



Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.



Serving Children and Families in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties



2018-2019 Family Handbook Policies & Procedures



PERSONAL INFORMATION

This Family Handbook Belongs To:

NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

Pre School Services

Name of Center: _____

Classroom #: _____

Center Telephone #: _____

Teacher: _____

Assistant Teacher: _____

Family Worker: _____

Nurse: _____

Center Manager: _____

Early Head Start

Family Center _____

Center Telephone # _____

Family Educator _____

Nurse Educator _____

LCHS Central Office

23 Beekman Street

Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Telephone: (570) 829-6231

Fax: (570) 829-6206

E-Mail: lchsinfo@hsweb.org

Website: www.lchs.hsweb.org

Transportation Information, if applicable:

Bus Driver: _____

Bus #: _____

Bus Pick-Up Time: _____

Bus Drop-Off Time: _____

Facebook: www.facebook.com/luzernecountyheadstart

Important Telephone Numbers:

Name

Telephone Number

Special Dates / Appointments:

Date

Name

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YOU

**ARE YOUR CHILD'S
FIRST and MOST IMPORTANT
TEACHER!**

**IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO
SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND LIFE,
PARENTS AND EDUCATORS
MUST WORK TOGETHER AS
PARTNERS!**

Thank you for joining our Head Start Family!



TO OUR FAMILIES

Welcome to Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.!

The year will be one of exploration, growth, and development for your child and your family, filled with opportunities to learn and to prepare for the future.

If your child is three or four years old, he or she will be participating in our preschool program. Coming to his or her classroom every day will mean seeing the new friends they have made, having fun on the playground, enjoying delicious meals, reading books, using the computer, and learning their letters and numbers. They also will be developing the necessary skills they will need to succeed in school, such as how to get along with others, how to listen to their teachers and follow directions, how to plan the things they will do each day, and how to eat and exercise to be physically healthy.

If you are participating in the Early Head Start program for pregnant women and children from birth to three years of age, you will have weekly visits with a Nurse or Family Educator who will discuss your child's development and show you ways in which you can help ensure that your child reaches his or her maximum potential. Other activities include parenting, nutrition, and health education, and family support services along with encouragement and guidance which will help you in providing a warm, caring, and responsive environment for your child and family.

The staff looks forward to partnering with you to make sure that your child receives the full benefit from this experience and to helping you in your role as your child's first and most important teacher.

The Board of Directors, Policy Council, and staff of Luzerne County Head Start present this Family Handbook with the expectation that awareness of procedures will contribute to effective participation in the program and greater satisfaction and results for your child. We are committed to our mission, principles, and values and strive to implement them in all of our activities. We recognize that a personal and mutually trusting relationship with our children and their families is essential for truly effective participation and we will always meet our professional and ethical responsibility to you.

The following information is provided to acquaint you with us and our services and policies. We are pleased to have you join in the Head Start program and we intend to provide your child with the very best early childhood development and school readiness services as well as educational and support services for you and your family.

It is important that you, as your child's first and most important teacher, participate in and support the activities provided for both your child and yourself in order for the program to have the greatest benefit for your child. If you have any questions, please discuss them with your Teacher, Family Worker, Family Educator, or Center Manager.

Our Motto: "CHILDREN NEED TO BE WELL TO DO WELL"



PROGRAM OPTIONS

Your preschool age child will be participating in one of several program options which are staffed by qualified teachers and other professionals.

For each Program Option, classrooms are inclusive and all children participate fully in the classroom experience regardless of any disability. Head Start makes sure that children with physical, language, speech, vision, hearing, or mental health needs are identified early and that treatment is begun as soon as possible.

Head Start Center-Based Program

provides services throughout Luzerne and Wyoming Counties from August to Mid-June.

Head Start Dual Language Learning Classrooms

are offered in Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton to aid children in developing English listening and speaking skills while maintaining their home language in preparation for kindergarten.

Pre-K Counts Program

is a center-based, preschool program funded by the state of Pennsylvania, serving Wilkes-Barre, Wyoming Valley West, Hanover, Pittston Area School Districts, and other select service areas for qualifying families.

Early Head Start Program

is a year round home visiting program for children birth to three in selected service areas. Weekly home visits include parenting education, health services, early childhood development and support and referral services. Group activities with other families are held twice a month. Children who are enrolled in the Early Head Start program are given priority for the Head Start preschool program at three years of age.

Early Head Start programs are offered in selected areas in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties.

Early Head Start Prenatal Program

offers home visiting services to pregnant women provided by a Registered Nurse. At birth, the baby is enrolled in the Early Head Start program.

PARENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent Rights

1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.
2. To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for you and your family.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom.
4. To choose whether or not to participate without fear of endangering your child's right to be in the program.
5. To be informed regularly about your child's progress in Head Start/Early Head Start.
6. To always be treated with respect and dignity.
7. To expect guidance for your child from Head Start teachers and staff, which will help his/her total individual development.
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.
9. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase your skill in areas of possible employment.
10. To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education, and the improvement of family life.
11. To enhance your skills as the most important teacher in your child's life.

Parent Responsibilities

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
2. To accept Head Start/Early Head Start as an opportunity through which you can improve your life and your children's lives.
3. To take part in the classroom as an observer, a volunteer worker or a paid employee, and to contribute your services in whatever way you can toward enrichment of the total program.
4. To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parents and encourage their full participation.
5. To welcome teachers and staff into your home to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home in relation to school experiences.
6. To work with the teacher, staff and other parents in a cooperative way. To talk respectfully to staff and other parents at all times, avoiding nasty and abusive words.
7. To guide your children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
8. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and to share in evaluating it.
9. To take advantage of programs designed to increase your knowledge about child development and your skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education and recreation for all.
11. To complete the necessary medical and dental forms required.
12. To ensure your child attends on a regular basis, adhering to arrival and departure time.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Calendars

Each month, you will receive a calendar from your child's center. This calendar will help you to know what is happening at your child's center, class, in the Head Start program, Early Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts. Notices of school closings, holidays, vacations, etc. will be brought home in your child's backpack or given to you by your Family Educator. ***Please be sure to check the backpack each day for important information!***

Website for Luzerne County Head Start

Families are encouraged to visit our website at www.lchs.hsweb.org to see all of the center happenings and to get useful information about child development, health, dental visits and nutritional health. Our School Readiness Goals can be found on our website under the 'Parents' section. There is also information on how to begin the application process for all programs.

There is also information specifically for parents, employment opportunities, and relevant websites that families might find useful.

You will be asked for permission for your pictures and your child's pictures to be used on the LCHS website and other related websites, including social media. You can also visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/luzernecountyheadstart

GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Active Supervision of Children

Keeping children safe is a top priority of our Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The staff of LCHS practices *Active Supervision*, which means that classroom staff focus their attention on children and intentionally observe children at all times. To insure that children are closely supervised, our staff will be using a *Picture Card Accountability System*. Each child will have an individual card containing the child's picture, the child's first name and last name, and if the child has an allergy. The Picture Cards follow the children from the time they enter the program until the time they leave the program each and every day. If you bring your child to the center, take your child's Picture Card from the basket and hand it to the classroom staff person who is responsible for your child. Likewise, if you pick up your child from the center, take the Picture Card from the classroom staff and return it to the basket before leaving the center.

This transfer of your child's Picture Card signifies the transfer of supervision from you to the staff person or from the staff person to you. Picture Cards are to be exchanged adult to adult.

Prior to the Picture card transfer, you are responsible for your child's supervision. We ask that you limit distractions, such as cell phone usage, so that you can attend to your child and get him/her safely to and from the center.

Emergency Evacuation - Location Site

Each center has an ***Emergency Evacuation Location Site***, suitable to that location. An abbreviated version, with specific instructions, is provided to every parent during Orientation/Enrollment.

LCCHS uses the Standard Response Protocol and will be utilizing this response in Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K Counts Centers that are not located in School District buildings. The centers that are located in School District buildings will follow that School District's Emergency Plan. Each family will receive information about the plan during Orientation/Enrollment. This plan includes Lock Out, Lock Down, Evacuation, and Shelter. Your child will practice various drills throughout the school year to be prepared in case of emergency.

Emergency Notification System

LCCHS will be utilizing a new messaging system for families in our Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts programs. The Remind System allows us to notify parents/guardians within minutes of any emergency or unplanned event. The service will send a message via a text or email; alert you of the situation; and provide you with instructions. It is extremely important for parents/guardians to keep all phone numbers current in case of an emergency. Please contact your center as soon as possible with any changes to your contact information. You may sign up for the Remind System via text message by texting @luzernec to the phone number 81010.

Snow Days

An informational sheet with specific instructions about your classroom's cancellation, delay, or early dismissal will be provided to you in early October. Weather notifications can be found on WNEP-TV (channel 16), on their website at www.wnep.com, on our website – www.lchs.hsweb.org, and on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/luzernecountyheadstart.

Parent Concerns

We want you to have a rewarding and satisfactory experience at Head Start/Early Head Start. If you should have a complaint or concern that you would like to bring to our attention, please call your Center or the Central Office. Community/Parent Concerns are documented, and we will work with you to resolve the situation.

Video Recording, Photography, and Cellphone Photos Policy

Throughout the year, the agency will be taking photographs of various activities. These photos may be used for publications and newspaper articles. You have been asked to sign a consent form to have your child included in these photos. Please discuss any changes to this permission that you might have with your Teacher, Family Worker or Family Educator throughout the school year. The staff may record events for use by staff in the centers. **Parents must refrain from taking pictures of children and placing them on social media.** Video surveillance is used in Head Start centers and surrounding areas.

