Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council
Head Start/Early Head Start

Parent Handbook
2017-2018

Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council
Head Start/Early Head Start Central Office
938C Walnut Avenue West
McKenzie, Tennessee 38201
731-352-4743
Dear Parent:

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you into the Northwest Tennessee Head Start and Early Head Start family. We are pleased to have your child enrolled in our program.

The role of parents in Head Start and Early Head Start is critical to the success of our program. You are recognized as the primary educator, nurturer, and advocate for your child. Listed below are four major ways that you can participate in Head Start or Early Head Start:

**Volunteer:** You will be encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, on field trips, and for other center assignments. Working parents can volunteer for at-home projects and night and weekend events.

**Observer:** You will be welcomed at the center at any time to observe your child as he or she learns through work and play.

**Decision Maker:** You will become a member of the Parent Committee and help make decisions concerning your child’s center. You may be elected as a Policy Council member or be asked to serve on other program committees.

**Partner:** You and program staff will work together as partners to ensure high quality services are provided to your child and family.

We challenge and encourage you to become involved in the Head Start/Early Head Start Program. Please take time to get to know staff, visit your child’s classroom, attend Parent Committee meetings, and become a visible and active member of our program.

We have an open door policy. We cannot promise we will have all the answers but we do promise if you have a question we cannot answer immediately, we will do our best to find the answer for you or direct you to someone who can.

Sincerely,

Don Ridgeway, Executive Director
Sherry Harpole, Head Start/Early Head Start Director
Mitzi Gilliam, Early Childhood Manager
Mavis Curtis, Health Services Manager
Rema Wilson, Family and Community Services Manager
Rakaya Humphreys, Compliance Manager
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### Center Directory

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<th>Center</th>
<th>Telephone #</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benton County</td>
<td>Benton County Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-584-4953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton County</td>
<td>Magic Valley Head Start</td>
<td>731-584-2009</td>
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<td>Carroll County</td>
<td>Hollow Rock/Bruceton Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>731-418-4173</td>
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<td>Carroll County</td>
<td>Huntingdon Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>731-986-7526</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carroll County</td>
<td>McKenzie Head Start/Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-352-7170</td>
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<td>Crockett County</td>
<td>Crockett County Head Start</td>
<td>731-696-3217</td>
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<td>Dyer County</td>
<td>Dyersburg Head Start/ Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-285-3776</td>
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<td>Dyer County</td>
<td>Newbern Head Start</td>
<td>731-627-2122</td>
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<td>Fayette County</td>
<td>Fayette County Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Head Start</td>
<td>901-877-6372</td>
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<td>Fayette County</td>
<td>LaGrange/Moscow Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>901-877-6854</td>
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<td>Fayette County</td>
<td>Southwest Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>901-465-8317</td>
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<td>Gibson County</td>
<td>Humboldt Head Start</td>
<td>731-787-7574</td>
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<td>Kenton Head Start</td>
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<td>Trenton Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>731-855-0971</td>
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<td>Henry County</td>
<td>Rhea Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>731-642-8011</td>
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<td>Henry County</td>
<td>Harrelson Pre-K/Head Start</td>
<td>731-247-3152</td>
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<td>Lake County</td>
<td>Lake County Head Start/Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-253-8153</td>
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<td>Lauderdale County</td>
<td>Lauderdale County Head Start/ Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-635-8234</td>
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<td>Madison County</td>
<td>Lincoln Courts Head Start</td>
<td>731-424-7476</td>
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<td>Madison County</td>
<td>Washington Douglas Head Start/Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-424-4842</td>
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<td>Obion County</td>
<td>Miles Head Start/ Early Head Start</td>
<td>731-885-1533</td>
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<td>Obion County</td>
<td>Troy Head Start</td>
<td>731-536-4918</td>
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<td>Tipton County</td>
<td>Tipton County Head Start/ Early Head Start</td>
<td>901-476-7488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weakley County</td>
<td>Weakley County Head Start</td>
<td>731-364-3913</td>
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**Philosophy**

Both the needs of families and the community define the agency’s philosophy, which is described in the following paragraph, where they live. It is based on a firm and proven belief that “Working together we can make a difference.”

