



LUZERNE COUNTY HEAD START INC.



“Moving Families Forward”

Serving Children and Families in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties

2026-2027 Family Handbook

Policies and Procedures

lcheadstart.org



PERSONAL INFORMATION

This Family Handbook Belongs To:

Name _____

Address: _____

Early Head Start, Home Visiting Program

EHS Center: _____

Center Telephone #: _____

Family Educator: _____

Program Manager: _____

Head Start Preschool Services

Name of Center: _____

Center Telephone #: _____

Classroom #: _____

Teacher: _____

Associate Teacher: _____

Classroom Aide: _____

Family Worker: _____

Regional Nurse: _____

Center Manager: _____

Transportation Information, if applicable:

Bus Driver: _____

Bus #: _____

Bus Pick-Up Time: _____

Bus Drop-Off Time: _____

LCHS Central Office

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Welcome to Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.!

This 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 you are participating in the Early Head Start Program for birthing parents and children from birth to three years of age, you will have weekly home visits with a 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 education, nutrition, health education, and family support services along with encouragement and guidance that will help you in providing a warm, caring, and responsive environment for your child and family.

If your child is three or four years old, they will be participating in our preschool program in selected classrooms. Coming to their classroom will mean seeing the new friends they have made, having fun on the playground, enjoying delicious meals, reading books, brushing their teeth, exploring the environment 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.

The staff looks forward to partnering with you to make sure that your child receives the full benefit from this experience and to help 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, Inc. 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 you and your child. We are committed to our mission, principles, and values and strive to implement them in all 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 our services and policies. We are pleased to have you join the Head Start program and intend to provide your child with the 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 you and your child for the program to have the greatest benefit for your child and family. If you have any questions, please discuss them with your Teacher, Family Worker, Family Educator, or Center or Program Manager.



OUR VISION

Our vision is children growing and thriving in a supportive, nurturing environment of parents, family, neighborhood, and community where they and their families have options and opportunities for optimum growth, development, and learning.

OUR MISSION

As proven leaders in early childhood education and family development, Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for low-income children and families in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. Our knowledgeable and caring staff accomplish our mission by providing early care and education for birthing parents and children from birth to five years old, emphasizing healthy outcomes and school readiness, promoting family self-sufficiency, and partnering with individuals, school districts, and our community.

OUR MOTTO

“MOVING FAMILIES FORWARD”

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!

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. (LCHS) provides multiple services throughout Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. These services are provided at no cost to income eligible families.

Early Head Start Prenatal Program

Our Early Head Start (EHS) Prenatal program offers a weekly 1-hour, home-visit to support birthing parents. The Family Educator utilizes a home visiting curriculum and additional resources to support healthy pregnancies and positive birthing outcomes. At birth, the baby is enrolled in the EHS program.

Early Head Start Program

Our EHS program is a year-round home visiting program for children birth to age three. The Family Educator will provide weekly hour and a half home visits that include parenting education, health services, early childhood development, and support and referral services. The Family Educator will support the family as their child's first and most important teacher. Group Family Day activities are held twice a month for enrolled birthing parents, infants and toddlers to participate in a group setting and for families to socialize and support each other. Children in the EHS program will transition to the Head Start Preschool Program at three (3) years of age if eligibility is determined.

Head Start Center-Based Program

Our Head Start Center-Based program provides a comprehensive preschool program for children ages 3-5 years old that includes education, health, nutrition and social and emotional development. Children attend school 5 days a week, however classroom times vary by location. Each classroom has a minimum of 2 qualified staff. The Teachers will complete home visits and parent teacher conferences each year with the families. Transportation is very limited and will vary by classroom; many classrooms are self-transport only. The Family Worker will complete home visits and support families in achieving their goals, while providing support and referrals to the community as needed. Parenting education and opportunities to participate in program activities, including program governance, will be offered for families.

Pre-K Counts Program is a center-based, preschool program funded by the State of Pennsylvania, serving Crestwood, Dallas, Lake Lehman, Wilkes-Barre, Wyoming Valley West, Wyoming Area and Pittston Area School Districts, and other select service areas.

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 that will improve daily living for you and your family.
3. To be welcomed in the program.
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.
6. To always be treated with respect and dignity.
7. To expect guidance for your child 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 our program as an opportunity through which you can improve your life and your children's lives.
3. To take part in our program as an observer, a volunteer worker, or a paid employee, and to contribute to your services in whatever way you can toward the enrichment of the total program.
4. To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explaining 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 unpleasant 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 immunization records, medical and dental forms as required.
12. To ensure your child attends on a regular basis, adhering to arrival and departure time.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

LCHS is committed to operating 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 always act in the best interest of the agency and exercise the highest level of integrity, ethics and objectivity in their actions and relationships which may affect the agency. Everyone has a duty to act in the best interest of the agency at all times.

This rationale serves the 2024 Head Start Program Performance Standards, Part 1302, Subpart I - Human Resources Management, §1302.90 Personnel Policies, (c)(1)(2) wherein a program must ensure the following:

Staff, Consultants, Contractors, and Volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct that implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior and do not engage in behaviors that maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum:

- Corporal punishment, or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force feeding, or dragging;
- Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual action, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child or other sexual activities;
- Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating or threatening a child; and
- Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to, leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as punishment or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment.

Additionally Staff, Consultants, Contractors, and Volunteers must:

- Report reasonably suspected or known incidents child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C. 5101 note) and in compliance with Federal, State, local and Tribal laws;
- Respect and promote the unique Identity of each individual and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;

- Comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws; and,
- Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff.

Expectation of Mutual Respect

Our "Expectation of Mutual Respect" policy at LCHS aims to create a positive, respectful, and safe environment for both staff and families involved in our programs.

1. **Mutual Respect:** A foundation of mutual respect is crucial in the relationship between staff and families.
2. **Role of Parents:** Acknowledgment of parents as the first and most important educators of their children, and support for parents in this role.
3. **Cultural Respect:** Respect for families' values and culture by the staff.
4. **Reciprocal Respect:** Expectation that families will also show respect toward the staff.
5. **Safe Environment:** Commitment to a safe and respectful environment for everyone.
6. **Zero Tolerance for Violence:** Strict policy against acts or threats of violence to ensure a safe workplace.

Website Information

For the most current and detailed information, please visit lcheadstart.org directly.

- **Center Happenings:** Updates and activities at our centers.
- **Useful Information:** Resources on child development, health, dental care, and nutrition.
- **School Readiness Goals:** Located under the Resources Tab in the 'Parent Resource' section.
- **Information for Families:** Details on area school districts, job opportunities, and community resources.
- **Physical and Dental Forms:** Available under the Parent Resources tab.
- **Application Process:** Families interested in applying can find the application in English and Spanish by clicking the red APPLY button on the homepage. For questions, they can contact the LCHS Central Office at 570-829-6321 to speak with an Enrollment Specialist.
- **Newsletter:** You can sign up on our website, <https://lcheadstart.org/> to receive quarterly newsletters and occasional updates from LCHS.

Social Media Information

LCHS uses Facebook and Instagram for communication on social media. Please check out our pages for up to date information.

Facebook: facebook.com/luzernecountyheadstart

Instagram: instagram.com/luzernecountyheadstart

PROGRAM POLICIES

Confidentiality

At LCHS, we prioritize the confidentiality and privacy of your family's information. Any information provided to us, or any details we gather about your child or family, will only be shared within our program when necessary to provide services to your family. We will not disclose this information to anyone outside of the LCHS program unless we have received written permission from a parent or guardian.

Parents or legal guardians have the right to access their family's records. However, access to information regarding other families is restricted, and it is not permissible to discuss the situations of other families with program staff or any other individuals.

We are committed to maintaining the trust and confidentiality of all families participating in our program.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

LCHS recognizes that parents are their child's primary teacher and advocate. We also understand the importance of providing information and support to families so that, in turn, parents will be better prepared to take an active role in their child's education and development.

Under federal law, FERPA, which governs information in educational records, gives parents rights to:

- Inspect and review education records.
- Seek to amend education records.
- Have some control over the disclosure of information from education records.

"Parent" is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. NOTE: FERPA affords full rights to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statutes or legally binding document that specifically revokes these rights.

"Education Records" are records that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

FERPA also permits schools to share information with:

- another school system regarding a student's enrollment or transfer
- specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes

- appropriate parties about financial aid to a student
- organizations conducting certain studies for, or on behalf of the school, and accrediting organizations

Schools may also disclose information to comply with:

- a judicial order or subpoena
- appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, according to specific state law
(This disclosure of information does not apply to Head Start students)

Video Surveillance Camera Usage Policy



LCCHS has implemented a comprehensive video surveillance system to enhance the safety and security of its facilities.

24-Hour Video Surveillance: Cameras are installed in all classrooms, some hallways, and external areas. These cameras record video only, without audio. Recorded footage is stored on a DVR for up to 30 days.

Signage: All classrooms will have video surveillance signs on the doors, and where feasible, at building entrances.

Authorized Personnel: The Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Director of Operations, and the Director of Early Childhood Education are authorized to view the footage at any time. Center Managers and Early Childhood Education Specialists may also view the footage to ensure high-quality teaching environments. **Families are not able to view the video footage.**

Usage: The footage will be saved and reviewed as needed. **However, video footage is for internal use only and will not be shared with families.**

Purpose: The surveillance system is used to monitor, ensuring a secure environment for all children and staff within LCCHS centers.

Photography and Video Consent Form Information

This document outlines several important policies regarding photography and recordings at LCCHS.

Consent for Child's Photographs:

- Parents and guardians are asked to sign a consent form allowing their child to be photographed during various activities throughout the year.
- These photos may be used for public publications and newspaper articles.
- Any changes to this permission should be discussed with the Teacher, Family Worker, or Family Educator.

Staff Recordings:

- Staff may record events for internal use within the centers on LCHS devices only. This suggests that recordings may be made for administrative or educational purposes within the school or center.

Refusal Option:

- Parents and guardians have the right to refuse permission for their child's picture or video to be taken.
- If parents refuse, their child's picture will not be used in any publications or newspaper articles.

Family Guidelines - Social Media Restrictions:

- Parents, guardians, and other family members **must refrain from taking pictures** of other children. This is to protect the privacy of other children at the center.