Note:

- ***No photos/videos are to be taken when volunteering.***
- ***Cell phone usage is not permitted when visiting or volunteering.***
- ***No photos/videos may be taken during school event.***

Smoking Awareness Policy

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. cares about the health and safety of our children, families, and staff. It is part of our mission to promote health and wellness. In addition, our Federal Performance Standards require us to provide information to our families regarding preventative health awareness, including environmental hazards.

Smoking presents more than risk of cancer. The Pennsylvania Department of Health reports that children exposed to smoke experience frequent colds and ear infections, increased risk of developing asthma, higher risk of pneumonia and bronchitis, and weaker lungs. A recent study shows that 40% of children who have been exposed to secondhand smoke were more likely to experience breathing problems while under general anesthesia. Smoking during pregnancy can put a woman at risk for miscarriage, stillbirth, or premature birth, and can cause the baby to have less oxygen than needed, low birth weight, and respiratory problems. Smoke in the home has also been linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Did you know?

- Second-hand smoke and third-hand smoke can cause serious health problems.
- Invisible particles from smoke stay in a room 3-4 hours after a person has smoked a cigarette.
- Tobacco products contain over 4,000 chemicals.
- Even “third-hand” smoke, the chemicals that stay on clothes and furniture, is dangerous.

Our staff is aware that smoking is a personal choice, and that smoking is a powerful addiction. We will be happy to provide you with information and support if you should decide to quit. In the meantime, we offer these helpful tips for you and your children:

- Don't smoke when your child is present, especially in your car.
- If you must smoke, do so OUTSIDE of your home.
- Ask others not to smoke around you and your children.

For the health and safety of your children and our staff, we ask that you and others in your home make every effort to refrain from smoking during Head Start and Early Head Start home visits.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated!

NOTE: Smoking is prohibited in and around all Luzerne County Head Start/Early Head Start sites and in agency vehicles, including our buses. This includes the use of e-cigarettes.



Standards of Conduct

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. is committed to operate all activities within the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations affecting its services, staff, consultants, contractors and volunteers. The provision of a code of conduct reinforces appropriate professional behavior as everyone has the duty to act in the best interest of the agency at all times and exercise the highest level of integrity, ethics and objectivity in their actions and relationships which may affect the agency. This rationale serves the 2016 Head Start Program Performance Standards, Part 1302, Subpart I - Human Resources Management, §1302.90 Personnel Policies, (c)(1-2). Therefore, Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.'s Standards of Conduct and Professional Ethics include, but is not limited to, ensuring the following:

Staff, Consultants, Contractors and Volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's wellbeing and prevent and address challenging behavior;

Staff, Consultants, Contractors and Volunteers do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not:

- Use corporal punishment;
- Use isolation to discipline a child;
- Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth;
- Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;
- Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;
- Use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;
- Physically abuse a child;
- Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family; or,
- Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.

LCHS is committed to conducting all activities within the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations affecting its services and employees. All employees of LCHS must exercise the highest level of integrity, ethics and objectivity in their actions and relationships which may affect LCHS. Everyone has the duty to act in the best interest of the agency at all times.

Study Trip Policy

Your monthly calendar will inform you of any study trips or special visitors that may be planned for the center. You may also receive a flier in your child's backpack with extra information if needed.

- Parents with volunteer clearances are invited to attend their child's study trips unless space is limited. They are expected to participate in all activities with the Head Start child and are responsible for the care and safety of younger siblings.
- Only scheduled volunteers will receive lunch.
- Smoking is prohibited on all study trips and special events.

ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Attendance

Funding sources require that we maintain a high level of attendance. We are required to keep records of attendance and reasons for absences. Daily attendance is very important for your child to remain enrolled in our program. As "partners" with us in our program, parents are expected to:

- Send your child to school regularly and in time;
- Call the center before class begins or tell your Bus Driver/Family Worker/Teacher whenever your child will be absent;
- Tell us the **reason** for the absence;
- Know that "Chronic absenteeism" could result in termination from the program;
- Please do not send your child in when they are ill and cannot participate in daily activities.

(PLEASE SEE **HEALTH SECTION**)

When a child is absent and no contact has been made by the parent, it will be considered an "unexcused absence". Families will be contacted by staff when there are unexcused absences.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance of your child is both expected and mandatory. We want your child to have the best preschool experience as possible and to be "Kindergarten Ready" when they enter elementary school. Setting up consistent routines such as bedtimes and wake times through positive conversations with your child will help you set an early standard of on time regular attendance, which is extremely important for your child and is also a requirement of our regulations.

We understand that children can become ill and must be kept at home when they are sick. However, our program ***regulations expect children to be in attendance.*** Children who exhibit "chronic absenteeism" ***may lose their placement in the program if attendance cannot be improved.*** **Excused absences** are defined as: those absences when a student is prevented from attending for mental, physical or other urgent reasons. These can further be defined as illness, family emergency, death of a family member, health or dental appointments, fire, natural disaster, or other extenuating circumstances deemed as excused by the program.

Unexcused absences are any absences that are not included in the above definition of excused absences. Research shows that attendance is directly related to achievement and success in school. Therefore, when children have more than 5 consecutive, unexcused absences, the provider and family together, must discuss the reasons for the absence and determine ways to support the child's attendance in school. A written "Attendance Success Plan" may be required to preserve the child's slot in the program.

If a child is absent, parents must contact the center before class begins and speak with their teacher/family worker/center manager or leave a message ***as all absences and the reasons for them must be documented by our staff.*** Please refer to the “*Infectious Disease Policy*” chart located in this parent handbook to see when a doctor’s note is recommended in order for your child to return to class. When children are absent from the center and no contact is made by the parent, our staff are required to reach the parent through contacts or a home visit. If contact is not made by the third day of an unexcused absence, a letter of concern will be sent. If unsuccessful, the Family Engagement-Specialist will send a follow-up letter. If no resolution is agreed upon, the slot will become a vacancy and filled with the next eligible child on our waiting list in order to maintain full enrollment in our program.

Any plans for an extended absence (i.e. due to a family trip or emergency) must be discussed with staff. The situation will be evaluated to determine if the enrollment slot can be held during the absence. There must be an expected date of return no more than 30 calendar days from the first day of absence. If the child does not return by the deadline, the slot will become a vacancy. You may be asked to sign an agreement indicating your understanding and expected date of return.

Lastly, our Support Staff are in place to provide services and referrals for families with children. If you have any needs or concerns related to you or your child’s health or any other issues affecting your family, staff can furnish you with quality information on a variety of topics and are familiar with the services of the many helping agencies in our community. Our staff wishes to develop a friendly and productive working rapport with all our families, so we encourage you to communicate with us regularly. Our goal is to keep your child enrolled and on a healthy path of lifelong learning.



Transportation

LCHS will provide transportation services wherever possible. Please check with your Family Worker if your classroom provides transportation services.

There are three basic bus rules for children to follow when riding on a Head Start bus:

- (1) Buckle Up and Bottoms Down**
- (2) Inside Voices**
- (3) Keep Your Hands to Yourself**

Children, parents, and volunteers should remain seated at all times and **MUST** wear a safety restraint.

The parent or a responsible individual 18 years or older who is listed on the Consents, Authorizations and Release Form must be at the designated pick up and drop off location to help the child on and off the bus. The individual must hold the child's hand while walking to the bus, board the bus and properly secure the child in the safety restraint. At drop off time, the individual must walk onto the bus, release the child from the safety restraint, initial the roll book, and help the child off the bus. A parent or responsible adult will be responsible for seeing the child gets from the house/vehicle to the bus and from the bus to the house/vehicle safely.

Exception: All exceptions will be approved by the Director of Operations and then placed in writing and signed by the parent/guardian. When the pick-up/drop-off is located on a street that is highly traveled by other vehicles the parent or responsible individual who is 18 years or older can take the child to the bottom of the bus steps and the Bus Monitor will secure the child in the child safety restraint. At drop-off the parent or responsible individual who is 18 years or older will wait at the bottom of the bus steps, initial the roll book, and then receive the child.

Please contact the staff at your center to make any additions or deletions on the Consents, Authorizations and Release Form. In cases where Driver/Bus Monitor does not know the identity of the parent, guardian, or emergency contact person picking up the child, a staff member, the Driver or Bus Monitor must see a form of picture identification.

If a parent or responsible individual who is 18 years or older is **NOT** at the bus stop, the Bus Driver will adhere to the following procedure: The Driver/Bus Monitor will call the numbers on the Consents, Authorizations, and Release form to discuss where the adult is located. The Driver/Bus Monitor will then call the Family Worker and/or Center Manager to inform them of the situation. The Center Manager and/or Family Worker will then inform the Family Engagement Team and the Director of Operations. The Driver will continue on the run and may return to the stop after all children have been dropped off or before the Driver leaves the local area. If a designated person is still not at the location, the Driver will call the Family Worker and/or Center Manager who will then call the emergency contacts again. The Center Manager and/or Family Worker will then inform the Family Engagement Team and the Director of Operations that your child will be returning to the center. This will be listed as an occurrence. After one hour of no contact from the family, proper authorities will be contacted. **Please make sure all emergency contact numbers are up to date at all times.**

If at any time your bus is late (more than 10 minutes after scheduled bus stop time) dropping off your child, please contact your center. If the center has closed for the day, there will be a message on the center's machine with your bus contractor's phone number so you can contact them directly.

If your child will not be attending school on a school day, you are asked to contact the Bus Driver/Bus Company/Center prior to 7:00 a.m.

All children will have a Head Start backpack that is provided by the program. Please check it on a daily basis and be sure that your child wears it daily.

There is a one hour ride limit for Head Start buses; we ask that you be at the designated bus stop ready to board and then ready to take your child off the bus at your designated bus stop when it returns. **Please be ready at the designated bus stop at least ten minutes before the scheduled time of pick up or drop off.** Your Driver will not be able to beep the horn and can not wait for you.