The role of the agency is to act as an advocate and service provider for children and families and to fulfill this role through partnerships with parents and agencies that are grounded in mutual goals, trust, and accomplishments.

**Mission**

Helping People, Changing Lives in our community through education, partnerships, and delivery of quality services in Northwest Tennessee.

**Vision**

Hand in hand, working together we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other to make a difference in our communities.

**Motto**

Working Together We Make A Difference.
Frequently Asked Questions (Review Page numbers for accuracy when complete)

1. Do I need to provide a mat, crayons, paper, etc.? no, materials are provided (See page 6)
2. Can I pick up my child from school early? (See page 6)
3. How many books can be checked out at a time from the Parent Lending Library? (See page 6)
4. Why are children’s pictures only taken once a year? (See page 6)
5. Will my child be terminated if they behave badly? No, we do not terminate children for behavior issues. (See Page 22)
6. Can staff give my child cough medicine, aspirin, Tylenol, or apply ointments? (See page 10)
7. What do the children eat? Can the child bring his/her own lunch, if they do not like what is on the menu? (See page 6 and page 11)
8. What do the children learn in Head Start? (See pages 13-16)
9. Why does Head Start have to do home visits? (See page 14)
10. How can I be involved if I am not able to attend functions? (See pages 12-15, page 23 & page 31)
11. How is Head Start different from the school system Pre-K? Head Start serves the entire family (See page 23)
12. Why is transportation not provided in my area? (See pages 26 & 27)
13. If my child misses for vacation, breaks, illness, etc. will they get released from the program? (See pages 27-29)
14. If my child comes in late, do they get breakfast/lunch? (See page 27)
15. I do not get off work/out of school until 2:00 p.m., and will arrive 10-15 minutes late. Is that okay? (See page 29)
16. Why can we not do fundraisers? (See page 30)
17. Why can the children not bring snacks/birthday cupcakes/treat bags for his/her class? (See page 30 & page 31)
18. Why is there not a graduation ceremony? (See page 31)
19. Can we have parties/celebrations? (See page 30 & page 31)
20. What can I do as parent to get a volunteer STAR early in the school year? (See page 31)
Guidelines and Suggestions for Parents

These easy to follow guidelines were written to make your time in Head Start a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

- Physical violence, horseplay, cursing or loud arguments or conversations are not allowed in the center.
- You cannot spank your child at the center.
- Department of Children’s Services workers can look at records and interview a child at the center without notifying the parent.
- Other children cannot be brought to the center or on a field trip when you volunteer.
- Parents must sign their child in and out at the center or bus stop.
- Parents must not bring food or drinks into the center or classroom.
- Do not let your child bring food or toys to the center or on the bus unless the toy is for a center activity.
- Remember Head Start buildings, buses, and grounds are smoke, drug, and alcohol free.
- Take part in the “Readers are Leaders” program and read to your child.
- Volunteer in the center and participate in the Stars program.
- The Customer/Parent/Community and Grievance procedure will be posted on the parent bulletin board. Your family advocate or center coordinator can explain the procedure to you.
- Your family advocate or Early Head Start teacher/family advocate will give you a school calendar for your child’s center.
- Only one set of children’s pictures can be taken during the program year in order not to be a financial burden on parents. Pre-K/Head Start classrooms in school buildings pictures will be determined by school system.
- Your center coordinator will give the Parent Committee bids from photographers. The parents will then vote on a photographer and a picture package of their choice.
- Parents, monitored by center staff, will collect and submit picture money to the photographer.
- Send a complete change of clothes for your child and label each item.
- Dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes suitable for running and climbing on the playground. Flip-flops are not a good shoe choice for outdoor play. Remember children use paint and get dirty during the day.
- Children are to arrive “dressed for play.” Please do not bring your child in their pajamas unless it is your child’s “pajama day” planned event. In order to be a good example for your child, please also be dressed for the day and not wearing pajamas at drop-off or pick-up times.
- Children wearing large dangling earrings or long necklaces could get hurt so please refrain from sending them in these.
- The Chronic Absenteeism and Late Policies are available at your center and are included in this handbook as well. Your family advocate or center coordinator will review these policies with you.
- The Release of Child Policy will be posted on the parent bulletin board and is included in this handbook as well. Your family advocate or center coordinator will discuss the policy with you.
- If a family need arises, your child or children can be signed out prior to dismissal.
- Each center has a Lending Library; the number of books that can be checked out will be determined by your specific center.
- It is not necessary that you purchase anything for your child to attend Head Start/Early Head Start. All supplies are provided by the program such as mats, crayons, and any other educational items.
Health Services