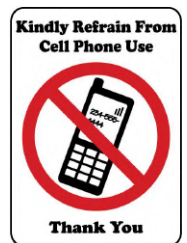
Family Guidelines - Photography Restrictions:

- ***Families are not allowed to take videos or recordings during home visits, conferences, or phone conversations.***
- Families are not allowed to take pictures or videos of other children when present onsite.
- Families are not allowed to take photos or videos on any virtual platform where other children are displayed. This includes virtual meetings or events where multiple children are participating.

These guidelines are to ensure the safety, privacy, and respectful use of images and recordings of children at the center. It emphasizes the importance of parental consent, respect for privacy, and adherence to specific rules regarding photography and recordings both onsite and virtually. Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate any concerns or changes regarding these guidelines directly with the designated school personnel throughout the year.

Cell Phone Usage

To help create a safe and supportive environment for your child, we kindly request that you turn **OFF or MUTE** your cell phone upon arrival. This ensures our staff can fully focus on your child's needs during these crucial moments. Your attention is invaluable in signing your child in or out, exchanging greetings or farewells, and ensuring their safety to and from our program. Thank you for your cooperation in making these transitions smooth and positive for your child.



Smoking Free Environment



At LCHS, the health and safety of our children, families, and staff are a top priority. As part of our commitment to promoting wellness, we maintain Smoke-Free Environments across all locations. Research confirms that secondhand and thirdhand smoke poses significant health risks. ***Therefore, the use of tobacco or cannabis, whether through smoking, vaping, or E-cigarettes, is strictly prohibited on LCHS premises, including***

parking areas and near bus doors, as well as during Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences.

1. Health Hazards of Smoking and Vaping:

- Smoking during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, low birth weight, and respiratory issues for the baby.
- LCHS acknowledges the serious health risks associated with secondhand smoke and third-hand smoke. This includes increased risks of colds, ear infections, asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, and other respiratory problems in children exposed to smoke.
- Tobacco products contain over 4,000 chemicals, and even third-hand smoke (residual chemicals on clothes and furniture) poses health risks.

2. Policies and Regulations:

- Smoking and vaping, including e-cigarettes, are prohibited in and around all LCHS sites and in agency vehicles, including on and outside of buses.

3. Support and Information Provision:

- LCHS recognizes smoking as a personal choice and a powerful addiction. We offer support and information to help individuals quit smoking if they choose to do so.
- Tips for minimizing exposure to smoke for 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.

4. Educational Mandate:

- LCHS is mandated by the National Head Start Program Performance Standards to educate families about preventative health concerns, including environmental hazards like smoking. They also provide information on fetal development risks associated with substance use, including tobacco, vaping, non-prescribed drugs, and alcohol.

LCHS is committed to creating a smoke-free and vape-free environment for the health and well-being of children, families, and staff. We not only enforce strict no-smoking policies at our facilities but also provide education, support, and resources to help families understand and mitigate the health risks associated with smoking and vaping.

Emergency Procedures



LCHS has an emergency response plan in place, tailored to different types of emergencies and specific to each location. LCHS prioritizes safety through comprehensive emergency preparedness planning and regular drills. This approach aims to ensure that both students and staff are well-prepared to respond effectively in case of any emergency.

Emergency Evacuation Location Site: Each center has a designated Emergency Evacuation Location Site suited to its specific needs and circumstances.

1. **Standard Response Protocol:** LCHS uses the Standard Response Protocol developed by "I Love U Guys." This protocol includes standardized procedures for various emergencies such as Hold, Secure, Lock Down, Evacuation and Sheltering in Place
2. **Application of the Protocol:** The Standard Response Protocol is implemented in Head Start, EHS, and Pre-K Counts Centers that are not housed within School District buildings. Centers located within School District buildings follow the specific Emergency Plan of that district.
3. **Information:** Information about the emergency plans, including the Standard Response Protocol or the School District's Emergency Plan, is provided to every parent during Orientation and Enrollment periods. This ensures that parents are aware of the procedures in place to protect their children during emergencies.
4. **Drills and Preparedness:** Children and families may practice various emergency drills throughout the school year. This practice helps to provide an understanding of what to do and how to stay safe in different emergency scenarios.

Inclement Weather/School Closings

Early Head Start

Inclement weather may cause the Family Educator to reschedule the Home Visit. If that is the case, the Family Educator will contact you to reschedule. A Family Educator may keep the appointment with you, even if the district you live within has announced a closing/delay.

Head Start and Pre-K Counts

The School District in which your child's preschool classroom is located determines any delay or school closing. If the district delays, your child's preschool classroom will be delayed. If the district closes, your child's preschool classroom will be closed as well. The Flexible Instruction Plan (FIP) may be used in the event that school needs to be closed due to health reasons, building issues, or weather. Families will be notified when a FIP is being used by staff through the use of One Call Now, ChildPlus Messenger, and/or email.

Announcements about school delays or closings are made using our ChildPlus system. Parents/guardians need to keep all phone numbers and emails current by informing their child's Teacher, Family Worker or Family Educator when a change takes place.

LCHS will notify you if there is an early dismissal through a phone call by the staff.

Parent Concerns

We want you to have a rewarding and satisfactory experience at LCHS and we are committed to addressing any concerns or complaints parents may have. If you're facing an issue or have feedback to share, we encourage you to reach out to your Center Manager/Program Manager, whose name and number is listed on page 1 of this handbook. This approach ensures that your concerns are documented and that they can work with you to find a resolution.



EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED PROGRAM OPTION



Early Head Start (EHS) is a federally funded program for low-income families with infants, toddlers, and birthing parents. The EHS program plays a crucial role in supporting families and children in various aspects of their development.

1. Purpose and Goals:

- **Developmental Enhancement:** EHS strives to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development through structured activities and interactions.
- **Parental Support:** EHS assists parents in fulfilling their role as the child's first and most important teacher.
- **Family Self-Sufficiency:** EHS helps families move toward self-sufficiency by identifying community services and resources that may benefit them.

2. Service Components:

- **Prenatal and Postnatal Support:** For birthing parents enrolled in the Prenatal Program, there are weekly home visits to prepare for parenthood. After birth, the child transitions into the EHS program, with the Health Specialist conducting an initial visit within two weeks after delivery.
- **Home-Based Model:** Services are delivered through weekly in-person home visits that are at least one and a half hours long, ensuring consistent engagement and support for families.
 - The visits **must** be conducted with the enrolled child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), who **must be present and an active participant** for the entire visit. Home visits are a time for you to engage with your child to reinforce your role as their first and most important teacher.
 - Our National Head Start Performance Standards state that we must provide one home visit per week that lasts at least an hour and a half and provide a minimum of 46 visits per year.

Sample Schedule - Weekly Home Visit with Enrolled Child(ren)

- Greeting Time/Review of Previous Week
- Parent/Child Activities
- Review of Family Circumstances/Family Support/Resources
- Planning for Next Week's Visit
- Goodbyes

- **Family Days:** Family Days are held approximately twice a month at your EHS center, providing opportunities for children and families to interact and learn together in a group setting. Children will be introduced to classroom concepts, including hand washing, snack, toothbrushing and socializing with their peers.

Sample Schedule - Family Day

- Welcome (“Welcome” song)
- Circle Time (book sharing, singing songs)
- Snack/Toothbrushing
- Parent/Child Activities (directed and explorative activities)
- Resource Sharing (Health/Safety, Child Development, Community, etc.)
- Closing (Review activities, “Goodbye” song)

*Please note that there is no cell phone usage during Family Day to ensure safety and allow families to be fully present and engaged.

3. Comprehensive Services:

- **Child Development:** Focuses on developmentally appropriate learning and school readiness skills.
- **Family Support:** Includes assistance in setting and achieving personal and family goals.
- **Health, Safety and Nutrition:** Provides guidance on family/child health, safety, nutrition, and overall well-being.
- **Mental Health and Disabilities Services:** Offers support ensuring all family and children's needs are met.
- **Transportation:** Provides transportation to Family Days, medical/dental appointments pending staff and/or vehicle availability and assists in obtaining transportation resources within the community.
- **Transition at Age Three:** Prepares children and families for the transition from EHS to Head Start Preschool or another educational setting.

4. **Parental Involvement:** Emphasizes the active participation of parents or legal guardians in all aspects of the program. This involvement strengthens the parent-child relationship and reinforces the parent's role as the child's first and most important teacher.

Clothing for Family Days and Home Visits

Families are encouraged to dress comfortably as they will be actively participating with their child(ren). Please refrain from wearing messages or slogans that could be offensive to others during socializations or home visits.

School Readiness, Curriculum, Assessment, and Screenings

The EHS program is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to children and families, ensuring that each child receives individualized care and developmentally appropriate activities to prepare them for future educational success. The Birth to Three School Readiness Goals 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 EHS.

1. **Curriculum and Activities:** The curriculum for infants and toddlers is holistic, encompassing all aspects of their daily life including play, feeding, sleeping, and communication. Family Educators collaborate with parents to create activities aimed at enhancing child development and school readiness.
2. **Partners for a Healthy Baby (PHB) Curriculum:** Developed by Florida State University, this curriculum focuses on prenatal services and children from birth to three years old. It includes activities to promote child development, secure parent-child relationships, and empower parents as their child's first teachers.
3. **Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP):** This is a family-centered assessment tool that evaluates children's development across multiple domains such as cognitive, language, motor skills, social-emotional development, and self-help skills. It provides a framework for ongoing assessment, planning, and tracking progress.
4. **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3):** 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 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.
5. **Home as Primary Learning Environment:** EHS emphasizes the home environment as crucial for child learning and development. They support bilingualism and biliteracy, recognizing these as strengths, and provide experiences in both the home language and English.

Parent/Staff Agreement

The *Home Visiting Agreement* is an agreement between the parent/guardian and the Family Educator regarding the expectations of enrollment.

Expectations for Home Visits

As the Parent/Guardian, I will:

- Be present and actively engaged for the duration of the Home Visit; I will remain in the room at all times during the home visit.
- I will notify my Family Educator of any cancellations I must make at least 30 minutes before our scheduled visit time.
- I will inform my Family Educator of communicable diseases or other Health/Safety concerns before my scheduled visit.
- I will actively participate in the activities during the home visit and try to provide a quiet place free of distractions.
- I will refrain from using my cell phone during the home visit and Family Day.
- I will follow through with weekly Parent/Child activities.
- I will put my animals in another room and away from the activities while my educator is present.
- I understand and will adhere to the 'Expectation of Mutual Respect'.
- I understand that repeated missed visits can result in termination from the program.
- I understand that three Unexcused "not homes" (visits that are not canceled 30 minutes before start or not at all) can result in termination from the program.