Parents/guardians and children are provided Bus Safety Education along with Pedestrian Safety at Orientation. For late enrollees, parents/guardians and children will receive Bus Safety Education along with Pedestrian Safety within the first 30 days of enrollment. Head Start children participate in monthly bus education lessons. Bus drills will take place for all children throughout the year. The purpose of the drill is for all children understand what to do in case of an emergency when on the bus.

If your child's classroom provides transportation and there is room on the bus for a parent volunteer and arrangements have been made ahead of time, then we will be able to provide transportation services for those parents. If you plan on bringing in a younger child on the bus (infant to age 2), you **MUST** let the center know to first see if there will be room on the bus and also to make sure a child safety restraint can be provided as required by law under the Child Passenger Protection Act (PLEASE SEE **HEALTH, NUTRITION AND SAFETY SECTION**). Volunteers are always needed on the Head Start buses. No food, beverages or smoking is permitted on the buses or any other owned and operated vehicles.

Cameras on Buses

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. utilizes cameras among all Head Start buses. These cameras record voices and activities inside the buses, and also record activities outside in front of the buses.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Your child is about to begin their first educational experience. The magical ages of three and four are a time of wonder and questions. **We believe that parents are the primary teachers of their children.** Teachers work together with parents, communicating regularly to build an understanding and a greater consistency for children. You will see teachers at Orientation, Enrollment, monthly Parent Committee meetings, home visits, Parent/Teacher conferences, and while volunteering at the centers.

Our goal is to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of your child. **Children learn through play.** A child needs to see, touch, smell, taste and hear to understand and obtain the true meaning of their environment.

Children need safe and comfortable environments where they can practice newly acquired skills and build on those skills to learn new information. Teachers support children's individualized learning opportunities by providing meaningful experiences that engage their interests, abilities and culture. Classroom learning for young children is a balance of self-discovery and supportive and nurturing teachers who construct challenging, yet attainable goals.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire Developmental Screening, Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment, individualizations, the PA Early Learning Standards and teacher observations of children's progress and achievement are used to plan curriculum, identify children with special needs, communicate with parents and evaluate the program's effectiveness. Children with special needs receive additional supportive services.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is a researched-based social and emotional curriculum that addresses the following goals: 1. Increase children's self-control, 2. Increase children's ability to get along with others by improving friendship skills, 3. Enhance children's self-esteem, self-confidence and ability to give and receive compliments, 4. Increase children's understanding and communication of emotions, 5. Help children recognize and understand how their behavior affects others, 6. Increase children's understanding and use of logical reasoning and problem-solving vocabulary.

Daily PATHS activities include songs and stories led by Twiggie and his friends. PATHS characters Twiggie the turtle, Daphne the duck, Henrietta the hedgehog, and Duke the dog help to create socially acceptable expectations used through our program. Our expectation of everyone at Head Start:

We are **Kind**
We are **Safe**
We are **Helpful**
We all **Work Together**



Children's Temperament

Children are born with their natural style of interacting with or reacting to people, places and things-temperament. Nine temperament traits are present at birth and influence development throughout life. The nine temperament traits combine to form three basic types of temperament, easy, difficult and slow to warm up. By understanding these traits, parents can be more aware and respect their child's uniqueness, communicate with their child, set limits and be a good role model. Please refer to the handout *Understanding Your Child's Temperament* given at Orientation for more information.

Sample of Daily Routine Schedule

Arrival - Breakfast and tooth brushing

Planning Time -Your child will be given the opportunity to decide where they would like to play. This helps with decision-making, language skills, organization of thoughts, and social skills.

Work Time - Your child is completing their plan. Children select their own activities and materials from among a variety of learning areas the teachers prepare, such as: **Block**—Children practice building cooperatively, sorting, grouping, comparing, and arranging objects, counting, and balancing. **Dramatic Play**—Children demonstrate make-believe play by using the experiences they have observed: pouring, zipping, buttoning, playing with others, writing, and one-to-one correspondence. **Art**—Children draw representations of what they have seen by using paint, crayons, scissors, glue, and many other art materials. They are learning to cut, mix, make decisions, and be creative. In the art area emphasis is placed on the “process rather than the finished product” that is when the ideal learning occurs. **Library**—Literacy skills are very important to young children. Children are to read, dictate stories, read labels, act out a story, pretend to read a story, play literacy games on the computer and identify words and sounds. **Manipulative**—Children put puzzles together; develop eye-hand coordination, string beads, use counting bears, match pictures, and sort objects.

Recall Time- Your child will tell where they played, who they played with, what they played with and how they accomplished their plan. This helps with social skills, organizing thoughts, and literacy skills.

Small Group Time –Children are involved in teacher designed activities based on the needs and interests of the children. Teachers and children are asking questions, offering suggestions, experimenting, drawing conclusions, adding more complex vocabulary and ideas. Children can be involved in a variety of activities such as cooking, planting, science experiments, or drawing, etc.

Outside Time - Children have opportunities to use their large muscles by jumping, balancing, running, climbing, pedaling, catching, throwing, etc. Outdoor activities are also planned so children can express themselves freely.

Large Group Time- Children experience and enjoy many types of music using instruments, dancing, and self-expression.

Story Time - Children develop listening skills, learn new vocabulary words, analyze the stories, learn the parts of a book, and appreciation of books.

Birthdays, Holidays & Celebrations

The Head Start/Early Head Start program is interested in facilitating meaningful experiences for children; therefore, we do not emphasize specific holiday celebrations. Children will be encouraged to share meaningful experiences from their own family traditions with the class or on home visits. Conversations about the diversity of cultures will be encouraged, and will be included as part of our inclusive curriculum and program.

Children's birthdays are acknowledged in various ways in our classrooms. We want all children to feel special when celebrating birthdays, and therefore do not allow parents/guardians to bring goody bags or gifts for the children in the class or center since this can cause an added hardship on families. We prefer to keep the celebration simple, but special for your child. Parents/ guardians are welcome to celebrate by doing a special activity with the children in honor of their child's birthday. Invitations to birthday parties will not be distributed by Head Start/Early Head Start staff.

In keeping with our Nutrition Policy, we do not allow families to bring any food or treats into the center to celebrate birthdays. Classrooms do celebrate birthdays with ice cream, a book and song in the classroom.

Celebrations

You will be invited to Classroom Appreciation Day, at the end of the year, which will recognize your child's accomplishments. You will be presented with their portfolio and their certificate of accomplishment.

Early Intervention Services

The teacher will contact you after the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Developmental Screening is scored if your child needs further testing to determine if your child has developmental delays. While all children grow and change at their own rate, some children experience delays in their development. Early Intervention (EI) provides services and supports to young children and their families/caregivers to help the child grow and develop. With your permission, additional testing will occur at the center. The permission forms will come from Hazleton Area School District. If your child qualifies for services after the evaluation is complete an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed to include individual goals the therapist and teacher could work on in the classroom. It is very important for you to attend the meeting. Your input is vital in the process. You know your child the best.

If your child is going to kindergarten the next year, in February you will be invited to attend a Transition Meeting with your teacher, Early Intervention Therapist and a School District representative. The district will discuss services that will be continued in kindergarten and may request further testing. It is very important that you attend as a team member.

Discipline Policy

The education staff are trained in classroom management and child development. **At no time is physical punishment or timeout used.** Appropriate positive methods, which are outlined in a 5-step Positive Guidance Procedure, are used instead. The staff corrects a child's behavior by helping the child understand the consequences, discussing their problems, and including them in the problem solving process.

A Behavior Protocol Agreement will be reviewed with parents during Enrollment Day to outline steps that will occur if a child's behavior becomes a safety issue.

Clothing

The classrooms, both indoor and outdoor, are busy with many activities such as painting, water play, sand and glue, just to name a few. Let your child wear comfortable play clothes so he or she will not worry about getting dirty. Proper footwear, such as sneakers, should be worn. Please, no flip-flops or sandals due to gross motor and outdoor play. Children should dress according to the weather. **We do go out every day, even if it's only for a few minutes, unless it is below 25 degrees F or above 90 degrees F.**

Each parent should send an extra set of clothes to leave at the center in case of an accident. All such clothing should be marked with the child's name. Please include one of everything (underwear and socks included). If by chance your child does have an accident, the teacher will send the dirty clothes home. **Please remember to send a clean set in once again.**

Diapers

Some enrolled children need to wear diapers or disposable training pants. If your child needs to wear diapers or training pants, they will be provided while your child is in session or during an Early Head Start Socialization. If you prefer a special brand of diapers or training pants, you are responsible for providing them.

What to Send to School with Your Child

It is not recommended to bring toys from home on a daily basis. There are many toys available at the center and we would not want your child's favorite toy to be broken.

Family Lending Library

Every LCHS classroom has its own Lending Library. The home environment has a direct influence on children's early literacy development, including the availability of reading and writing materials. Your classroom Family Lending Library is one way to provide what is needed to enhance early literacy development.

Transition

Transitioning to kindergarten is an exciting time for both you and your child. Throughout the year, your child's Head Start/Pre-K Counts teacher will send home many activities that will focus on a variety of readiness skills. The time you spend with your child doing the take-home activities is a fun way to prepare for the move to kindergarten. Remember to attend kindergarten orientation if your district has one, try to meet the teacher before the first day of class, read books about kindergarten, share stories about your first day of school, talk about the bus ride, and offer reassurance that school is a great place to be!

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family Partnerships

The Head Start/Early Head Start vision for parent involvement and family engagement is to support parents as their child's first and most important teacher. **We Are Partners.** When your family is enrolled in LCHS, including Jump Start, Early Head Start and Pre-K Counts, we become partners. Our focus will be on identifying your own strengths and skills and using those toward setting and achieving goals. We will also support you in finding resources within the community to partner with for your success.