To the parent/guardian of __________________________________________:

Northwest Tennessee Head Start/EHS realizes children are more capable of learning when they are both mentally and physically healthy. Therefore, it is the program goal to identify any health related issues and work together with you, the parent/guardian, to address these concerns. This will ensure that any roadblocks to learning are reduced or eliminated prior to your child entering kindergarten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERFORMED BY</th>
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<tr>
<td>PHYSICAL EXAMINATION/EHS WELL BABY CHECKS</td>
<td>Beginning at two months for EHS children and prior to program entry for Head Start children and annually thereafter</td>
<td>Your physician or local health department</td>
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<td>SCREENINGS-hearing, vision, growth assessment, developmental, behavioral, and speech.</td>
<td>Required within the first 45 days of child's entry in program and annually thereafter</td>
<td>Head Start/EHS staff, your physician or local health department, optometrist, school system personnel, and mental health consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENTAL EXAMS</td>
<td>Beginning at 12 months for EHS children and within the first 45 days of child's entry in program for Head Start children and annually thereafter</td>
<td>Your child's private dentist or a dentist arranged through Head Start/EHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAD</td>
<td>Ages 12 and/or 24 months for EHS children and within the first 45 days of child's entry in program for Head Start children</td>
<td>Your physician or local health department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMMUNIZATIONS</td>
<td>Prior to program entry and current according to the state of TN EPSDT Immunization schedule</td>
<td>Your physician or local health department</td>
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Northwest Tennessee Head Start/EHS

Health Services Agreement

Parent Responsibilities

As the parent/guardian of the Head Start/EHS child, I agree to:

1. Ensure that my child has an up to date physical exam/well baby check and current immunization certificate before entering the HS/EHS centers.

2. Allow my child to participate in all aspects of the Northwest Tennessee Head Start/EHS program to include: Health, Mental Health, Nutrition and Disabilities.

3. Work with program staff to ensure all follow-up services are completed in a timely manner.

4. Allow program staff to seek emergency medical or dental attention for my child if needed.

5. Allow program staff to post my child’s allergies in the classroom, kitchen area and on the bus.

6. Allow program staff to release my child’s name and birth date to the local health care providers.

7. To participate in developing and implementing a Special Health Care Plan for my child, if necessary.

8. Provide a doctor’s statement for documented food allergies.

9. To attend IEP, IFSP, Mental Health, Behavioral and Nutritional Consultant meetings, if necessary.

10. Allow my child to participate in classroom mental health observations and receive consultation services as needed by mental health consultants.

Head Start/EHS Responsibilities

Head Start/EHS center staff agrees to:

1. Inform parent/guardian of health requirements.

2. Obtain consent for evaluations, screenings and follow-up.

3. Inform parent/guardian of screening results, follow-up treatments, and meetings pertaining to Nutrition, Mental Health and Disabilities regarding their child.

4. Assist parent/guardian with scheduling appointments and arrange transportation, if needed.

5. Obtain a signed Special Health Care Plan Form from health care provider for children with special health care needs before special health care plan can be given.

6. Obtain a signed Food Allergy/Special Diet Substitution Statement from health care providers before accommodations can be made for food allergies.