As the Family Educator, I will:

- Provide a weekly home visit and notify you of any changes in my schedule.
- Support you in your role as your child's first and most important teacher.
- Assist you in planning weekly activities for you and your child.
- Support you in working toward goals for yourself and your family.
- Follow the 'Standards of Conduct', 'Confidentiality Policy', and 'Expectation of Mutual Respect'.

Health Screenings

The Family Educator will review research-based assessments with you about your pregnancy or your child. These assessments cover milestones in hearing, vision, oral health, safety, and nutrition. With your consent, the Family Educator can refer you either to a specialist or your Primary Care Physician based on these screenings. Additionally, we will offer information on nutrition and meal preparation, and engage in enjoyable nutrition-related activities at your home.

Attendance Requirements



EHS is required to keep records of attendance, educate on the importance of good attendance, and address attendance concerns in our program. Our attendance policy outlines the procedures to ensure that families meet attendance requirements within the specified timeline.

Families are expected to participate in our in-person services to remain enrolled in our program.

Requirements:

1. **Attendance Requirements:** Families are required to participate in weekly in-person home visits, totaling at least 46 visits per program year.
2. **Communication Protocol:** Families must provide at least 30 minutes' notice for any visit cancellations. If a visit is canceled, efforts will be made to reschedule it within the same week. If not possible, two visits will be scheduled for a future week.
3. **Consequences of Non-Attendance:**
 - One unexcused absence triggers an EHS Attendance Agreement to be completed by the Family Educator and the family.
 - If attendance issues persist, a series of notifications (Manager phone calls and letters) will be sent to the family, ultimately leading to withdrawal from the program if the situation doesn't improve.
 - You may discuss extended absences or extenuating circumstances with the Family Educator.
 - **No Contact:** If there has been no contact with a family for two weeks without prior approval, a door tag or letter will be placed to reestablish communication and ensure the family's well-being. If communication is not re-established within 30 days, your family may be withdrawn from the program.
 - **Not Home:** Two "Not Home" (not home for scheduled visit, or not cancelled at least 30 minutes in advance) codes will trigger a letter sent from an EHS Specialist stating if another occurs your family will be withdrawn from the program.
4. **Initial Requirements:** During the first 45 days of enrollment, specific actions are taken if a home visit is not completed due to assessments and screenings that must take place within the first 45 days:
 - If no home visit is completed the week following enrollment, EHS 45 Day Letter #1 is sent.
 - If no home visit is completed the next week, EHS 45 Day Letter #2 is sent. This letter includes a deadline that a home visit must be completed by in order to stay enrolled. If this deadline is not met, your family will be withdrawn. **Extenuating Circumstances:** Families experiencing difficulties meeting attendance requirements due to exceptional circumstances are encouraged to contact their Family Educator promptly. Accommodation may be considered by the EHS Family Engagement and ERSEA Specialists on a case-by-case basis.

This approach ensures clarity and accountability regarding attendance expectations from the outset of enrollment. It emphasizes regular participation in program activities, with clear consequences outlined for non-compliance balanced with provisions for genuine extenuating circumstances. If you have specific questions about implementing or understanding aspects of this policy, feel free to ask!

Emergency Information

It is important that we know about your health needs and those of your child, so that we may assist with any community services and referrals which you



may need or be eligible for. We must also have someone to contact in case of an emergency with you or your child.

1. Emergency Contacts:

- Make sure your Family Educator has updated information about your health needs and emergency contacts. Notify them promptly of any changes.
- Develop a list of names and telephone numbers of individuals who can be contacted in case of an emergency. Keep this list easily accessible in your home and give a copy to a responsible person outside your home, like a relative or neighbor.

2. Emergency Procedures During a Home Visit:

- If an emergency involving a Family Educator occurs during a home visit, call 911 immediately. Then the Lynn Evans Biga Center EHS office at 570-824-9050.

3. Emergency Evacuation Plan:

- Create an emergency evacuation plan for your home. This plan should include at least two exit routes from each room and a designated meeting place outside.
- Practice this evacuation plan with your family at least once a month to ensure everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency.

4. Communication Plan:

- If you don't have a phone, make arrangements with a nearby neighbor or relative who does have one, so you can use it in case of an emergency. See the resources in the back of this handbook for information on how to acquire a cell phone.

5. Additional Notes:

- It's important to regularly review and update your emergency contacts and evacuation plans to reflect any changes in circumstances or contact information.
- Consider any specific health needs or requirements that family members might have when formulating your plans.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure that you and your family are well-prepared to handle emergencies effectively and safely. If you have any specific questions or need further assistance with developing your emergency plans, feel free to ask!

Family and Children's Illness

Notify your Family Educator if your enrolled child or another family member is ill before they arrive at your home for your scheduled visit, at least 30 minutes before the scheduled time. If someone becomes sick immediately prior to your home visit, please notify your Family Educator before they come into your home so you can make a joint decision if a home visit should occur.

Please contact your Family Educator or the Health Specialist for details about childhood diseases or conditions.

Food Allergies, Special Diet, and Religious Considerations

Your Family Educator will talk with you during enrollment to learn about any allergies or medical conditions your child may have. Please inform your Family Educator promptly if you become aware of any allergies. EHS will provide nutritious meals or snacks to your family and it's important for us to know about any allergies, special diets, or religious considerations in your home. We also will provide snacks during Family Days. Our goal is to make sure all children can participate and are well-fed. **The entire agency maintains peanut-free and pork-free meals and snacks.** Alternatives such as soy butter, sunflower butter, or other peanut-safe options are available. **All food allergies/considerations will be posted in the kitchen area during Family Days.**



Transition from Early Head Start to Head Start Preschool Program

1. **Timing of Planning:** Planning for your child's transition into Head Start Preschool should ideally begin six (6) months before their third (3rd) birthday.
2. **Age Eligibility:** Children who turn three (3) during the program year while Head Start is in session may be eligible to start attending at age three (3), depending on availability.
3. **Application Process:** A new application must be completed to determine your family's eligibility for the Head Start Preschool Program.
4. **Income Guidelines:** Families who are over the income guidelines for Head Start do not automatically receive placement. The availability of openings and adherence to income guidelines will determine eligibility.
5. **Transition Process:** The transition process into Head Start will be explained in detail by your Family Educator. They will provide information on what steps need to be taken, what documents are required, and any other relevant details to ensure a smooth transition for your child.

It's essential to communicate closely with your Family Educator to understand all requirements and deadlines to ensure a smooth transition from EHS to Head Start Preschool for your family.



HEAD START AND PRE-K COUNTS PRESCHOOL PROGRAM



Our Head Start and Pre-K Counts preschool center-based programs are federally and state-funded programs for children three and four years of age who live in low-income families. The Head Start and Pre-K Counts program plays a crucial role in supporting families and children in various aspects of their development.

1. Purpose and Goals

- **Developmental Enhancement:** Our Head Start and Pre-K Counts programs at LCHS aim to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development through structured activities and interactions within the classroom.
- **Parental Support:** LCHS believes that parents are the most important educators of their children. We are committed to fostering continuous communication and collaboration between parents and teachers. This partnership is vital in maintaining consistency and mutual understanding to support the development of each child effectively.
- **Family Self-Sufficiency:** The program helps families move towards self-sufficiency by goal setting with their Family Worker or teacher which, in turn, helps to identify community services and resources that may benefit families.

2. Service Components

- **Center-Based Model:** Services are delivered within a classroom setting. Children attend Monday through Friday.
- **Play-Based Learning:** Recognizing that children learn best through play, we provide opportunities for children to explore and interact within the classroom, using all their senses. This approach supports their social and cognitive development in a natural and engaging way.
- **Safe and Supportive Environment:** Creating a safe and supportive environment is crucial for children to practice and develop their skills. This environment encourages them to explore, learn from their experiences, and build upon their abilities over time.
- **Individualized Learning:** Teachers focus on each child's unique interests, abilities, and cultural background to tailor learning experiences. This personalized approach ensures that children are engaged and challenged appropriately while fostering their growth.
- **Assessment and Evaluation:** Tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3, e-DECA, Teaching Strategies Assessment, and teacher observations are used to assess children's progress. These assessments help in planning the curriculum, identifying areas for improvement or further evaluation, supporting children with special needs, and evaluating the effectiveness of the educational program.

3. **Comprehensive Services**

- **Child Development:** Focuses on age-appropriate learning and readiness skills.
- **Family Support:** Includes assistance in setting and achieving personal and family goals.
- **Health and Nutrition:** Provides guidance on child health, nutrition, and overall well-being.
- **Mental Health and Disabilities Services:** Offers additional resources and support if needed, ensuring all children's needs are met.
- **Transition:** Prepares children and families for the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

4. **Parental Involvement:** Emphasizes the active participation of parents or legal guardians in all aspects of the program. This involvement strengthens the parent-child relationship and reinforces the parent's role as the child's primary educator.

LCBS combines educational, developmental, and supportive services to empower families and promote the healthy growth and development of young children. It operates on the principle of partnership between program staff and families, aiming to meet individual family needs while fostering a community-based approach to early childhood education and family support.

School Readiness, Curriculum, Assessment, and Screenings

The Head Start and Pre-K Counts program is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to children and families, ensuring that each child receives individualized care and developmentally appropriate activities to prepare them for future educational success. We use various educational programs to help meet each child's needs.