To build our partnership, we need to get to know each other. We hope to see you at program activities and during home visits as much as possible. We will also keep in touch through notes and phone calls.

Our partnership with parents is fundamental to providing quality early childhood services. Four elements of our program that are key to parent and family engagement are:

- *Program environment* - families feel welcomed, valued and respected by program staff;
- *Family partnerships* - staff and families work together to identify and achieve goals and aspirations;
- *Teaching and learning partnerships* - families are engaged as equal partners in children's learning and development; and
- *Community partnerships* - communities support families' interests and needs and encourage parent and family engagement in children's learning.

Expectation of Mutual Respect

Luzerne County Head Start ("LCHS") has an "Expectation of Mutual Respect" between staff and families. In the partnerships that we build, we develop an atmosphere of mutual respect in the provision of Head Start/Early Head Start services.

We understand that parents are their child's first and most important educator and we want to help parents be successful in that role. All expectations of respect are given to our families' values and culture. Head Start/Early Head Start staff will show respect to the families in our workplace, whether that is in a Head Start center or in a parent's home.

In return for families who are Head Start/Early Head Start participants, we look for the same mutual respect toward our staff.

Our agency is committed to providing a safe and respectful atmosphere for everyone who works or visits here. We provide an environment where children and their families are safe, enriched and empowered. To that end, there will be "zero tolerance" of acts or threats of violence in our workplace. LCHS is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free from violence, or the threat of violence. Together we will create and maintain a safe and mutually respectful working environment.

Parent Training

LCCHS offers opportunities for parents to participate in a research based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge and offers the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development. Information will be provided throughout the year. In addition to the parenting curriculum, various workshops and other activities are provided at individual centers, based on parent interest and need.

Family Literacy Program

What is Family Literacy?

- (A) Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.
- (B) Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- (C) Parent literacy training leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

As parents acquire new educational, social, employment and life skills, they are able to enhance the literacy skills of their children. Family Literacy programs are conducted at the Nanticoke Center, the Beekman Street Center, LCCC and the Hazleton Center. Contact your Family Worker or Family Educator for details and to enroll in the Family Literacy Program.

Father/Father Figures in Head Start

In addition to specific programming designed to bring the father/father-figures together with the child, traditional ways of volunteering are also encouraged. Ways to be involved include volunteering in the classroom, attending Parent Committee meetings and parent workshops; serving on Policy Council, the Health Advisory Committee, the Transition Advisory Committee; participating in Parent/Teacher conferences and Home Visits; and attending specific activities at individual centers such as Breakfast With Dad and family literacy activities. Our Family Lending Libraries contain "father friendly" books that dads will enjoy reading to their children. Fathers are included in Early Head Start Home Visits when available and are welcome at EHS Group activities.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

A formal structure of program governance provides parents and other community representatives with the authority and opportunity to participate in shared decision-making concerning program design and implementation.

Parent Committee

Parents are offered the opportunity to participate in shared decision-making on a center basis through Parent Committee groups. Every parent of an enrolled child is automatically a member of the Parent Committee. Parent Committee provides parents with an opportunity to assist in the development of activities that address their interests and needs, and that support the education and healthy development of their children. It provides parents with an opportunity to advise staff in developing and implementing program policies, activities and services. Through Parent Committee, parents can plan, conduct and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities. Meetings are held monthly, during the school year for Head Start and Pre-K Counts. Early Head Start meets six times a year. During the meetings, parents are elected to serve on Policy Council.

Policy Council

Opportunities for parents to participate in agency program governance happens through Policy Council. Policy Council is established and charged with specific functions outlined in the Head Start Performance Standards in order to ensure that parents have the opportunity to be involved in shared decision-making. Policy Council provides a method for parents to assume leadership roles in representing the collective interests of all families.

Policy Council meets monthly at the Central Office of Luzerne County Head Start, 23 Beekman St., in Wilkes-Barre. Membership consists of current and former Head Start parents and members of the community who share a common interest in the welfare of children and families. Representatives are elected from Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts, and Early Head Start. Parents must provide their own transportation and are reimbursed for mileage at the federal reimbursement rate.

Child Care for Policy Council and Other Activities

Child care may be available for children of enrolled families, preschool age and younger, while families are participating in meetings, special activities, workshops and program functions. Other age restrictions may apply when activities are held somewhere other than a program facility.

For Policy Council Meetings, child care will be provided for enrolled Head Start children at their own centers. Siblings of enrolled Head Start children and Early Head Start children will be cared for at the Beekman Street Center. (School age children may receive care during Policy Council meetings *providing they normally would not be in school.*)

Requests for babysitting must be made in advance. Policy Council representatives are to contact the Family Services Program Assistant, at the Central Office to arrange for childcare at the Beekman Street Center.

When parents are not at the center where care is being provided, an Emergency Information form must be completed. Parents must provide Emergency Information forms on non-enrolled children as well as enrolled children. Parents are requested to provide bag lunches for children being cared for during Policy Council meetings, **as well as diapers and other necessities for children who are not yet toilet trained. If a child drinks from a bottle, parents must provide the bottle and contents. Bottles must be dated and labeled with child's and parent's name and contents. Bottles must be stored in the designated refrigerator. Staff must wear disposable gloves when handling, storing, and feeding breast milk.**

Children who are ill should not be brought to the centers for child care.

Volunteering in Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.

Volunteerism is an important part of the Head Start experience. Volunteer opportunities exist for parents, individuals, and organizations in the community to become involved in LCHS. Examples of volunteerism are reading in the classrooms, Adopt-a-Classroom, assisting with screenings for children, serving on Policy Council or Board of Directors, assisting with food drives or health fairs, etc. Head Start programs are required to engage parents and the community in volunteerism and LCHS is required to track and document these volunteer hours.

Parent/Guardian Volunteers

The Head Start/Early Head Start vision for parent involvement and family engagement is to support parents as their child's first and most important teacher and to provide every parent with opportunities to be involved in all aspects of the program. Children benefit from this involvement, and so do their parents. Much of the success of the Head Start/Early Head Start program has been due to parent involvement. Children benefit when their parents know about and support what is happening in their education. Parents who are involved are more likely to continue that participation throughout their child's school years. Parents who are involved gain skills in decision making, teaching, management, and advocacy.

Other family members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, are also welcome. Any volunteer who is with the children is a "helper" and is never asked to be responsible for the children or to be alone with the children at any time. (A volunteer is never responsible for taking a child to the bathroom, nurse's office, etc.) All volunteers before being scheduled in the classroom will need to complete the volunteer training provided by agency staff, adhere to LCHS volunteer clearance procedure, and be approved by Human Resources.

Training for parents and community volunteers will be conducted at each center early in the program year with subsequent sessions provided as the need arises. *Volunteer training can be provided at any point in the school year.* Training will be provided for classroom volunteers as well as for those who would like to assist in the kitchen, on the buses, assist the Regional Nurse with health-related activities, and assist with clothing and food campaigns. The training will include the definitions of child abuse, the volunteer's role as a Mandated Reporter, and the procedures in reporting child abuse and neglect. Volunteers will be responsible for completing a volunteer application packet which includes the following:

1. Background Clearances (need to be renewed every five years)
2. Volunteer Application
3. Volunteer Training and Orientation Checklist
4. TB Screening Questionnaire (risk determination to identify need for Mantoux testing)
5. Confidentiality Pledge
6. Standards of Conduct and Professional Ethics

***Only adults 18 years of age and older are required to have clearances**

***Prospective volunteers must submit valid clearances prior to the commencement of services**

***Volunteers must report to the Center Manager changes in clearance status within 72 hours (i.e. an arrest, conviction, or any occurrence which might alter their status as a volunteer).**

***LCHS will retain copies of all required clearances in the volunteer official file held in the Human Resources Office/Admin, Central Office**

***All volunteers are Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect**

CHILD WELFARE

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Head Start and Early Head Start staff, like other medical, social and educational professionals, contracted staff, bus staff, and volunteers are **mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect**. This means that we are required by law to report any *suspected* cases of child abuse or neglect to the Childline Abuse Registry of the state of Pennsylvania. It is important for families to keep in mind that a report is made in order to get help for a family experiencing an abuse or neglect problem, not to punish or embarrass the family. All child abuse/neglect reports are kept strictly confidential. For more information and helpful resources visit www.keepkidssafe.com.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse, according to the CPSL, means intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

- Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
- Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
- Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
- Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
- Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.

Child abuse also includes certain acts in which the act itself constitutes abuse without any resulting injury or condition. These recent acts include any of the following:

- Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
- Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
- Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.
- Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.
- Interfering with the breathing of a child.
- Causing a child to be present during the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
- Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the parent knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or III sexual offender or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.

Megan's Law Policy

Head Start/Early Head Start staff will be updated on a regular basis regarding any individuals registered under Megan's Law.

Any person who is registered as an offender and/or sexually violent predator under Megan's Law will not be permitted to:

- volunteer in any capacity where there is a potential to have direct contact with children.
- be on Head Start/Early Head Start premises where they may potentially have direct contact with children or in proximity to any Head Start/Early Head Start sponsored off-site event.

Head Start staff may release children to a biological parent, even if they are registered offenders under Megan's Law, unless a court order has been provided to staff which prohibits this parent from contact with the child.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to any other individual (who is not the biological parent) if they are registered under Megan's Law. Additionally, if any Head Start/Early Head Start staff are aware of any individual (including biological parents) registered under Megan's Law, who is residing with an enrolled Head Start/Early Head Start child, it will be our obligation to report this situation to the appropriate Children and Youth Services office as well as the appropriate police department.

Consents, Authorizations, and Releases

During the Orientation Process, you will complete the Consents, Authorizations and Release form. The form must be kept current at all times. We recommend there be at least three responsible adult contacts, at least 18 years of age, close to your home or the center for pick up or drop off.