7. Ensure children with disabilities are mainstreamed into all areas of the program.

8. Obtain a signed Denial of Services Form, only after every possible attempt has been made, for the parent/guardian refusal to complete health follow-up.

____________________________________  __________________
Parent / Guardian Signature           Date

___________________________________________  __________________
Head Start / EHS Center Staff           Date
Child Health and Safety Services:

Your child must receive the following screenings, examinations, and services:

- Physical
- Dental
- Immunizations
- Vision
- Speech and language
- Hearing
- Developmental
- Lead screening
- Follow-up medical and dental treatment, if needed
- Nutrition assessment and follow-up services
- Behavioral

You will be responsible for:

- Taking your child for a physical examination and dental examination
- Taking your child for follow-up medical and dental treatment
- Providing immunization on a Tennessee Dept. of Health certificate of immunization form.
- Asking your family advocate for help to make an appointment or to provide transportation if needed
- Transporting your child to and from center or bus stop in a car seat.

The safety and well-being of your child is important to us. We will work in partnership with you to protect and nurture your child. If your child does not have insurance or TennCare, Head Start will pay for follow-up treatment services.

Communicable Disease/Short Term Exclusion Policy for Children, Staff, and Volunteers:

A communicable disease is defined as a disease that can be transferred from one person to another person. Illnesses spread because children have close contact with each other and naturally explore their environment by touching and putting things in their mouth. Simple prevention measures, such as hand washing, can reduce the spread of diseases.

Head Start/Early Head Start staff will call you to pick up your child if he or she:

- Has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
- Vomits repeatedly.
- Has reoccurring diarrhea.
- Has a rash with fever or behavior change.
- Has live head lice or live nits.
- Has ringworm, scabies, impetigo, or pink eye.

Your child cannot return to the center until he or she:

- Is free of fever or symptoms of communicable diseases for 24 hours.
- Feels well enough to participate in classroom activities.
- Is free of live head lice and live nits.
- Ringworm sores are dry, shrinking and not draining. (They must be covered)
- Is free of scabies, impetigo, or pink eye.
- This policy can override a doctor’s statement for a child to return to the center.
**Medication Policy:**

Medication that is scheduled to be given three times a day must be administered at home. Your child can receive other medication that is prescribed more than three times a day at the Head Start/Early Head Start center. **Here is how:**

1. Obtain written instructions from a physician.
   **Prescription medication:** Ensure the following information is provided on each container of medication.
   - Name of medication
   - Method of administration (oral, etc)
   - Dosage
   - Frequency
   - Duration medication is to be given
   - Child’s first and last name
   - Physician’s name
   - Date prescription was filled
   - Expiration date
   - Storage instructions

   **Over-the-counter medication:** You must have a doctor’s note on an original prescription pad that states the same information listed above for prescription medicine. The note must be clear and easy to read.

2. You must administer first dose of medication to child **at home**.

3. You must come to the center **in person** to complete the following:
   - Medication Consent/Log
   - Demonstrate to staff the use of any medical equipment (such as a breathing machine)

**Medication Transportation**

Transportation of medication is avoided whenever possible. Parents are asked to request the medication to be divided into two separate containers when being filled at the pharmacy, one bottle for home and one for the center.

A parent or designated adult must bring or pick up medication at the center.

**Child Abuse and Neglect**

*State laws require* that **anyone**, including Head Start employees, who see or know about child abuse or neglect, must report it **immediately** by calling 1-877-237-0004. Training on *Keeping Kids Safe* will be provided to all parents. Lessons will be used in the classroom. For more information, attend the *Keeping Kids Safe* training or talk with your Center Coordinator or child’s teacher. Other training on preventing and reporting child abuse will be provided to parents. **Remember if you see or suspect someone at home, the center, or neighborhood is abusing your child, you are required to call 1-877-237-0004 immediately.**
2. Nutrition Services

Nutrition guidelines and best practices are listed below:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) approved meal patterns are used for all meals.
- A Registered Dietician provides menus for all Head Start kitchens.
- Children, teachers and volunteers eat together, sharing the same menu.
- Cultural, ethnic, and new foods are included on menus.
- A copy of the daily menu is given to parents monthly.
- Each child receives a nutrition evaluation in addition to height and weight assessment.
- Head Start/Early Head Start provides all meals. Due to USDA guidelines, no food (such as breakfast or lunch) can be brought into the center. All food is prepared on-site to meet the nutritional services guidelines.
- Parents are given the opportunity to make menu suggestions.