HighScope Curriculum

The HighScope approach is an educational curriculum for early childhood education that's based on the idea that children learn best through active learning experiences. The main principles of HighScope are active learning, hands-on exploration of materials, shared control between teachers and children, and a whole-child approach to learning. Children are encouraged to plan which materials to use and how to use them while teachers support and scaffold their learning.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching Strategies is an authentic, ongoing observational system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. It helps teachers to observe children in the context of everyday experiences, which is an effective way to learn what they know and can do.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)

Areas screened include communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal-social. If applicable, and with your permission, your child's Teacher will be able to assist you with making a developmental and/or behavioral referral to Early Intervention or a Behavioral Health agency for your child to receive further evaluation. Early detection of possible delays is crucial for healthy child development and, if needed, early specialized services can improve your

child's overall development and social and emotional skills needed for school readiness. An Early Intervention referral can be filled out at: iepwriter.com/pa/ei_Referral/hazleton_referral.aspx

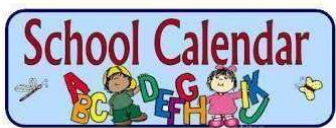
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) is a behavior rating scale that is completed by parents and/or caregivers or teachers. The DECA helps teachers and families assess and plan to promote resilience in children up to six years old. The DECA is a strength-based behavior rating scale that helps identify protective factors that are important for social and emotional health and resilience.

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 the *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.

Calendars



Each month, you will receive a calendar from your child's center in your ChildPlus Communication App. This calendar will help you to know what is happening at your child's center, class, in the Head Start program, EHS, and Pre-K Counts. Notices of school closings and holidays, etc. will be posted in the app. ***Please be sure to check the ChildPlus Communication App each day for important information!***

Flexible Instruction Plan For Pre-K Counts Families

Flexible Instruction Plan (FIP) may be used in the event that school needs to be closed due to inclement weather closings, in-service days, emergency-related classroom or building closures. Families will be notified that the FIP is being used by One Call Now.

During short-term closures as defined above, Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. (LCHS) will deliver services that provide families with Non-Virtual Remote Learning.

Families will receive a paper copy of "At Home Learning Activities" created from Teaching Strategies, and handed to them from our teachers. Copies of the "At Home Learning Activities" will also be available on the Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. website. The learning activities are designed to last no more than 30 minutes each day. Families will not need any additional materials for Non-Virtual Remote Learning. The "At Home Learning Activities" provide families with activities which utilize everyday items which can be found in families' homes or outdoor environments. Families will submit evidence of children's work by completing the At Home Activity. The At Home Activity Sheet needs to be turned into classroom staff within 2 days of implementation of the Flexible Instruction Plan. The learning options can be accessed in the family's home language through paper copies, which will be provided to families.

Active Supervision and Picture Card Accountability

Keeping children safe is a top priority at LCHS. Our staff practices **Active Supervision**, which means that classroom staff focus their attention on children and intentionally observe children at all times. To ensure that children are closely supervised, our staff will be using a **Picture Card Accountability System**. Each picture card contains each child's first and last name, their picture, and any allergies that the child may have. This system is designed to ensure smooth transitions and accountability between families and classroom staff.

The Picture Card system serves several important purposes:

- **Identification and Accountability:** It helps ensure that each child is correctly identified by the education staff and handed over to the correct family member.
- **Smooth Transitions:** By using the cards during drop-off and pick-up, it facilitates smoother transitions between home and school.
- **Organization:** Grouping the cards into primary care groups helps in organizing activities and maintaining oversight during the day.

Emergency Information



LCHS has created a safe and secure environment for children attending the program. To maintain the safety and security of all children attending the program at LCHS, several important policies have been put in place:

1. **Authorized Contacts:** Parents or guardians are required to provide the names of individuals who are authorized to pick up their child when they are unavailable. This list should include at least three responsible adults who are 18 years of age or older and can pick up the child.
2. **Photo ID Requirement:** Before releasing a child to anyone, the staff will require a photo ID to verify the identity of the authorized person. This is a standard practice to ensure that only approved individuals have access to the child.
3. **Strict Release Policy:** Children cannot be released to anyone who is not listed as an authorized contact. This policy is crucial for the safety and security of the children in the program.
4. **Updating Information:** Parents or guardians are required to keep the list of authorized contacts current at all times. This ensures that the staff has the most up-to-date information regarding who is permitted to pick up the child.

Clothing for Preschool

The classrooms, both indoors and outdoors, are busy with many activities such as painting, water play, sand, and glue, just to name a few.

Clothing Suggestions

- **Play Clothes:** Children should wear comfortable play clothes that can get dirty without worry.

- **Footwear:** Full-coverage footwear like sneakers (with laces or Velcro) are recommended. Flip-flops, Crocs, or sandals are not suitable due to outdoor play and gross motor activities.
- **Weather-appropriate:** Dress your child according to the weather conditions.

Outdoor Time

- **Daily Outdoor Activity:** Children go outside every day, even if it's only briefly, except when the real feel is below 25 degrees F or the heat index is above 90 degrees F. This follows the guidelines of Caring for Our Children.
- **Air Quality Watch** airnow.gov: Staff will refer to the AirNow website daily to verify the quality of the air outside. The class will not go outside if the level is in the orange or above.

Extra Set of Clothes

- **Provide Extra Clothes:** Each parent should send an extra set of clothes to the center in case of accidents. These clothes should be labeled with the child's name and include everything needed (including underwear and socks).
- **Handling Accidents:** If your child has an accident, the teacher will send the dirty clothes home. It's important to return a clean set of clothes afterward.

Diapers

- **Provided:** If your child wears diapers or disposable training pants, they will be provided while your child is in session. If you prefer a special brand of diapers or training pants, you are responsible for providing them.

Attendance Requirements



Head Start and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts require Luzerne County Head Start to maintain and regularly monitor attendance records for every child. Children enrolled in our program are expected to attend school everyday. Our program is responsible for monitoring attendance, identifying chronic attendance issues, and work in understanding and address underlying causes.

Attendance is crucial to ensure that children are prepared for kindergarten and to comply with program regulations. **Children are expected to maintain an attendance percentage at or above 90% throughout the school year.** Consistent attendance helps children develop routines and ensures they get the most out of their preschool experience. However, it's understood that children may occasionally need to stay home due to illness. Please do not send your child to school if they are not feeling well enough to participate in school activities, or if they present fever or vomiting within 24 hours of school.

Excused absences are any absences that prevent a child from attending for mental, physical or other urgent reasons. Examples of an excused absence are; illness, family emergency, death of a family member, health, dental or other appointments that cannot be scheduled after school hours, fire, natural disasters, 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. When children have more than five (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 Action Plan" will be required to preserve the child's enrollment in the program.

If a child is absent, parents/guardians **must** contact the center before class begins. Please speak with your child's Teacher/Family Worker or Center Manager or leave a message as all absences and the reasons for them must be documented by our staff. If you do not call prior to the time class begins, the staff will reach out to you within one hour after the start of class.

When parents and guardians leave a message, they must include:

- **Child's Name**
- **Date of Birth**
- **Teacher's name**
- **Classroom Number**
- **Reason for the absence(s)**
- **Name of person calling to report the absence**

When children are absent from the center and no contact is made by the parent, our staff may reach out to you through phone, email, text message or a home visit. If contact is not made by the second day of an unexcused absence, a home visit with a door hanger will be attempted. 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.

Extended absence: Any planned extended absence (such as vacation or emergency) requires prior discussion with staff and formal approval from a Family Engagement Specialist prior to the planned event with a predetermined return date.

***Slot Evaluation:** Staff will review your situation to determine if your child's enrollment spot can be held.

***Return Date:** A firm return date must be established before the absence begins.

***Agreement:** You will be asked to sign an agreement confirming your understanding of these terms and your expected return date.

***Vacancy Policy:** If your child does not return by the agreed-upon deadline, the enrollment slot will become a vacancy.

Arrival and Departure for Children Not Bussed

We are sensitive to the fact that unforeseen situations occur, but to provide a quality program, we ask that all children arrive on time and are required to be picked up on time.

Arriving at school on time and staying until the end time is very important for all children. Children who arrive late or leave early miss opportunities for many critical learning experiences, a healthy and nutritious meal, and time spent developing social skills and friendships. Please check with your child's teacher to verify the drop-off and pick-up times.

Bussing

Important Bus Information



Head Start is not required to provide transportation

- Transportation is provided on a limited basis
- Not all children will be offered transportation
- **Cameras are installed on all Head Start buses to monitor activities inside and outside the bus, ensuring the safety of all passengers. Sound is recorded on all bus cameras.**
- If your child has bus transportation, parents/guardians **must** be at the bus stop at least **10 minutes** before scheduled pick-up/drop-off times. The bus cannot wait at the bus stop. Children will not be picked up in the morning if they are not at the bus stop. The bus can not wait for you to arrive. Children will be returned to the center in the afternoon if there is not an approved adult at the bus stop at drop off.
- All approved adults (18 and over), who will be taking the child off the bus in the afternoon, must be added to the emergency contact form **at least one day before** the individual is scheduled to be at the bus stop.
- **No child will be released to an individual who is not on the emergency contact form.**
- If an adult is asked to show ID and does not have a picture ID, then the bus driver will return the child to the center.
 - An adult who is on the emergency contact form and has a picture ID will need to pick up the child at the center.

Basic Bus Rules for Children

1. Buckle Up and Bottoms Down: Children must remain seated and wear safety restraints at all times.
2. Inside Voices: Maintain appropriate volume levels during the bus ride.
3. Keep Your Hands to Yourself: Respect others' personal space and belongings.
4. No Food allowed on buses.

Procedures for Authorized Pick-Up Person:

1. This authorized adult must be listed on the emergency contact form
2. An authorized adult must initial the bus roll book to verify that they have received the child.
3. The authorized adult must hold the child's hand during departure from the bus.
4. If the bus driver/bus aide doesn't recognize the adult picking up the child, they must verify their identity with picture identification.
 - If no picture ID is present, the child will be returned to the center.
5. **If no** authorized adult is at the bus stop during drop-off:
 - The bus driver/bus aide will call the primary contact number.
 - If no one answers, the bus driver/bus aide will call the school to inform them that the child will be returned to the center.
 - The center staff will begin to call contacts to inform them that the child will need to be picked up at the center, immediately.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why must an authorized adult be outside with the child ten minutes before the pick-up time?

A child must be with an adult outside ten minutes before his/her scheduled bus pick-up time for his/her due to traffic-related issues.

Why won't the driver blow the horn?

According to the school bus drivers' manual, the horn is to be used for emergency situations only and will not blow the horn at the bus stop for families to know they are there.

Why is my child's bus late?

Weather, traffic, maintenance difficulties, and other unforeseen incidents may cause a delay in the arrival of school buses.

