your differences, and to find a solution that is acceptable to both of you. If you cannot resolve the conflict, ask to meet with the Site Supervisor. Note: If you have any disagreements and complaints you should notify your Parent Committee and Policy Council Representative.

You must follow the Chain of Command. Be advised that the center's Policy Council Representative should be guiding you through the Chain of Command.

Meet with the person with whom you have the disagreement. You may also need to meet with the:

- Family Advocate
- Child/Family Site Director
- Management Team/Any Team Member
- Associate/Assistant Director(s)
- Director

Remember, the Policy Council is the voice of the parents.

## THANK YOU

Thank you for choosing Center For Family Services early learning and child development preschool for your child. Your family and your child can anticipate a joyful year of early learning.

As a parent/guardian, you are your child's first and most important teacher. As we work together to provide a rich educational and developmental experience for your child, your active participation can support the learning process.

Let's stay connected. Contact us at 856.964.2100.

For more information or general resources, visit our website at [centerffs.org](http://centerffs.org).



# NOTES

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# Early Learning

Child Development & Preschool

**Family Handbook**