A registered dietician consultant will work closely with you and your child if he or she is overweight, underweight or has other nutritional needs. Parents have the right to deny this service.

You must obtain and submit a doctor’s statement before your child enters the center or when diagnosed if he or she has a medical or other special dietary need. The doctor’s statement must include alternate food and drink substitutes. CACFP only allows food substitutions for medical reasons. We must have a supporting doctor’s statement.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have questions about CACFP, please contact one of the following:

Sponsoring organization/center State Agency: 615-313-4749
Child and Adult Care Services
TN Department of Human Services
400 Deadrick Street
Nashville, TN 37248-9500
3. Mental Health Services

Two sources of Mental Health services are available to families. One is provided directly to children and one is provided for families if needed. Training on mental health related issues is provided to parents and staff. Other mental health services include:

- Behavioral screenings and observations
- Referral for family or individual counseling if needed
- Mental health classroom observations and individual child observations if needed.

4. Disabilities Services

Children with disabilities will:

- Attend a regular classroom in a handicap accessible center
- Be provided special equipment and supplies
- Receive special education services through the local school system or the Tennessee Early Intervention System

Parents of a child with a disability will:

- Receive a copy of the Rights of Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs or a copy of the Rights of Pre-School Children with Disabilities
- Be provided training and support to meet their individual needs

The program will:

- Actively recruit and serve children with disabilities
- Ensure ten percent of Head Start/Early Head Start enrollment is children with diagnosed disabilities
5. Early Childhood Development

We recognize you as your child’s first and most important teacher. You know your child best; therefore, you are an important partner in Head Start/Early Head Start. The way you talk with your child makes a big difference in how your child thinks and feels and the kind of person your child will become. If we can work together and share activities and observations, your child will benefit in many ways. You do not have to buy a lot of special toys or equipment to help your child become successful at learning. The best thing you can do is take the time to play with your child, read books together each day and talk to your child as you go about your normal routine. You can also ask open-ended questions and offer suggestions to extend the child’s thinking and curiosity. This may seem difficult, but you will find this kind of attention has a powerful effect on your child and it makes your job as a parent more fun and interesting. When you visit your child’s classroom you will notice that we plan a daily schedule with goals that will help your child feel secure yet independent.

The Head Start Early Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) is a guide for programs to plan and use a complete learning program. The role of the HSELOF is mandated by the Head Start Act and by the Head Start Performance Standards. The Performance Standards describe requirements that a program must follow. The HSELOF identifies what young children should know and be able to do. Fully using Head Start Performance Standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework will promote high quality services and practices for teaching and learning so that all children can succeed. You will receive more information about the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework from your child’s teacher at the first home visit. The program utilizes The Creative Curriculum for planning as well as the Teaching Strategies GOLD on-line assessment. We provide a variety of learning experiences that allow your child to move from one activity to another easily and confidently. You will see a room full of children engaged in play. As the children play, we observe how they use the materials, listen to what they say, and talk with them to find out what they are thinking and trying to do. We ask questions, offer suggestions and plan what materials to offer next, and then challenge them to extend their thinking further and further. The most important goals of our curriculum are for children to learn to get along well with others and become eager to learn. Purposeful and productive play indoors and outdoors help children develop:

- Social/Emotional Skills  
- Physical Skills  
- Cognitive Skills (thinking)  
- Language Skills  
- Literacy Skills (if needed)

- Mathematical Skills  
- Science and Technology Skills  
- Social Study Skills  
- Art Skills  
- English Language Acquisition Skills (if needed)

Through observing children we utilize the information gathered on each child to plan group and individual activities, toys and materials are selected to extend children’s thinking skills in order to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.
When your child is enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start the teacher will give you a booklet titled *A Parent’s Guide to Preschool* or *Parent’s Guide for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos*. It is important that you read the booklet carefully to understand our curriculum and know how to partner with the teacher to help your child acquire the skills, attitudes, and habits to do well in school and throughout life. *Partners for A Healthy Baby Curriculum* is used for weekly home visits to pregnant women and parents of newborn infants.

Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start operates a center-based option for both Head Start children and Early Head Start infants and toddlers. Home-Based services are provided for EHS children during the months centers are closed. Your EHS Teacher and Family Advocate will work with parents to schedule visits at times that meet the needs of your family. Your center coordinator, family advocate, or Early Head Start teacher will provide a schedule that shows the hours your child will attend the center.

During the year classroom teachers, make two educational home visits, one of which will be before the children enter the center, and have at least two staff/parent conferences to share and gain information about children and their progress in the program. *(HSPS 1302.34) (b) (7)*  
“Teachers conduct at least two home visits per program year for each family, including one before the program year begins, if feasible, to engage the parents in the child’s learning and development.”

Your center coordinator or family advocate will notify you of the name of your child’s teacher and the date and time the center will open. Other important information and dates concerning center policies and procedures are included in the Parent Handbook and posted on the Parent Bulletin Board.

*School readiness goals are included on the next page. If you have questions about any of the school readiness goals, please discuss with your child’s teacher.*
NORTHWEST TN HEAD START
PRE SCHOOL SCHOOL READINESS GOALS


1. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH:
* Children will demonstrate traveling skills & balancing skills
* Children will demonstrate fine motor manipulative skills
* Children will demonstrate gross motor strength & coordination
* Children will practice healthy/safe habits

2. SOCIAL – EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
* Children will regulate emotions & behaviors
* Children will participate cooperatively and in group situations
* Children will establish and sustain positive relationships

3. APPROACHES TO LEARNING
* Children will demonstrate positive approaches to learning
* Children will use classification skills
* Children will remember & connect experiences
* Children will use symbols & images to represent something not present

4. LANGUAGE/LITERACY DEVELOPMENT
* Children will listen to and understand increasingly complex language
* Children will use appropriate conversational communication skills
* Children will demonstrate phonological awareness
* Children will demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet
* Children will demonstrate knowledge of print
* Children will comprehend & respond to books/text
* Children will demonstrate emergent writing skills

5. COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
* Children will use number concepts & operations
* Children will compare & measure
* Children will explore & describe spatial relationships & shapes
* Children will demonstrate knowledge of patterns
NORTHWEST TN HEAD START EHS
SCHOOL READINESS GOALS


1. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH:
   * Children will demonstrate control of large muscles
   * Children will demonstrate fine motor manipulative skills
   * Children will practice health/safety habits

2. SOCIAL – EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
   * Children will regulate emotions
   * Children will follow routines and rules of the classroom
   * Children will establish and sustain positive adult-child relationships

3. APPROACHES TO LEARNING
   * Children will show interest in positive approaches to learning
   * Children will demonstrate persistence and sustain attention with activities and materials
   * Children will use symbols & images to represent something not present

4. LANGUAGE/LITERACY DEVELOPMENT
   * Children will listen to and understand increasingly complex vocabulary
   * Children will demonstrate sounds within words
   * Children will use verbal and non-verbal cues to communicate wants/needs

5. COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
   * Children will explore materials and the environment using senses
   * Children will manipulate materials to better understand the activity
   * Children will increase skills in remembering information
A Summary of Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers or a copy of the Department of Education Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines will be given to you during open house/parent orientation.