What happens if an authorized adult is not outside when the bus arrives at the bus stop in the morning?

The bus will continue to the next bus stop.

Can I pick up my child or drop off my child at any bus stop?

No, for your child's safety, your child must use their bus stop only.

What happens if an authorized adult is not outside at the bus stop in the afternoon?

The child will be returned to the center for the parent to pick up.

Why can't the bus pick up at my address one day and the babysitter's the next day?

Bus routes must remain consistent for pick-up and drop-off of children for the children's safety.

Center Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

1. Morning Drop-off:

- As families drop off their children at the center at the designated class time, the Teacher gives each family the child's Picture Card. Staff can not take children prior to their class time.

- The family member checks the Picture Card to confirm it belongs to their child.
 - After verification, the family hands the Picture Card back to the Teacher.
 - This process ensures that the Teacher acknowledges responsibility for each child as they enter the school.
 - Before the Picture card transfer, you are responsible for your child's supervision.
2. **During the Day:**
- This helps in organizing activities and keeping track of which children are in which groups throughout the day.
3. **Afternoon Pick-up:**
- At the end of the day, when a child is picked up, the Teacher hands the Picture Card to the family.
 - The family member confirms that it's their child's Picture Card.
 - After confirmation, the family places the Picture Card in the Picture Card Basket.
 - This final step ensures that the child is safely accounted for and has been picked up by an authorized person.

We ask that you limit distractions in order to attend to your child and get him/her safely to and from the center.

Sample of Daily Routine Schedule

- **Arrival** - Breakfast
- **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 will explore books, dictate stories, read labels, act out a story, pretend to read a story, play literacy games and identify words and sounds.
 - **Manipulative** - Children develop fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination by putting puzzles together, stringing beads, using counting bears, matching pictures, and sorting 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, 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 appreciate books.

Children's Illness

Even the healthiest child will have a day that they are too ill to attend school. Please call the center before class begins to inform your Family Worker/Teacher whenever your child is absent. 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, and prompt pick-up is required.

If children enrolled in Early Head Start they should not attend Family Days and the home visit needs to be cancelled, if demonstrating any symptoms of sickness.

Doctor's Note

A doctor's note is necessary following hospitalization, surgery, any medical treatment related to an injury (such as casts, slings, stitches, etc.), or extensive dental work. Providing a doctor's note ensures that our staff can appropriately care for your child at the center following any of the mentioned medical events.

The doctor's note must include:

1. Approval for the child 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 on the child's activity, the doctor must specify these clearly in the note.

**Be sure all phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts are up to date.
We must be able to contact you for any emergencies.**

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 the parent, one form for each medication must be provided.
2. Medication must be in the original container, and properly labeled.
3. A doctor's note must be presented with all directions and information.
4. Any over-the-counter medications must have a doctor's note and consent form.
5. All rescue medications and appropriate paperwork must be complete and on-site **BEFORE** the child can start school.
6. Medication must not be expired.

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 the Bus Driver, Teacher, or Associate Teacher. It should **NEVER** be sent with the child or in the child's backpack.

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

Childhood Infections

Children who are exhibiting fever of 100.4, diarrhea, or vomiting, will not be able to attend school. If any of these symptoms occur during school, the parent will be notified, and prompt pick-up is required. Children that have not experienced any vomiting or diarrhea overnight and feel well enough to participate can return to school. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) before they can return to school.

Feel free to contact the LCHS Health team for details about childhood diseases or conditions. A doctor's note may be required for returning to school after being ill with a contagious disease.

Parents will be notified via email if there is a child in the classroom with a contagious illness.

Illness	When Can My Child Return	Do I Need a Doctor's Note
Conjunctivitis Pink Eye Bacterial conjunctivitis with or without drainage (Red eyes with greenish or yellow drainage)	Contact the Doctor for diagnosis and treatment recommendations No exclusion necessary	No doctor's note required
Vomiting and or Diarrhea	Remain home until no vomiting and bowel movements are normal	No Doctor's note required
Rashes	Contact the Doctor for treatment recommendations. No exclusion necessary	Doctor's note recommended
Strep Throat	Contact the Doctor for treatment and diagnosis Return to School 12 hours after starting treatment <u>and</u> the child has no symptoms, feels well, and is able to participate in activities	Doctor's note recommended
Chicken Pox	Contact the Doctor for diagnosis. Remain home until sores are scabbed over (usually 6-8 days after onset of rash) Cases are milder with the vaccine	Doctor's note recommended
Influenza (flu)	Contact the Doctor for treatment and diagnosis fever must be less than 100.4°F without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours	Doctor's note recommended
Impetigo	Contact the Doctor for treatment and diagnosis Return to School 12 hours after starting treatment <u>and</u> the area must be covered	Doctor's note recommended
Ringworm	Contact the Doctor for treatment and diagnosis Return to School 24 hours after starting treatment <u>and</u> the area must be covered	Doctor's note recommended
Scabies	Contact the Doctor for treatment and diagnosis Return to School 12 hours after starting treatment is applied	Doctor's note recommended

Meals

LCHS adheres to the guidelines set by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals are integrated into the daily learning experience, and it is crucial for children to be present for all meals. During snow delays and early dismissals, breakfast and lunch will be provided.



Menus are carefully created to be low in added sugar, salt, and fat. They are shared with parents monthly and displayed in classrooms. Children are introduced to a diverse range of healthy foods without pressure to eat items they do not prefer.

Family Style Meals

Meals are served in a family-style setting. Both adults and children receive the same portion sizes. Classroom staff join children during meals to demonstrate good eating habits, engage in conversations, and foster a home-like atmosphere. This time is also used for educational purposes, integrating nutrition education into the mealtime routine. The menus align with CACFP guidelines and typically include the following:

Breakfast	Lunch
6 oz. Unflavored Milk/Milk Substitute ½ cup Fruit or Vegetable 0.5 oz. Grain	6 oz. Unflavored Milk/Milk Substitute 1.5 oz Protein 0.5 oz. Grain ¼ cup Fruit or Vegetable ¼ cup Vegetable

Food Allergies, Special Diet, and Religious Considerations



If your child has a food allergy or needs a substitution due to a religious reason, the following requirements must be met:

1. Food Allergies/Food Sensitivities:

- Parents/guardians must inform the center in writing about any allergies, food sensitivities, or medical conditions at enrollment or as they become aware of them.
- If a child requires special dietary accommodations due to food allergies this must be documented in writing **by the child's medical provider**.

2. Religious Substitutions:

- For religious reasons, parents must provide a note specifying any dietary restrictions or substitutions required.
- LCHS is peanut-free and pork free.

3. Support Available:

- Our Nutrition Specialist is available to consult with families on developing appropriate meal modifications.

All food allergies/considerations will be posted in the Head Start and Pre-K Counts classroom and kitchen area.

Birthdays, Holidays & Celebrations

LCHS is interested in facilitating inclusive experiences for children; therefore, children will be encouraged to share meaningful experiences from their own family traditions with the class. Conversations about the diversity of cultures will be encouraged and will be included as part of our inclusive curriculum and program, however, we do not emphasize specific holiday celebrations.

Birthday Celebrations:

- Birthdays are acknowledged in various ways in the classrooms to ensure all children feel special.
- Families are not allowed to bring goody bags or gifts for the children in the class or center to maintain equality and simplicity.
- Celebrations are kept simple but special with a book and a song in the classroom.
- LCHS staff do not distribute invitations to birthday parties
- In alignment with the Nutrition Policy, families are not allowed to bring any food or treats into the center to celebrate birthdays. The child's special day will be celebrated with non-food recognition.

End-of-Year Recognition:

- At the end of the year, there is a Classroom Appreciation Day where children's accomplishments are recognized.
- Parents are invited to this event where they will receive their child's portfolio and certificate of accomplishment.
- Photos and video recordings will be prohibited.

Transition to Kindergarten

Transitioning to Kindergarten is an exciting time for both you and your child. Throughout the year, your child's Teacher will share many activities that will focus on a variety of readiness skills. The time you spend with your child doing activities is a fun way to prepare for the move to kindergarten. Your teacher will conduct a Spring Transition meeting with you to discuss your child's strengths and goals. You'll receive information about kindergarten registration from your teacher.

Here are some tips for a successful transition process:

- Attend the Spring Parent Committee meeting when a school district representative shares information about kindergarten registration.
- Complete the Kindergarten registration process before your child leaves Head Start/Pre-K Counts.
- Remember to attend Kindergarten orientation if your district has one (this might be via Zoom).
- Try to meet the teacher before the first day of class.
- Read books about kindergarten and share stories about your first day of school.
- Talk about the bus ride, and offer reassurance that school is a great place to be!
- Sign up to receive *Kindergarten, Here I Come* newsletter from PA Promise for Children. Each month, receive tips and information to help your preschooler prepare for Kindergarten. papromiseforchildren.com/learning-is-everywhere

Information for Early Head Start and Head Start

Children's Temperament

Children are born with their natural style of interacting with or reacting to people, places, and things. Understanding children's temperament is important for parents and caregivers to effectively support their development and well-being. Temperament refers to the innate behavioral and emotional characteristics that children are born with, which influence how they interact with their environment and others. Here are the three basic types of temperament and the traits associated with each:

Easy Temperament:

- These children generally have a positive mood.
- They adapt easily to new situations.
- They have regular routines and biological rhythms.
- They are generally easygoing and approachable.

Difficult Temperament:

- These children tend to have intense reactions.
- They may be more negative in mood.
- They have difficulty adapting to change and new experiences.
- They may have irregular biological rhythms.

Slow-to-warm-up Temperament:

- These children are cautious and withdrawn in new situations.
- They may have a low activity level.
- They tend to take time to adapt to change and new people.
- Once they warm up, they can become more comfortable and sociable.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach that focuses on helping adults better understand how to respond to and care for both children and other adults.

Conscious Discipline takes a brain-based approach to foster the development of new skills in emotional regulation and understanding among teachers, children, and families. The goal of Conscious Discipline is to help adults see conflict as a teaching opportunity; it helps adults recognize that children can self-regulate when provided with the proper skills. The idea of connection is ever present in Conscious Discipline; connection helps to motivate children and adults while making them feel safe and secure.