Children will only be released to parents/guardians and persons designated on the Consents, Authorizations and Releases. All persons picking up children from the center or from the bus must have proper photo identification. No child will be released to anyone whose name appears on the Megan's Law Registry. Additionally, no child will be released to any individual suspected of being impaired due to the use of drugs or alcohol.

Prior to arrival and after departure:

- **Please hold your child's hand while crossing the street, walking in the parking lot, and walking your child to and from the classroom.**
- **Children must be supervised by an adult at all times. You are responsible for his/her supervision.**
- **Your full attention should be focused on your child. We ask that you limit distractions, such as cell phone usage, so that you can attend to your child and get him/her safely to and from the classroom.**
- **Never leave children unattended in a car for any reason!**

Picture Cards follow the children from the time they enter the program until the time they leave the program each and every day. If you bring your child to the center, take your child's Picture Card from the basket and hand it to the classroom staff person who is responsible for your child. Likewise, if you pick up your child from the center, take the Picture Card from the classroom staff and return it to the basket before leaving the center. *This transfer of your child's Picture Card signifies the transfer of supervision from you to the staff person or from the staff person to you.*

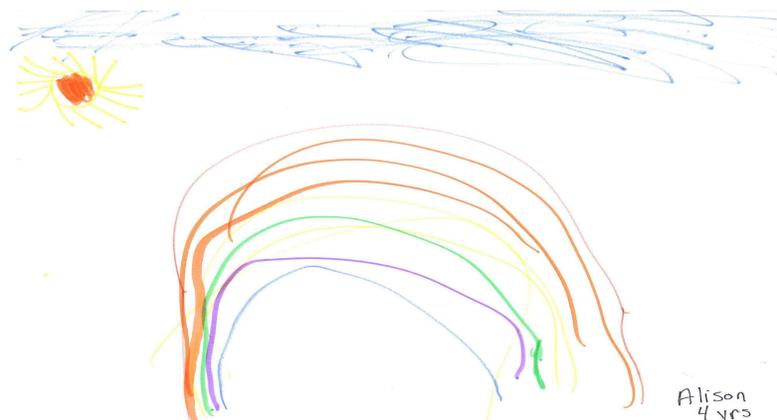
Child Release Procedure

Our primary responsibility as a Head Start program is to provide for the safety of all children entrusted to our care. In light of that responsibility and in consideration of concerns regarding our world today, we adhere to the following procedures.

You are required to contact the center with any emergency contact information changes that occur. If you are not able to take your child from the bus, or to be on time to pick up your child from the center, someone from your Consents, Authorizations and Releases form must be available. If we have had no contact from you and no one is on time to receive your child, we will attempt contact to those on your list. If no one can be reached, after one hour County Children and Youth Services or law enforcement will be contacted. **Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. reserves the right to contact Children and Youth upon recurrent late pick ups in order to coordinate services and work toward resolution. If the problem persists and no resolution is found, the child may be terminated from the program.**

Luzerne County Head Start reserves the right to bar any individual from Head Start/Early Head Start facilities and/or attending any Head Start/Early Head Start function or event who is or has:

- been convicted as a perpetrator of violent crimes or offenses against children and/or adults
- considered to pose a danger to children, volunteers or staff due to mental health issues, domestic violence, etc., or suspicion of impairment due to drug or alcohol use
- acted in such a way that they would be detrimental to the provision of quality services to children and families (i.e. inappropriate language, breach of confidential information, inappropriate discipline of children)
- been a registered offender under Megan's Law (See MEGAN'S LAW POLICY)



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HelpLine



HelpLine is an information and referral service, as well as a first response point for crisis calls. HelpLine operates throughout Luzerne and Wyoming Counties, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is staffed with trained caseworkers. HelpLine maintains a listing of over 400 local agencies to assist callers. **Those seeking information or referrals can dial 570-829-1341, or 2-1-1 in some areas.**

HelpLine maintains a resource guide titled, "Negotiating the Networks" that can be accessed by visiting www.helpline-nepa.info or our website www.lchs.hsweb.org. Once on the LCHS website, click on "resources", then "HelpLine Resources Guide" or click on "Parents' Resources", then "HelpLine Resources Guide". If you have difficulty accessing the website, or obtaining a resource guide, please allow Head Start staff to assist you. HelpLine can also be reached by texting your zip-code to 898211.

Warm Line

The Warm Line is a telephone support line where the caller is able to talk to trained peers that can listen to concerns and offer support. The Warm Line Peer Responder has a unique perspective on issues since they may have experienced many of the same feelings in the past. Warm Line is available seven days a week from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. **Warm Line can be reached by calling 1-866-839-0445 or 570-270-6866.**

Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO)

Operating a broad array of programs, CEO exemplifies its "People Helping People" mission by mobilizing resources to fight the causes and effects of poverty and promoting self-sufficiency among low-income and vulnerable populations. Some of these resources include:

- The Weinberg Regional Food Bank
- Planning and Service Coordination for the Homeless
- PPL, UGI Fuel Funds and Energy Conservation
- Weatherization
- Case Management
- Income Tax Preparation Assistance
- Food 4 Kids

For more information on CEO:

Phone: (570) 826-0510

E-Mail: ceo@sunlink.net

Toll Free Number: 1-800-822-0359

Weekdays - 8:30am - 5:00pm

North Penn Legal

North Penn Legal Services is a nonprofit organization providing civil legal aid to low-income residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania. They provide legal assistance so that people can know their rights and free legal representation in non-criminal matters such as eviction from housing, discrimination, family law, and consumer protection issues.

For more information:

Legal Aid Hotline: 877-953-4250

Email: smorrow@northpennlegal

Intake hours: Mon- Thurs: 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-4:00 a.m., Fri 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

WIC (Pennsylvania Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children)

The WIC Nutrition Program provides pregnant and breastfeeding women, new moms, and children birth to age 5 with nutrition counseling to make healthy food choices and improve overall health, and vouchers to purchase healthy foods at grocery stores and local farmers markets.

For your convenience, WIC appointments can be made at the Head Start Beekman and Nanticoke Centers allowing your child to remain in school for those enrolled in those centers. Other Head Start families/community members are also welcome to schedule WIC appointments at these satellite sites.

WIC Satellite Sites Scheduling: 1-866-942-8463

Beekman St Center, Wilkes-Barre

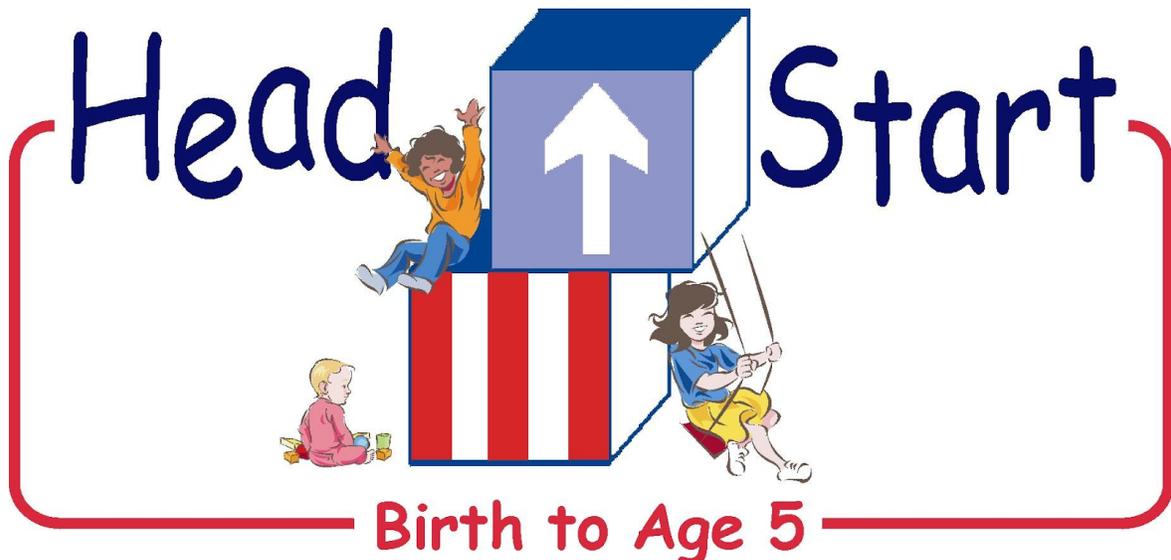
Nanticoke Center, Nanticoke

WIC Clinics: Kingston WIC Center: 570-283-3523

Wilkes-Barre WIC Center: 570-823-1516

Hazleton WIC Center: 570-459-1805

Tunkhannock WIC Center: 570-836-6622



HEALTH, NUTRITION AND SAFETY

Introduction

Our Head Start/Early Head Start motto “Children Need to Be Well to do Well”, stresses the importance of overall health and wellness for our children and families. Staff and healthcare professionals work closely with our families to identify health and developmental concerns and referrals can be made to address those concerns.

Our goal is to insure that every family has ongoing access to a medical and a dental provider. Additionally, staff will provide assistance, as needed, with appointments, follow-up and treatments. Also, staff will conduct Health Literacy workshops that will educate families on becoming self-sufficient within the healthcare system.

Healthy Children are Ready to Learn and Have Fun

Every **Head Start** child must have completed & on file:

1. Up-to-date immunization record: **Head Start or Pre-K Counts may not retain a child at the center for more than 60 days without an up to date immunization record on file.**
2. Annual Physical Exam and treatment every 12 months including annual flu shots
3. Screenings:
 - Vision** – completed at Head Start
 - Hearing** – completed at Head Start
 - Lead** – required at 24 months. If no results are available from testing at age 24 months or older, Head Start will offer testing on site at each center, or you can request this blood test from your doctor and provide Head Start with the results.
4. Dental Exam, every 6 months, and treatment completed

These are Head Start and PA State Requirements. **Head Start and Pre-K Counts staff will work with families to to obtain immunizations, immunization records, and health requirements.**

To help promote Health, Safety and First Aid, a Regional Nurse is assigned to each center. Regional Nurses are available to assist staff, families, and children. Parents can call for an appointment to meet with the Regional Nurse.