The following pages contain a summary of the Department of Human Services licensing requirements for childcare:
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

SUMMARY OF LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUP CHILD CARE HOMES

This summary is intended as a guide for parents of children in group child care homes. It outlines some of the requirements child care providers must meet in order to be licensed. The purpose of licensing is protection of children. The Department of Human Services has the legal responsibility for licensing homes which provide child care for 8-12 children. Questions about licensure requirements or concerns about a home’s compliance with them should be referred to the local DHS office. You may ask your child care provider to see a rule book (“Standards for Group Child Care Homes”).

Ownership and Administration

- Children in child care shall be at least six weeks old.
- This summary shall be given to parent(s) of each child enrolled.
- Specific policies are required to be in written form.
- A policy statement signed by caregiver and parent shall be on file.
- Parents shall be permitted access to their children and shall be informed in advance of removal from premises.
- The following records shall be kept:
  - Three recommendations for each caregiver.
  - Adult health records.
  - Child health records.
  - Daily attendance records.
  - Children’s records containing identifying and emergency information and a parent caregiver communication plan.
  - A child’s and family privacy and confidentiality shall be protected.
  - A current license shall be posted conspicuously.
- All agencies will undergo an evaluation prior to the expiration of their license and be required to post a report card that outlines the results of the evaluation.

Staff

- Criminal background checks are required for employees who have contact with children and anyone 15 or older who lives in the home.
- All caregivers shall be trained in child abuse detection/prevention.
- The primary caregiver shall:
  - Be 18 or older.
  - Be able to read and write English.
  - Have earned a high school diploma or GED.
  - Complete pre-service and 8 hours of inservice training.
  - Not be employed at any other occupation during child care hours.
- An adult shall be present and supervision at all times.
- Volunteers shall not be used to meet classroom adult:child ratios.
- The total number of children shall not exceed 15.
- If 4 or more infants/toddlers are enrolled, they shall have their own space and their own caregiver for their safety and security and for infection control.
- See ratio chart on the last page.

Equipment

- Equipment shall be well made and safe.
- There shall be equipment appropriate for:
  - Children enrolled.
  - Activities listed under Program.
- Outdoor equipment shall be:
  - Placed to avoid accidents.
  - Securely anchored.
  - Placed over resilient surfaces.
  - At least 6 feet away from retain structures.
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Program
- The daily program shall include some of the following:
  - Reading to and talking with children.
  - Art, music, and dramatic play.
  - Age-appropriate participation in home-type activities.
- The daily schedule shall be posted.
- Children shall be allowed to choose some of their own activities; others shall be planned by the caregiver.
- Children shall not be confined to one room.
- TV/videos shall be limited to 2 hours per day and to children’s shows. Other options shall be available.
- All children shall play outside daily except in extremely bad weather.
- Discipline shall be:
  - Reasonable and it terms of the child’s understanding.
  - Positive and encouraging of good behavior.
- Discipline shall not be:
  - Shaming, humiliating, frightening, or injurious.
  - Related to food, rest, toilet training, or physical punishment.
- Preschool children shall have a reclining rest period, according to individual needs.
- School-age children shall be allowed to nap but not forced to do so.
- Children under 15 months and unable to walk shall have their own crib or playpen for napping; sleeping infants shall be checked every 30 minutes.
- Older children shall have something soft and at least two inches thick to sleep on.
- All children shall have their own clean sheet and coverlet.
- Children shall be allowed to get up after a reasonable rest period.
- Toilet training shall not be started until the child:
  - Has been in the child care home long enough to feel comfortable.
  - Is able to understand, to do what is asked, and to let his/her need to use the bathroom be known.
- Children shall not be made to sit on the potty more than 5 minutes.
- Children shall be diapered or cleaned when needed.

- For ages three through school-age instruction in personal safety must be offered annually.
- The facility is required to notify parents regarding the personal safety curriculum that is being used.