Key Components of Conscious Discipline:

- **Brain State Model:** This component emphasizes addressing the internal state first, helping children and adults learn to self-regulate effectively. By understanding and managing their brain states, individuals can better navigate emotions and behavior. The three brain states are:
 - Survival State
 - Emotional State
 - Executive State
- **7 Powers for Conscious Adults:** These powers are tools that help adults change their perceptions of conflict, viewing challenging situations as opportunities to teach new skills rather than moments of frustration or punishment. The seven powers are:
 - Power of Perception
 - Power of Unity
 - Power of Attention
 - Power of Free Will
 - Power of Acceptance
 - Power of Love
 - Power of Intention
- **Creating the School Family:** Conscious Discipline promotes building connections within the school environment, fostering a culture of compassion and support. This approach views the school community as a "family," where everyone feels safe, valued, and connected.
- **7 Skills of Discipline:** This component focuses on teaching problem-solving skills through social-emotional learning. These skills include:
 - Composure
 - Encouragement
 - Assertiveness
 - Choices
 - Empathy
 - Positive intent
 - Consequences

Early Intervention and Referrals

Early Intervention (EI) is a service, through SAM Inc. for Birth to 3 and the Hazleton Area School District for children ages 3-5, that is provided free of charge to qualifying children with developmental delays in Luzerne and Wyoming counties. The multi-disciplinary services that EI offers can include speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and family support services. Services are tailored to the specific needs of the child and family. Early Intervention is not a LCHS service, however our staff work in collaboration with Early Intervention staff and services.

While all children grow and change at their own rate, some children experience delays in their development. If the Ages and Stages screening suggests further evaluation is needed, the

teachers and family educators at LCHS will reach out to the child's family and EI. With parental permission, additional testing will be conducted to assess the child's needs more comprehensively. An Early Intervention referral can be filled out at:

iepwriter.com/pa/ei_Referral/hazleton_referral.aspx

If the evaluation confirms that a child qualifies for EI services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children from Birth to age 3, or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for children ages 3-5, will be developed by EI with input from the family and Head Start staff. These plans outline specific goals that therapists, families, family educators, or teachers will collaborate on to support the child's development. The IFSP/IEP is a personalized roadmap that ensures the child receives appropriate educational and therapeutic interventions to help them progress and thrive in their learning environment.

All parent(s)/guardian(s) of children with an IFSP/IEP are emailed an "A Family's Introduction to Early Intervention" packet, to help them better understand Early Intervention, the IFSP/IEP, and the transition process. The packet also provides more information to the families on IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and resources they can access in the community.

If your child is going to kindergarten next year, you will be invited to attend a Transition Meeting with your teacher, Early Intervention, and a School District Representative. This meeting usually takes place in February. The district will discuss services that will be continued in kindergarten and may request further testing. As part of your child's education, it is important that you attend.

Mental Health Consultations

The health and mental wellness of all household members is important to the social-emotional development and wellness of young children. LCHS partners with families to gather information such as various developmental and behavioral screenings, health screenings, and observations, and uses this information to help all children develop the social-emotional skills necessary to be successful.

Some children may exhibit behaviors that require more specialized services to meet this goal. LCHS collaborates with licensed mental health and occupational therapists to assess and address the specific needs of these children. These therapists will conduct observations and observe individual children to identify additional support that may be necessary for the child, Family Educator, Teacher, and/or family.

Our licensed professional counselors specialize in children's mental and behavioral health. If you have concerns or questions regarding your child's mental health and behavioral health, they are available for consultation. Please ask your child's Family Educator or Teacher how to schedule an appointment.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Family Partnerships

The vision of LCHS 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 an LCHS program 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.

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

Who is coming to my home?

Family Educators, Family Workers, and Teachers conduct home visits throughout the year to support families in meeting their goals and provide resources as needed.

Are they going to look around my house?

No. They are not there to inspect the home. They are strictly there to provide support to families. They review the goal(s) established in the Family Partnership Agreement (FPA).

What is the Family Strengths Assessment?

The Family Strengths Assessment is started within the first 90 days and completed by the end of the program year. The form is used to gauge the strengths and needs of the family, as well as establish goals. Appropriate resources will be determined by the outcome of this assessment.

Why do I have to have home visits?

Head Start requires that home visits be completed throughout the school year.

How long is a typical home visit?

A home visit for a Family Educator in EHS will be weekly for 90 minutes. A typical home visit for Head Start will last between 45-60 minutes.

What are we going to talk about?

The Family Educator in EHS provides child-focused visits that promote the parents' ability to support their child's development. The Family Worker in Head Start will review your goals and discuss the progress your family is making toward those goals as well as discuss any needs, concerns, and future plans that we may be able to help support.

Does my child have to be present during a home visit?

The child does have to be present during all of the home visits in EHS. For Head Start, the child needs to be present for the initial home visit in August, but not for all of the other home visits throughout the school year.

Family Engagement Opportunities

LCCHS will provide families with opportunities to be involved in their child's learning and ways to grow as a leader and advocate for their families. The following opportunities for engagement will be offered and discussed at various times throughout the program year.

Parent Training/Curriculum

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.

Conscious Discipline Parent Education Curriculum is an evidence-based and research backed comprehensive guide for increasing the social-emotional intelligence of all children and their families. Throughout the program year, families will have the opportunity to learn the brain state model and how it helps us bridge safety, connection, and problem-solving to our children's social-emotional well-being. Opportunities will include an Introduction to the Curriculum, Parent Days, and Mini Sessions.

Father/Father Figures in Head Start

In addition to specific programming designed to bring the father/father figures together with the child, other ways to be involved include attending Parent Committee meetings, Dads Parent Cafe parent workshops, serving on the Policy Council, the Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee, Transition Advisory Committee, Family Services Advisory Committees, and attending specific activities, such as Breakfast with Dad, and family literacy activities. Fathers/father figures can enjoy reading books to their children, participating in Parent/Teacher conferences, and other Head Start 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. The 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 allows parents to advise staff in developing and implementing program policies, activities and services. Through the Parent Committee, parents can plan, conduct and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities. EHS meets six times a year and Head Start and Pre-K Counts meetings are held monthly, during the school year. During the meetings, parents may be elected to serve on the 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 National Head Start Program Performance Standards to ensure that parents have the opportunity to be involved in shared decision-making.

Our Policy Council members continue to meet monthly. 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 through the Parent Committee from Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and EHS.

Parent Café

LCHS has partnered with Be Strong Families to be able to offer Parent Cafes across our agency. The Be Strong Parent Cafe model was developed in 2007 and focuses on the 5 Protective Factors - Resilience, Relationships, Knowledge, Support, and Communication. These protective factors are meant to keep children safe and families strong.

"The purpose of the Parent Cafes is to provide an environment in which parents and family members can build the protective factors through individual, deep self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning. The model is based on principles of adult learning and family support, and builds family member leadership."

Family Literacy Program

The Family Literacy Program, in partnership with Luzerne County Community College, is a state-funded initiative designed to provide educational services to both parents and children from birth through 3rd grade. This program, known as the ALTA Family Literacy Program, aims to improve the literacy skills of parents while equipping them to be their children's first and most influential teachers.

What is Family Literacy?

Family Literacy involves:

- Interactive Literacy Activities: Engagements between parents and their children that promote learning and literacy.
- Parent Training: Guidance for parents on how to be the primary educators and active partners in their children's education.
- Parent Literacy Training: Education that helps parents achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Age-appropriate education for Children: Preparing children for school success and life experiences.

As parents improve their educational, social, employment, and life skills, they can better support and enhance their children's literacy development.

Referral and Information

LCHS staff can refer you to the program. They will also provide information during Orientation and throughout the school year as needed.

Volunteering

Volunteerism is a crucial element of the Head Start experience, providing opportunities for parents, individuals, and community organizations to actively participate in the program.

Volunteer Opportunities

In the Classroom:

- Help prepare curriculum materials
- Help with classroom set-up and/or clean-up
- Interact with small groups doing an activity
- Read to children
- Share cultural heritage
- Share a skill/talent

Outside the Classroom:

- Assist with event planning, set-up and/or clean-up
- Complete Home Curriculum Activities with your child
- Help gather or make classroom materials
- Office assistance – copying, sorting, etc.
- Participate in a Recruitment Event
- Participate in Policy Council

Family Volunteers

The 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 our 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. All volunteers, before being scheduled to volunteer, will go through an approval process by completing a volunteer application packet, which adheres to the LCHS volunteer clearance procedure, and must be approved by the LCHS Human Resources office. Volunteer training will be provided by agency staff. The Approved Volunteer Packet will be retained in the LCHS Human Resources Office following approval.

Volunteer applications can be found online under the Volunteer tab (<https://lcheadstart.org/volunteer/>) or you can ask your EHS and/or Center staff for a Volunteer Packet.

Training for parents and community volunteers will be conducted at each center throughout the school year. The training will include the definitions of child abuse, the volunteer's role as a "Mandated Reporter" of Child Abuse and Neglect, and the procedures in reporting child abuse and neglect.

- **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 Approved Volunteer file held in the LCHS Human Resources Office.**
- **All volunteers are Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect**

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

All Head Start and EHS staff are "mandated reporters" of suspected child abuse and neglect.

- **Mandated Reporting Responsibility:** All staff members, including contracted staff, bus staff, and volunteers, are mandated reporters. This means they are legally required to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.
- **Reporting Mechanism:** Reports must be made to the Childline Abuse Registry of the state of Pennsylvania. This ensures that suspected cases are documented and investigated by the appropriate authorities.
- **Purpose of Reporting:** The primary goal of mandated reporting is to ensure that families in need receive help and support when child abuse or neglect is suspected. It is not intended to punish or embarrass the family.
- **Confidentiality:** All reports of child abuse or neglect are kept strictly confidential. This helps protect the privacy of the individuals involved while allowing for appropriate intervention and support.

- **Legal Obligation:** Mandated reporting laws exist to ensure that children are protected from harm and receive the assistance they need. Failure to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect can have legal consequences for mandated reporters.

For more information and helpful resources visit Keep Kids Safe PA at

pa.gov/en/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe

Megan's Law Policy

Megan's Law is a federal law in the United States that mandates law enforcement agencies to disclose information to the public about registered sex offenders. It was enacted to enhance public safety by providing the public with knowledge about the presence of these offenders in their communities. Regular updates to such lists ensure that the information remains current and accurate.