Dental Exams and Treatment

Healthy teeth and gums improve appearance and self-esteem. They allow children to eat a variety of healthy foods, speak clearly and promote healthy placement of secondary teeth.

- Have a dental exam by age 1 then every 6 months as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Brush teeth after meals and at bedtime.
- Floss after brushing when teeth are present.
- Replace toothbrushes when worn, every 3 months or as directed by your doctor or dentist.
- Use fluoride supplements as instructed by you dentist or doctor.
- Obtain immediate care for broken or knocked-out teeth, tooth pain, or decay.
- Avoid sugary food and drinks.

Head Start/Early Head Start requires all children to have a professional dental exam every 6 months. This should include cleaning and fluoride and treatment, as needed.

Health Insurance Coverage and Medical Assistance

Geisinger Health Plan: 1-800-275-6401

Aetna Better Health: 1-866-638-1232

AmeriHealth Caritas Northeast: 1-855-809-9200



CHIP: Children's Health Insurance Program (chipcoverspakids.com)

1-800-986-KIDS(5437) Provided by

- Aetna
- First Priority Health
- Geisinger Health Plan

CHIP is a state and federally funded children's health insurance program. CHIP provides free or low cost health insurance to children who fall within CHIP income guidelines and who are not eligible for Medical Assistance (Medicaid) or covered by private insurance.

Medication Policy

Medication should be given at home before or after school whenever possible. When it is absolutely necessary to administer medication at school, the following procedure **MUST** be followed:

1. Consent form completed and signed by parent, one form for each medication must be provided.
2. Medication must be in original container, properly labeled with current date.
3. Doctor's note with all directions and information must be presented.
4. Any over-the-counter medications, including Tylenol and cough medicine, must have a doctor's note and consent form.

Please make sure staff members are made aware of ALL MEDICATIONS. Changes in dosages or directions, require a new note from the doctor.

*An adult must hand any and all medication to Bus Driver, Teacher, or Assistant Teacher. It should **NEVER** be sent with the child or in the child's backpack.*

- Parents must make sure all medications are returned to them on the child's last day of school. Any medications left will be sent to Central Office for summer break and may be picked up. Medications which are left 30 days from child's last day will be discarded.

Sick Children

Even the healthiest child will have a day he or she is too ill to attend school. Please call the center before class begins and tell your Bus Driver/Family Worker/Teacher whenever your child will be absent. Please inform center staff if your child is ill or injured. We want to know how they are doing so please keep us up-to-date. If a child comes to school sick, or becomes ill and must return home, you will be called.

Be sure all phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts are up-to-date. You or an emergency contact must be available for any emergencies or illness at all times.

Doctor's Note

A doctor's note is required after hospitalization, surgery, any medical treatment related to an injury (casts, slings, stitches ect.) or extensive dental work.

The Doctor's note must show:

1. The child is allowed to return to school.
2. It must clearly state if the child is returning without any restrictions to their activity or with restrictions to their activity. If there are restrictions to the child's activity, the doctor needs to clearly state what they are on the DOCTOR'S NOTE.

Providing a DOCTOR'S NOTE allows the staff to know exactly how to care for your child at the center after hospitalization, surgery, injury or extensive dental work.

Accident Reports

In the event that your child is injured at Head Start and receives any basic first aid, an accident report will be completed and you will be notified. If requested, a copy of the report will be made available to you.

Common Childhood Infections

You can request information from your Regional Nurse on childhood diseases or conditions. We may request that you have a doctor's note to return to school following an infectious/communicable disease. You will find a list of some common infectious/communicable diseases in our Infectious Disease Policy. Parents will receive a note only in the event of unusual number of children with an infectious condition in the classroom.

Regular attendance is very important. Please be sure your child returns to school when he/she is well and able to return to participate in the classroom activities. Refer to the Infectious Disease Policy on the following page.

Infectious Disease	Return to Center	
Chicken Pox	Remain home until sores are scabbed over (usually 6-8 days after onset of rash) Cases are milder with the vaccine	No doctor's note required
Common Cold	Remain home until symptoms are mild, child feels well and is able to participate in activities	No doctor's note required
Conjunctivitis Pinkeye-Bacterial conjunctivitis with drainage (red eyes with greenish or yellow drainage)	Remain home for 24 hours after beginning of treatment	Doctor's note recommended and/or proof of treatment
Fever 101°F	Fever-free (less than 101°F) for 12 hours without medication, child is feeling well and able to participate in activities.	No doctor's note required
Impetigo	Return after on medication for 24 hours	Doctor's note recommended
Influenza (flu)	Confirmed diagnosis, fever must be less than 100°F without medication for 24 hours	Doctor's note recommended
Ringworm	See Doctor for diagnosis & treatment, return 24 hours after beginning of treatment. All areas must be covered.	Doctor's note recommended
Scabies	See Doctor for diagnosis & treatment, return after treatment completed	Doctor's note recommended
Rashes	New or undiagnosed must see a doctor	Doctor's note recommended
Strep. Throat	See doctor for diagnosis & treatment, return 24 hours after starting treatment and child feels well and is able to participate in activities	No doctor's note required
Vomiting and/or diarrhea	Remain home until no vomiting and bowel movements are normal	No doctor's note required

Head Lice

Anyone can get head lice, especially young children. This is not a serious health threat, but does need quick and proper treatment. The situation is easily managed if all instructions are followed. Anytime your child has head lice, it is important to let us know. We will work together as a team, offering assistance and additional information. If we discover live lice or a new case of nits, we will call you. Parents will have the option of picking their child up early or letting the child stay in school until the end of that school day. Children may return to school the day after treatment has been completed.

The treatment and cleaning process should begin as soon as possible. Remember, for best results follow the specific directions on the product. Check every family member, treat **ONLY** those with lice.

- Use an effective lice treatment, either prescription or over the counter.
- Remove nits daily with a lice comb and/or by hand.
- Wash clothes, bed linens, towels. Use hot water for washing and dry on hot for 20 minutes. Items not washable must be bagged for 2 weeks.
- Soak combs, brushes and hair items in hot water for 10 minutes.
- Vacuum everywhere—furniture, carpets, pillows, mattresses and car seats.
- Nit removal should be following treatment.
- Daily head checks for live lice or nits for 7-10 days after treatment completed.

Bedbugs

Bedbugs are reddish brown, oval, flat pests about the size of an apple seed. They bite the exposed skins of humans, and sometimes other living creatures, to feed on their blood. Although bedbugs are considered to be a public health pest, they are not known to transmit or spread disease.

A few simple precautions can help prevent bedbug infestation in your home:

- Check second hand furniture, beds and couches for any signs of infestations (eggs and eggshells, which are tiny and white; skins that are shed as bugs grow larger; rusty or red stains on sheets or mattresses; live bedbugs).
- Use good quality protective covers to encase mattresses and box springs.
- Reduce clutter in your home to reduce places for bedbugs.

Like head lice, bedbug infestation can happen to any family. It is important that you inform your Family Worker, Family Educator or Teacher if you are experiencing a bedbug problem in your home so that we can be alert to any bugs being brought into or back to the centers. The center staff can also provide you with useful information about how to deal with the pests.

Pet/Animals Policy

Safeguards are required to reduce the risk for infection and injury from animals to promote the health and safety of children.

- Pets or visiting animals must have documentation from a veterinarian or animal shelter indicating that the animals have up-to-date immunizations and are free from conditions that pose a threat to children's health. This documentation must be given to the teachers prior to the visits.
- Classroom pets or visiting animals must appear to be in good health and child-friendly.
- All children, staff, and visitors must complete appropriate hand cleansing before and after contact with the animals.
- Parent/Guardian of any child with pet allergies, asthma, or compromised immune system must be notified prior to the animal visit or field trip. The parent must give written permission for the animal to be present or the child to attend the field trip.
- Parents must be notified in writing before any children are exposed to any animal.
- Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets.

Nutrition Consultation

Twice per year in Head Start, children's height, weight and Body Mass Index (BMI) are completed by the Regional Nurse. A letter and a BMI graph will be sent home.

If you have any concerns or questions with your child's height, weight, BMI, or diet, the Nutrition Specialist is available for consultation. You may contact your Regional Nurse, Family Worker, or Family Educator to set up an appointment.

Healthy Resources for Families: *MyPlate* offers a visual reminder to make healthy food choices when you choose your next meal. *MyPlate* can help prioritize food choices by reminding us to make half of our plate fruits and vegetables and shows us the other important food groups for a well-balanced meal - whole grains, lean proteins, and low fat dairy. If you would like additional information on healthier eating and physical activity, www.choosemyplate.gov is an interactive website for all ages.

Food Allergies, Special Diet, and Religious Considerations

Parents/guardians must notify the center in writing of any allergies or other medical conditions at enrollment, or as the parent becomes aware of them. Any special diet or food allergy requiring food substitutions at the center must be documented in writing by the child's doctor. For religious reasons, a note will be required from the parent and must be kept in the child's file. A Nutrition Specialist is available to work with the parent of any child who has special dietary requirements. We strive to ensure that all children in the program are well nourished.



The entire agency is peanut-free. Soy butter, sunflower butter or a peanut-free alternative is provided.

Head Start will honor food allergies and religious substitutions and provide the appropriate alternative. All food allergies/considerations will be posted in the Head Start classroom and in the Early Head Start Socialization room with parental permission.