Under Megan's Law, communities, including agencies like LCHS, are kept informed about the identities and locations of registered sex offenders. This proactive measure allows schools to take appropriate precautions and ensure the safety of children and other vulnerable individuals.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to any person who is registered as an offender and/or sexually violent predator under Megan's Law with the exception of the biological parent. Upon the family's orientation, and continuing bimonthly, LCHS staff will cross reference family records with the Megan's Law Registry, and report any situations to the Family Engagement Team, for follow up with appropriate authorities.



HEALTH, NUTRITION, and SAFETY FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Healthy Children are Ready to Learn and Have Fun

Requirements for Enrollment

Regular health screenings are an opportunity for early detection and treatment of health issues. This is essential in making sure children are growing and developing as they should. LCHS requires certain health screenings, including vision, hearing, lead, heights, weights, and well-child visits.

Required Documentation:

- **EHS Well Baby Checks**

- Each child entering EHS is required to have Well Baby/Child Checks following the pediatric preventive health care program listed in Pennsylvania Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment schedule. Your Family Educator will provide the form for these examinations or will assist you in getting the required documentation.

- **Preschool Physical Exam**

- If over 3, completed annually or as scheduled by your medical provider. Physical exams **MUST** be submitted within the first 90 days of school and be current throughout the program year.

Immunizations

- All Head Start and Pre-K Counts children are required to have up-to-date immunizations on file within 60 days of enrollment or risk exclusion from programming.

- **Dental Exams**

- Regular dental exams promote good oral and overall health.
- Dental exams are required every 6 months following the child's first birthday, **MUST** be submitted within the first 90 days of school and be current throughout the program year.

- **Hearing and Vision Screenings**

- Head Start and EHS programs are required to do evidence-based vision and hearing screening. These screenings are a way to identify children who will need a follow-up evaluation that will confirm or rule out vision and/or hearing loss.

- **Lead Screenings**

- Lead screening detects the risk for lead poisoning by measuring the amount of lead in the blood. Lead poisoning can cause serious injury to children.
- Required at 9-23 months and 24 months or older

- **Hemoglobin and Hematocrit levels**

- **Health Insurance - Company name and ID number**

- **Health, Safety, and Nutrition screenings**
 - Our family educators/workers and staff are available to support families in acquiring any mandatory documentation, should you need it.

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.

Every child should:

- Have a dental exam by age 1 or when first tooth erupts and 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 your dental health or medical health provider
- Obtain immediate care for broken or knocked-out teeth, tooth pain, or decay
- Avoid sugary food and drinks

LCHS requires all children to have a professional dental exam every 6 months, including cleaning and fluoride and treatment, as needed.

Nutrition Consultation

If you ever have any questions or concerns about your child's eating habits, growth or BMI, our Nutrition Specialist is available for consultation. You may contact your Family Educator/Worker, Teacher, or Health Specialist to set up an appointment. You can also find recipes and tips on cooking healthy meals at cookingmatters.org or foodhero.org

Food Allergies, Special Diet, and Religious Considerations

LCHS takes food allergies and dietary restrictions seriously to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our care. The entire agency maintains a peanut-free and pork-free policy. Alternatives such as soy butter, sunflower butter, or other peanut-safe options are available.



The goal is to ensure that all children in the program receive appropriate nutrition, despite any dietary restrictions. If a child requires special dietary accommodations due to food allergies, this must be documented in writing **by the child's medical provider.**

All food allergies/considerations will be posted in the classroom and emergency backpack.



Health Has a Hero

Choosy is an evidence-supported health hero who helps develop healthy habits and behaviors in children, families, and staff. His name stands for Choose Healthy Options Often & Start Young.

Head Lice

Head lice



Head lice can affect anyone, especially young children. While it's not a serious health threat, prompt and proper treatment is necessary. If your child has head lice, please inform us immediately. We will collaborate with you, providing support and further information. If live lice or new nits are found while at school, we will notify you. Parents can choose to pick up their child early or allow them to stay in school until the end of the day. **Children may return to school once treatment is completed.**

Starting treatment promptly is crucial. Make sure to carefully follow the instructions on the product you're using for the best outcome. Remember to check all family members thoroughly, and only treat those who have lice to prevent unnecessary exposure to chemicals. If you need more detailed advice on lice treatment, feel free to ask!

1. Choose an Effective Treatment:

- Use a recommended lice treatment, either prescription or over the counter. Follow the instructions carefully.

2. Remove Nits Daily:

- Use a fine-toothed lice comb to remove nits (lice eggs) daily. This helps prevent them from hatching and continuing the cycle.

3. Wash Clothes and Linens:

- Wash all clothing, bed linens, towels, etc., that have been in contact with the affected person in hot water. Dry them on a hot cycle for at least 20 minutes.
- Items that can't be washed should be sealed in a plastic bag for **at least 2 weeks.**

4. Clean Hair Items:

- Soak combs, brushes, and hair accessories in hot water for at least 10 minutes to kill any lice or eggs.

5. Vacuum Thoroughly:

- Vacuum all surfaces including furniture, carpets, pillows, mattresses, and car seats. This helps remove any lice or eggs that may have fallen off.

6. Continue Nit Removal:

- Continue using the lice comb to remove nits even after treatment to prevent re-infestation.

7. Daily Head Checks:

- Check the affected person's head daily for live lice or nits for 7-10 days after completing the treatment. This ensures that any surviving lice are caught early.

By following these steps diligently, you increase the effectiveness of the treatment and reduce the chances of lice re-infesting your household.

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. LCHS can provide you with useful information about how to deal with pests.

Injury Reports

If your child is injured during the day and receives basic first aid, the center will complete an accident report. You'll be notified about the incident either by phone or in person during pickup. A copy of the injury report will be provided to the parents/guardians. This process helps ensure that families are informed promptly about any incidents involving their children while at school.

RESOURCES

Community Resources

The staff at LCHS have access to a variety of community resources. They will be sharing information with you regarding social service providers and community events weekly. However, if you have a specific need, please reach out to them for information.

A variety of resources can be accessed by visiting our website at lcheadstart.org. Once on the LCHS website, click on “Resources”, and then “Parent Resources” for a list of community social service agencies. Staff can assist you in accessing services.

PA 211 Northeast



PA 211 Northeast is part of the national 2-1-1 Call Centers initiative designed to provide an easy-to-remember telephone number, chat, text, and a web resource for finding health and human services information for everyday needs and crisis situations.

PA 211 Northeast is a program of the Family Service Association of NEPA's Help Line.

With one phone number, callers gain free, confidential access to thousands of program and services that can help improve the quality of their lives – services ranging from aging to mental health, child abuse/neglect reports, drug and alcohol services, runaway help, energy assistance, homelessness, and victim services. In fact, every day, highly trained 211 call specialists provide referrals to:

- Basic Human Needs Resources: food banks, shelters, rent and utility payment assistance
- Physical and Mental Health Resources: crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling
- Employment Support: financial assistance, job training, education programs
- Support for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities: home-delivered meals, transportation, health care
- Youth and Child Care Programs: after-school programs, summer camps, mentoring, protection services
- Regional Disaster Preparation

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 can also be



reached by texting your zip-code to 898211. HelpLine maintains a resource guide titled *Negotiating the Networks*.

Mental Health Crisis or Suicide Help

Calling 988 connects Pennsylvanians to safe, secure, and confidential behavioral or mental health crisis services.

Call 988 if you or someone you know is:

- depressed,
- going through a hard time,
- needs to talk, or
- is thinking about suicide.

Crisis counselors located in PA can connect you to local resources.

Callers are directed to a local 988 call center based on a caller's area code where trained professionals are waiting to listen and assist. Counselors located at 14 crisis call centers around Pennsylvania can immediately provide phone-based support and connections to local resources.

If needed, the counselor can:

- Activate a mobile mental health crisis team that will arrive on site;
- Provide therapeutic interventions; and/or
- Make referrals for outpatient services or transportation for further evaluation.

By directing cases to 988 when a behavioral health or mental crisis isn't life-threatening, the response provided by public services, such as law enforcement and EMS, can be reserved for situations in which lives are endangered.

If a local call center does not answer the call within 60 seconds, the call will be routed to one of Pennsylvania's three regional 988 call centers. If a regional call center is unavailable, the call will be routed to the national backup network able to assess the crisis and connect to local assistance.



Neighborly helps individuals and families find free or reduced-cost services in their communities. Search for local resources to access food, housing, child care, transportation, utility assistance, healthcare, financial assistance, and other needs. Neighborly can be reached at neighborlypa.com.

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; Toll Free Number: 1-800-822-0359

E-Mail: ceonortheastpa@gmail.com

Weekdays: 8:30am - 5:00pm

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

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.

WIC Clinics:	Wilkes-Barre WIC Center	570-823-1516
	Hazleton WIC Center	570-459-1805
	Tunkhannock WIC Center	570-836-6622

Free Meals For Kids

No Kid Hungry is a national campaign run by Share Our Strength, a nonprofit working to solve problems of hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world.

For more information, visit the websites below.

English: impact.nokidhungry.org/free-meal-finder

Spanish: nokidhungry.org/find-free-meals-es

Dinners For Kids



This community program provides local children with freshly prepared, kid-approved, nutritious and balanced dinners. Each healthy dinner is packaged in a microwave-safe container and is accompanied by fresh fruit. For more information, call 570.262.7839 or email at dinnersforkids.org

You can find additional information on healthy eating and physical activity at the following websites:

realfood.gov

<https://www.cdc.gov/early-care-education/php/early-child-nutrition/resources.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition/foods-and-drinks/how-much-and-how-often-to-feed.html>

<https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/5-healthy-goals/get-kids-moving/resources/>

<https://extension.psu.edu/fresh-ideas-for-keeping-children-moving-at-every-age>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ChoosyKids/playlists>

North Penn Legal Services

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: Call the legal aid hotline at 877-953-4250

Intake hours are Mon-Thurs: 9am-11:30am and 1:30pm-4pm (No Friday Intake)

Parent Pathways

parentpathwaysofnepa.org

Parent Pathways of NEPA is a multi-sector collaborative fighting poverty two generations at a time. This holistic approach to removing barriers for parents so they can advance their education includes partners from higher education, social and community services, and youth development.