Parent Meetings and Early Head Start Family Day:

Light refreshments will be provided by Head Start at Parent meetings. Snacks will be served and provided by Early Head Start at Family Day based on the Head Start nutritional guidelines. All foods selected will be low in fat, sugar and salt. All children will be offered age appropriate food and beverages.

Anyone volunteering, working or visiting a Head Start Classroom or Early Head Start Family Day or Parent Meeting is asked not to bring outside food or beverages (coffee, soda, Gatorade, etc.) into the room. Water is available at all times in the center or classroom for visitors and children.

Meal Service

LCCHS participates in and follows the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Meals are planned as part of the day's learning experience.

It is very important that children are present for all meals. On snow delays and early dismissals, breakfast and lunch will be provided for your child. If a child arrives late to the center, they will be offered a nutritious meal.

The menus for the program are created by the Nutrition Specialist, and are designed to be low in sugar, salt and fat. Menus are sent home to parents monthly and also are posted in the classrooms. Family style meal service, where children are encouraged to serve themselves, is used in our Head Start program when possible. Children are introduced to a wide variety of healthy foods, but they are never forced to eat anything they do not want.

Staff, volunteers, and guests in the classroom will serve themselves in the same manner. Portion sizes for adults will be the same as those for children. Classroom staff will sit with the children during mealtimes, model appropriate eating behavior, and initiate conversations, similar to a home setting. Classroom staff will also use this time for learning so that nutrition education is incorporated into the routine of meals. Parents and other family members are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and participate in mealtimes!

The menus follow the guidelines for CACFP (Child and Adult Food Program) and are generally as follows:

Sample:

Breakfast

6 oz. Skim Milk
½ cup Berries
¼ cup low-fat Yogurt
1/2 cup Cheerios

Lunch

6 oz. Skim Milk
1.5 oz Baked Chicken
¼ cup Steamed Broccoli
¼ cup Brown Rice
¼ cup Melon

Child Passenger Safety

NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED IN ANY VEHICLE FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME!

CAR SAFETY SEATS – A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES: The type of seat your child needs depends on several things including age, size, and type of vehicle. To be sure your child is using the most appropriate seat, read on.

Types of Car Safety Seats at a Glance:

Age Group	Type of Seat	General Guidelines
Infants/Toddlers	Infant Seats and rear-facing convertible seats	All infants and toddlers are required to ride in a Rear-Facing Car Safety Seat until they are 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car's safety seat manufacturer.
Toddlers/Preschoolers	Convertible seats and forward-facing seats with harnesses	All children 2 years or older, or those younger than 2 years who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their car safety seat, should use a Forward-Facing Car Safety Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car's safety seat manufacturer.
School-aged children	Booster seats	All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat should use a Belt-Positioning Booster Seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly - typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age.
Older Children	Seat belts	When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use Lap and Shoulder Seat Belts for optimal protection. All children younger than 13 years should be restrained in the Rear Seats of vehicles.

EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED PROGRAM OPTION

Please read entire document for important information regarding the Early Head Start program.

Introduction

Early Head Start is a federally funded, community-based program for low-income families with infants and toddlers, and for pregnant women. The purpose of Early Head Start is to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist parents in fulfilling their roles as their child's first and most important teacher; and help families move toward self-sufficiency. Through everyday interactions with your child, he/she will learn the basic skills needed to cooperate, get along with others, and be eager to learn - the foundations for school readiness.

In our agency, Early Head Start services are provided using the HOME-BASED model. Families receive a **90-minute home visit each week**, and will be provided with 22 Socialization activities (Family Days) each year, offered approximately 2 times per month.

Women enrolled in the Prenatal Program receive visits with a Nurse Educator and/or a Family Educator. The frequency and duration of the visits are decided upon between the Nurse Educator and mother. Upon birth, the baby is enrolled in the Early Head Start program. A Registered Nurse is required to conduct a visit within the first two weeks after delivery.

Because your home is your child's learning environment, visits must take place in your home. The visits must be conducted with the enrolled child's parent(s) or legal guardians, who must be present for the entire visit. These are all program requirements mandated by our federal performance standards.

Early Head Start is a community-based program. Through a "partnership" between you and the Early Head Start staff, we help you to identify the services and resources in the community which your family might need, and help you work toward the goals you wish to achieve for yourself and your family. Our services include child development, family support, family engagement, health, nutrition, transportation, mental health and disabilities services, if needed, family days, and transition at age three.

Parents must be in attendance and present at all home visits. Parents may not leave your child alone with the Family Educator during a home visit. Home visits are a time for you to engage with your child to reinforce your role as their primary teacher.

Transition from Early Head Start

Planning for your child's transition into Head Start or other appropriate placement begins six months prior to the third birthday. Children who turn three during the program year while Head Start is in session may be able to begin attending Head Start at age three, depending upon availability of an opening in the program. A new application must be completed for the Head Start program, and families who are over the income guidelines do not automatically receive placement in Head Start. Details of the Transition process will be explained in detail by your Family Educator.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Emergency Information

It is important that we know about your health needs and those of your child, and that we have someone to contact in case of an emergency on the bus, in our van, or at the center. Please let your Family Educator know if there are any changes to your emergency contacts.

If an emergency arises concerning a Family Educator during a home visit, call 911, then immediately call the Early Head Start Family Center or the Central Office. These numbers appear in this handbook and on the name card magnet given to you at Orientation.

Nurse and Family Educators encourage parents to develop a list of names and telephone numbers of individuals to contact in an emergency. This handbook provides you with a page to complete for this purpose. Post the list in an easy to access place in your home, and give a copy to a responsible person outside the home, such as a nearby relative or neighbor. If you do not have a phone, make a plan to use the phone of someone nearby in case of an emergency.

You are encouraged to develop an emergency evacuation plan for your home. The plan should include two exit routes. Practice the evacuation plan with your family at least monthly.

Transportation in Early Head Start

Occasional transportation can be provided to families for appointments when the family can find no other means of transportation. Transportation is available only when the Educator does not have a scheduled visit with another family and only when a vehicle is available, so **it is important that families not assume the transportation will always be available when making appointments**. If you have explored all other means of transportation and still are in need, it may be possible that we can provide the transportation, depending on the circumstances.

Transportation is provided to and from Family Day on our Early Head Start bus or in Early Head Start vans. It is important that we know ahead of time which families are planning to attend so that we can make arrangements for the transportation, such as location of pick-ups and car seats needed. (Some families with young infants prefer to board the bus with their own infant seats).

It is important that families call us as soon as possible if they will not be attending the Family Day so that we do not send the bus to the home.

Please be ready to board the bus when it arrives at your home. The bus cannot hold up traffic for long periods of time, and it must stay on schedule to pick up other families and arrive at the center in time for the Family Day activity.

We do not transport children without the parent/legal guardian and we do not transport children or families members not enrolled in the program.

Bus Safety and Evacuation is reviewed monthly during Family Day transportation.

Bus Rules

- Be sure your child is buckled into the car seat properly.
- All adults must also wear seat belts.
- Keep the aisles clear at all times.
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- If there is an emergency, listen to the Driver and follow instructions.
- The Head Start Code of Conduct is to be followed at all times.
- Open food and beverages are not permitted in vans or on buses, including sippy cups and bottles.
- No smoking, e-cigarettes or tobacco products is allowed on the bus or on Head Start property.

Clothing for Family Days and Home Visits

Children and adults should wear clothing that is comfortable and allows them to move freely during home visit and center activities, especially floor play. For Family Days, it is recommended for safety purposes that enclosed shoes such as sneakers be worn, especially for outdoor play. Messages or slogans that might be offensive to others should not be worn to center activities. While participating in home visits or group activities, both staff and parents should dress in a manner that is respectful of self and others. It is unacceptable for men to be shirtless on agency property or during home visits.

Weather and Program Closings

Generally, when there is a delay or cancellation due to weather in the school district in which you reside, Family Days will not be held. School district delays and cancellations are aired on local television and radio stations. You can also find information about delays and cancellation at www.lchs.hsweb.org.

Home visits may or may not be held on weather emergency days. This will depend on factors such as family availability, driving and parking conditions, etc. Decisions about keeping visits on these days will be made cooperatively between the Educator and the parent(s).

Smoking Awareness (See also GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES)

Your health, your child's health, and the health of our staff are very important to our agency. Our Federal Performance Standards require us to provide information to our families on maternal and child health. Through our prenatal services, we are required to provide information on fetal development, including the risks from smoking.

If you or anyone in your household smokes, we hope you have decided not to smoke (while pregnant, if applicable), or around your child. Studies have shown that secondhand smoke and third-hand smoke are serious health hazards.

Even if you do allow smoking in your home, we ask that you refrain from smoking during home visits, and also that you ask others in your home to do the same. Smoking is prohibited in and around all Luzerne County Head Start sites and in agency vehicles. This includes the use of e-cigarettes.

School Readiness, Curriculum, Assessment, and Screenings

Birth to Five School Readiness Goals—are agency goals that can help us measure your child’s development gains throughout the program year. Your Family Educator will explain the goals and provide you with a copy of them as well as discuss the progress that your child is making while enrolled in Early Head Start.—Birth to Five School Readiness Goals can also be viewed on our agency website.

“Curriculum” for infants and toddlers includes just about everything they do - playing, feeding, sleeping and communicating. Family Educators work with parents to develop a plan of activities you can do with your child aimed at enhancing his/her development so that he/she can be better prepared for school.