Substance Use Disorder Treatment Information

The Luzerne/Wyoming Counties Drug and Alcohol Program has been designated by the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs as the Single County Authority (SCA) for drug and alcohol services in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties.

The SCA is responsible for planning, designing, and implementing a comprehensive array of services covering the full continuum of care to the residents of both Luzerne and Wyoming Counties in the areas of Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, and Treatment-Related Services. Phone: 570-826-8790, Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm.

After business hours, Treatment Services can be accessed by contacting the Help Line at 570-829-1341.

Or you may contact the PA Department of Health at **1-800-662-HELP(4357)** or text **717-216-0905**.

Children's Service Center (CSC):

Children's Service Center, together with its Robinson Counseling Center and Conyngham Primary Health Care Center, provides mental and physical health services to offer hope, help, and healing.

-  Mental health service · Addiction Treatment Center · Family Medicine Practice
-  335 S Franklin St, Wilkes-Barre, PA, United States, Pennsylvania
-  (570) 825-6425
-  info@e-csc.org
-  cscwv.org



Health Insurance Coverage and Medical Assistance

Medical Assistance Plans offered:

- AmeriHealth Caritas PA
- Geisinger
- Health Partners
- UPMC

Enrollment Contact Information

Medical Assistance PA Enrollment Service

Go to PA Enrollment Services at enrollnow.net

or

Download the mobile app



Search for **PA Enrollment Services** on [Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pa.enrollment) or the [App Store](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/pa-enrollment-services/id1444444444).

or

Call 1-800-440-3989 (TTY: 1-800-618-4225) and select Option 6 to speak with a representative.
Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

CHIP: Children's Health Insurance Program



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.

Apply at: pa.gov/en/services/dhs/apply-for-childrens-health-insurance-program-chip
or 1-800-986-KIDS (5437)

Luzerne County/Wyoming County Health Insurance Companies Available through CHIP

- Aetna Better Health Kids
- KIDZPARTNERS
- Highmark Healthy Kids Northeast
- UnitedHealth Care Community Plan of Pennsylvania
- UPMC for Kids
- Geisinger Health Plan

A list of Free Medical Clinics is located on our website lcheadstart.org under Parent Resources.

Safe Sleep for Your Baby

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):



SIDS is the sudden, unexpected death—that doesn't have a known cause even after a full investigation—of a baby between 1 month and 1 year of age. About half of the sudden, unexpected infant deaths that occur in the United States each year are from 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

nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/factsheets/sids

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 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 - 1-800-4ACHILD (1-800-422-4453)

For more information or additional resources, contact the

- PA Department of Health at 1-877-724-3258 or
- “Calm A Crying Baby” network at CalmACryingBaby.org

Car Seat Guidelines for Families



As children grow, how they are secured in your vehicle will change based on their age, weight, height, and developmental needs. The following guide will help you choose the correct child restraint for each state of your child's growth and development. It is imperative that families do not skip a step for the optimal safety of their child.

Buckle Up-Every Age, Every Stage

Before Baby Arrives

When you're a birthing parent, it's important to always wear your seat belt to protect you and your unborn child. Wear a lap belt across your hips and below your belly with the shoulder belt across your chest (between the breasts).



Rear-Facing

All infants and toddlers should ride in a **rear-facing car seat** until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer on the car seat. Pennsylvania law requires children younger than 2 years of age to always ride in a rear-facing car seat.

Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with an active passenger-side front airbag.

Traveling rear-facing is safer than forward-facing.

Forward-Facing

Children who have outgrown the rear-facing car seat, should be secured in a **forward-facing car seat** with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer of the car seat.

Forward-facing car seats reduce the risk of injury for children by 71% compared to children using the seat belt only.



Belt-Positioning Booster Seat



All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing car seat limit, should be secured in a **belt-positioning booster seat** with a lap and shoulder belt until the seat belt fits properly, typically when a child is approximately 4 feet 9 inches and between 8 and 12 years of age.

Booster seats lower the risk of injury for children age 4 to 8 years by 45% compared to children using the seat belt alone.

Seat Belt

When children outgrow the belt-positioning booster seat, secure them in a properly fitted lap **and shoulder belt**. A lap and shoulder belt fits properly when the lap belt lays low and snug across the hips/upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the center of the chest and shoulder.



The lap and shoulder seat belts reduce the risk of injury by 45%.

All children younger than 13 years of age should be secured in a back seat of the vehicle. In the event of a crash, even buckled up, a child is more likely to be injured or killed if they are sitting in the front seat. Whether they are in a car seat, booster seat, or using a seat belt, the only place where your children under 13 belong is in the back seat.

Remember:

Read and carefully follow the installation instructions included with a car seat, as well as the vehicle owner's manual. Failure to do this can lead to incorrect installation, exposing a child passenger to the risk of injury or death in a crash.

Did YOU KNOW?

- Even if you receive SNAP, MA or TANF, you may also apply for WIC.
- In most instances, WIC has higher income guidelines than SNAP, MA or TANF. Even if you don't qualify for these programs, you may qualify for WIC.
- Most families in Head Start and Early Head Start qualify for WIC.
- Foster children under age 5 qualify for WIC. Foster parent income is not considered.
- WIC does not require proof of citizenship.

WIC Income Guidelines

Household Size	*Monthly (Approx.)
1	\$2,461
2	\$3,337
3	\$4,212
4	\$5,088

For each additional family member, add:

\$876

*Income (before taxes) is effective July 1, 2026. For each unborn infant, add one to household size.



How DO I APPLY?

Get started online at pawic.com or call

1-800-WIC-WINS
(1-800-942-9467).



Pennsylvania
Department of Health

www.health.pa.gov

www.pawic.com



Choose Healthy.
Choose WIC!



PA WIC is funded by the USDA.
USDA is an equal opportunity
provider, employer, and lender.



1-800-WIC-WINS
www.pawic.com

HDWICOR.006

Rev. 7/26

Good nutrition today means a stronger tomorrow!

Building for the Future with CACFP

This Center receives support from the Child and Adult Care Food Program to serve healthy meals to your children.

**Meals served here
must meet USDA's
nutrition standards.**



Questions? Concerns?

Luzerne County Head Start, Inc.
23 Beekman Street, Wilkes-Barre PA 18702
570-829-6231

Learn more about CACFP at USDA's website:

www.fns.usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service FNS-317
November 2019

Luzerne County Early Head Start School Readiness Goals (Birth to Three)

Approaches to Learning

1. Children will explore their environment and tasks with confidence, self-direction, persistence, and attention.
2. Children will learn to communicate through rhythm and dramatic play.
3. Children will explore the use of a variety of media tools.

Language and Literacy

1. Children will demonstrate understanding the meaning of words and follow increasingly complex directions.
2. Children will communicate with caregivers and peers through actions and use of increasingly intelligible words and short sentences.
3. Children will demonstrate the knowledge that pictures can represent or symbolize real things.
4. Children will develop pre-writing skills through creative exploration of pre-writing tools.
5. Children will exhibit an increasing interest in books through reading readiness.
6. Children will exhibit an increasing understanding of concepts of print.

Social and Emotional Development

1. Children will develop special relationships and learn to trust others.
2. Children will learn that they are separate and important as demonstrated by their independence and self-confidence.
3. Children will exhibit behaviors consistent with understanding and expressing emotions and feelings.
4. Children will demonstrate the ability to control emotions and behaviors in following simple rules and routines.

Physical Development and Health

1. Children will develop gross motor coordination for sitting, moving from one position to another and moving from one place to another.
2. Children will develop the ability to use their eyes and hands together in order to complete tasks.
3. Children will develop fine motor skills necessary to complete activities with manipulatives and pre-writing tools.
4. Children will learn to be independent in self-care activities.

Cognition and General Knowledge

1. Children will show the ability to react to and use their senses to learn about their world.
2. Children will show an understanding of their environment and the relationship of objects and people in their environment through relational and symbolic play.
3. Children will show an understanding of discrimination and classification skills by comparing differences and similarities of objects.
4. Children will demonstrate beginning number concepts.
5. Children will develop the ability to use exploration and trial and error to solve problems.

Luzerne County Early Head Start School Readiness Goals (Preschool)

Ages 3-5

Approaches to Learning

1. Children will approach a task with confidence, self-direction, persistence, and attention to reach a desired goal.
2. Children will be able to demonstrate their individuality through creative arts as a form of self-expression using a variety of media tools.

Language and Literacy

1. Children will use and comprehend an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
2. Children will demonstrate emerging concepts about books, letter and name recognition, sounds and phonemes in language and letter-sound relationships.
3. Children will develop early writing skills in order to represent print through pictures, scribbles and writing as a means of communication.

Social and Emotional Development

1. Children will demonstrate the skills and strategies taught in the classroom to build connections and positive relationships with adults and peers.
2. Children will be able to use skills and strategies taught in the classroom to begin to regulate one's own behavior and emotions, and develop a healthy self-image.
3. Children will use strategies and skills from the social emotional curriculums to solve social problems.

Physical Development

1. Children will develop eye hand coordination strength, and controlled use of tools.
2. Children will demonstrate gross motor coordination and body control through active experiences and exploration.

Mathematics

1. Children will demonstrate counting skills.
2. Children will quantify and connect numerals with their quantities.
3. Children will gain an understanding of patterns, shapes, and measurement.

Cognition and General Knowledge

1. Children will question, analyze and draw on prior knowledge or experience to seek solutions to a problem or a task.
2. Children will develop scientific methods and skills that support discoveries about the natural and physical world.
3. Children will gain a sense of belonging in relation to their family, classroom and community and show an awareness and respect for diversity.
4. Children will understand family needs, roles and relationships.

English Language Development

1. Children will develop Basic English vocabulary and follow multi-step directions in English in order to increase receptive and expressive English language skills when communicating with adults or with peers to share ideas or to get their needs met.

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 children to develop independence</i>• <i>Help parents to identify safety issues</i>• <i>Instill confidence</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Teach basic skills such as the alphabet and colors, songs, nursery rhymes, writing names, verbal and language skills</i>• <i>Help children to get to know their surroundings and neighborhoods</i>• <i>Help families prepare for kindergarten</i>• <i>Support school-to-home learning</i>• <i>Work on conflict resolution</i> |
|---|--|