Early Head Start utilizes the Florida State University Partners for a Healthy Baby (PHB) curriculum, which is a developmentally appropriate and research-based home visiting and parenting curriculum focused on prenatal services and children birth to three. The PHB curriculum includes suggested activities parents can do to promote their child’s development, promotes secure parent-child relationships, promotes the parent’s role as their child’s teacher, is individualized to meet each family’s needs, includes resources pertaining to education, health, family engagement, disabilities, transition services and services to pregnant women, addresses appropriate supports for emotional well-being and nurturing, the importance of father engagement during pregnancy and early childhood and facilitates family partnership development.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is a researched-based social and emotional curriculum that your Family Educator will introduce during the transition planning period. PATHS activities include songs and stories led by Twiggie and his friends. PATHS characters Twiggie the Turtle, Daphne the Duck, Henrietta the Hedgehog and Duke the Dog help to create socially acceptable expectations used through our program. For more information, please refer to the information located in **Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies** in the Head Start section.



Teaching Strategies Gold is an ongoing assessment tool used in conjunction with the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Two's. TSG provides accurate and developmentally appropriate assessment of children and provides activity resources which include all 38 objectives of development which are aligned with the Pennsylvania Infant and Toddler Standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. We begin to develop the curriculum by completing a Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment (TSG) of your child's behaviors to see what he/she can already do, and what he/she is still working on. The TSG Development and Learning Report will individualize your child's activities and families will take an active role in planning and carrying out the activities.

We will assist families in completing periodic developmental screenings using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) to track their overall development. Areas screened include communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving and personal-social. Additionally, we will complete the Ages and Stages Social Emotional screening (ASQ:SE-2), focusing on your child's social and emotional development. If applicable, and with your permission, your Family Educator will be able to assist you with making a developmental and/or behavioral referral to Early Intervention or a Behavioral Health agency in order for your child to receive further evaluation. Early detection of possible delays is crucial for healthy infant and toddler development and, if needed, early specialized services can improve your child's overall development and social and emotional skills needed for school readiness.

Early Head Start staff assist parents in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. Early Head Start recognizes bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and will support dual language learners. Staff will focus on the development of the home language, as well as provide experiences that expose the child to English.

Sample Schedule - Weekly Home Visit

- Greeting Time/Handwashing (10 Minutes)
- Parent/Child Activities (40 Minutes)
- Review of Week's Home Activities (10 Minutes)
- Planning for Next Week's Visit (10 Minutes)
- Review of Family Circumstances/Family Partnering (15 Minutes)
- Gather Materials/Good-Byes (5 Minutes)

Family Day

Another important part of our program is Family Day, which is typically held twice each month. Family days give Early Head Start parents a chance to get to know other parents with young children, and give children an opportunity to be around other children. Parents are able to observe other children at different stages of development. It helps to know you are not alone in facing the challenges of parenting!

Family Day includes a snack, depending on the time of day, and parent/child activities which are planned with the help of parents and related goals they are working on through their Teaching Strategies GOLD Development and Learning Report. For our Family Day snacks, our program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a federal program that provides healthy snacks and meals to children in Head Start/Early Head Start programs. We are not permitted to serve food that has been prepared at home, so please do not bring food from home to share. Prepared bottles are allowed and will be labeled upon arrival and stored, if necessary.

Family Day - continued

We do ask that you not attend Family Day if you or your child are sick. Discuss your or your child's illness with your Educator. (See also Health, Nutrition and Safety in the Head Start section.) Parents of newborns should take into consideration the baby's immune system and practice caution bringing the baby into a group setting. We do recommend that infants have their first set of immunizations if attending Family Day.

Family Days are meant to be small group activities for Early Head Start children, parents, and staff. We request that you not bring guests to the Family Days, as space is limited. Diaper bags, purses, and other personal items are kept out of children's reach during Family Day activities. Staff will direct you to where these things can be stored. Cell phones, scanners, etc., are disruptive during activities and distract parents' attention from the children. We ask that cell phones and other devices be turned off and stored with personal items during Family Day activities. **Please refrain from taking pictures during Family Day.**

Sample Schedule - Family Day

WELCOME TIME (10 minutes)

- Arrival
- Wash Hands
- Informal conversation
- Free Play and exploration

CIRCLE TIME (15 minutes)

- "Hello" song
- Other songs/Roll the Ball/Exchange names
- Put up family picture on board

SNACK TIME (20 minutes)

- Wash hands
- Enjoy snack and conversation
- Tooth Brushing
- Wash Hands

PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITY AND OBSERVATIONS (30 minutes)

- Directed and explorative activities (Activities are based upon the Teaching Strategies Gold assessment as well as health, nutrition, mental health, and family support services).

CLEAN-UP TIME (5 minutes)

CLOSING (10 minutes)

- Review activities
- "Goodbye" song



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY HEAD START

Introduction Head Start/Early Head Start believes that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, and that children will benefit best from their education when their parents are actively involved. Our Early Head Start services are conducted in your home and at Family Days with total parent involvement. You will participate in your child's screenings and assessments, and plan activities for each home visit. You will also have the opportunity to help plan and participate in Family Days, which are held twice a month.

Parents are also offered the opportunity to participate in 6 Parent Committee Meetings throughout each program year.—During the first Parent Committee meeting of the year, parents may run for and be elected to serve on the agency's Policy Council. Policy Council is a group of parents who represent all of the Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K Counts centers and community representatives who help make decisions within the program. There are also opportunities to serve on committees and attend parent training. You will receive a monthly Early Head Start Parent Newsletter that provides useful information on various topics related to Health and nutrition, parenting, and child development.

Parent/Staff Agreement

The Home Visiting Agreement is signed by the parent and the Family Educator so that you will know what is expected from you by the program and what you can expect from us. Some of these things include: being home and on time for scheduled home visits, providing a distraction free environment to conduct home visits, and that our Family Educators will support you in your role as your child's first and most important teacher.

Missed Home Visits

Our federal performance standards require that we do weekly home visits with our Early Head Start families. We understand there could be missed visits due to the agency closings, illnesses, or vacation. When visits are canceled by the agency or by the family, we will schedule a make-up visit with you as soon as possible. When visits are canceled by either the family or Family Educator, each will be requested to sign the Missed Home Visit Acknowledgment form to serve as documentation of the missed visit.

We understand that families must cancel visits occasionally due to illness or other family situations. Reasons for missed visits are recorded in the family notes. **Repeated missed visits may result in termination from the program.** When there is a cancellation, caregivers are required to call the Family Educator or the center at least a half hour prior to the scheduled start of the visit. In the event the home visit was cancelled because the family was not home or cancelled at the last minute when there is no emergency, the visit will be unexcused. **Repeated unexcused visits may result in termination from the program.**

Any plans for an extended absence (i.e. due to a family trip or emergency) must be discussed with staff. The situation will be evaluated to determine if the enrollment slot can be held during the absence. **There must be an expected date of return no more than 30 calendar days from the first day of absence.** If the child does not return by the deadline, the slot will become a vacancy. You may be asked to sign an agreement indicating your understanding and expected date of return.

Safe Sleep for Your Baby

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.
- Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as on a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.
- Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.
- Do not allow smoking around your baby.
- Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep.
- Do not let your baby overheat during sleep.
- Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS, including but not limited to commercial apnea monitors.

– *National Institute of Child Health & Human Development*

Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention

Shaking a baby or small child can cause serious injuries and even death. Babies and young children have large heads compared to the size of their bodies; and, if they are shaken, it can cause the head to snap back and forth. This can cause serious head injuries referred to as Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Most times these events happen when a baby will not stop crying and caregivers become very frustrated. It is important to remember to stay calm and remember that babies will cry, even when they don't need anything and everything is okay. If you can't get the baby to stop and you have tried everything, keep these things in mind:

- Lay the baby down and take a break.
- Go to another room.
- Listen to music or read.
- Exercise.
- Call a friend or family member.
- **Call for help.** 24-hour crisis hotline - 1-800-4A CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

For more information or additional resources, contact the PA Department of Health at 1-877-724-3258 or the Calm A Crying Baby network at CalmACryingBaby.org

What can YOU do to help prepare your child to SUCCEED in school?

Use positive discipline!

PRAISE your child when he or she is doing well!

Try this: Say 3 positive statements for every one negative or correcting statement.

Provide language-rich experiences!

TALK to your child as you do everyday tasks!

Try this: “What fruits & vegetables do you see? Look, there’s an eggplant!”

Establish family routines!

KEEP a daily schedule!

Try this: Eat meals together every night.

Read with your child!

LIMIT your child’s TV/computer time to one hour each day.

Try this: Read a book for at least 20 minutes each day!

Head Start's role in helping children to be ready for school-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Support communication skills and language development</i> ● <i>Help to identify early learning disabilities</i> ● <i>Assist in social and emotional growth</i> ● <i>Teach socialization and gross/fine motor skills</i> ● <i>Help child to develop independence</i> ● <i>Help parent to identify safety issues</i> ● <i>Teach basic skills such as the alphabet and colors, songs, nursery rhymes, writing names, verbal and language skills</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Help children to get to know their surroundings & neighborhoods</i> ● <i>Instill confidence</i> ● <i>Help families prepare for Kindergarten</i> ● <i>Support school to home learning</i> ● <i>Teach respect for other adults</i> ● <i>Work on conflict resolution – share PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)</i>
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Parents' role in helping their children to be ready for school –

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Be a good role model: Brush teeth, practice good hygiene, use positive language, keep up with health and medical appointments</i> ● <i>Keep on a routine</i> ● <i>Have open communication with your child</i> ● <i>Have respect</i> ● <i>Be responsible – plan appropriate bedtimes</i> ● <i>Read to your child</i> ● <i>Reinforce what child learns at school</i> ● <i>Encourage pretend play</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Be sure child has regular attendance at school</i> ● <i>Set an example</i> ● <i>Listen to your child</i> ● <i>Volunteer</i> ● <i>Be sure to register for Kindergarten</i> ● <i>Have open communication with Teachers</i> ● <i>Help your child to have independence</i> ● <i>Show love and stability to your child</i> ● <i>Help your child to understand safety and bus riding</i>
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