Health & Safety
- Children shall be age-appropriately immunized before admittance to child care.
- If immunizations are not current or continued, the child will not be allowed to remain in child care.
- Records of children with disabilities shall contain a physician’s statement identifying the condition and giving special instructions for that child’s care.
- Children under 31 months shall have a physical examination prior to admission to child care.
- Immunization records shall be on file in the child care home.
- Accidents and injuries shall be recorded.
- Parents and the local health department shall be notified of outbreaks of communicable diseases.
- Medications and drugs shall not be administered without parental instructions and shall be charted as given, and containers shall be labeled and stored properly.
- Caregivers have physical examination before beginning work.
- An updated statement of caregivers’ physical health shall be obtained every third year.
- A statement of caregivers’ mental or emotional health may be required when deemed necessary by the Department.
- Caregivers shall not smoke while physically interacting with children; parents shall be informed of smoking in the home.
- Caregivers shall use prescribed infection control methods.
- The primary caregiver shall have pediatric CPR and first aid training.
- Home shall have a working telephone.
- A child sexual abuse prevention program shall be presented to children ages 3 and above.
- Suspected abuse/neglect shall be reported immediately.
- Primary caregivers shall be prepared for disasters.
- Firearms and other deadly weapons or tools shall be made inaccessible to children.

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- Swimming pools must comply with environmental sanitation regulations and wading pools must be approved by the environmentalist.
- Pets and children shall not be together on a regular basis.

Transportation
- When transportation is provided:
  - The driver shall be licensed.
  - General liability and medical payment insurance coverage required for injuries of children being transported.
  - Driver must submit to drug screening.
  - Children shall not be left alone in the vehicle.
  - Staff shall use passenger log to take roll during transportation.
  - Passenger log shall be reconciled with attendance records.
  - Driver or caregiver shall conduct physical walk through and inspection of vehicle after unloading the last child.
  - Additional staff person shall also verify the reconciled log and conduct physical walk through and inspection.
  - There shall be a plan for emergency transportation.
  - Children under four years of age shall be fastened in individual seat belts.
  - Children are not allowed to ride in the floor.
  - Firearms shall not be stored in the vehicle.

Food
- Prescribed food patterns shall be followed so that children receive adequate nourishment.
- Infant diets and other special diets shall be prepared as prescribed by the physician.
- Weekly menus shall be posted.
- These hygiene practices shall be followed:
  - Adults and children shall wash their hands before handling food.
  - High chairs, tables, and floors under them shall be clean.
  - Napkins, forks, or spoons shall be provided.
- Infants:
  - Bottles shall not be propped or given to children who are lying flat.
  - Children able to sit in a high chair shall be allowed to feed themselves at least a part of the meal.

- Formula and food from home shall be labeled with the child's name and placed in the refrigerator.
- Previously opened baby food jars shall not be used.
- Solid foods shall not be given in bottles or infant feeders.
- Weaning shall be started only after communication with parent.
- Servings shall be adequate to meet children's needs.
- Food, including dessert, shall not be forced or withheld.

Physical Facilities
- New or remodeled group child care homes shall be approved by a state fire safety inspector and by an environmentalist prior to opening.
- All group child care homes shall be inspected and approved annually.
- Facility shall have at least 30 square feet of usable play space per child.
- There shall be two exits, other than from the kitchen.
- The home shall not share a building used for other purposes which would be hazardous to children or limit outdoor play.
- The outdoor play area shall contain 50 square feet per child.
- Diapering areas shall be as close to a sink as possible, but not in the kitchen.
- All areas of the premises shall be well maintained, non-hazardous, and free of animal waste.

Care of Children With Disabilities
- In addition to the preceding standards, if children with disabilities are cared for, the following requirements shall be met. These requirements apply to staffing, grouping, equipment, program, health, food, and physical facilities.
- Children enrolled in a child care home shall receive the same care and participate in the same program activities as their peers with adaptations to enable them to participate.
- Adaptations to the environment shall be directed toward normalizing the lifestyle of the child with a disability by helping him/her become independent and develop self-help skills.
- Efforts to provide specialized services (e.g. speech/hearing therapy, physical therapy,
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

psychological evaluation, or services for the mentally retarded) shall be documented in the child’s record. Any information exchange regarding these services shall also be documented.

- The home shall have individualized evacuation plans for disabled children and shall be practiced monthly.

**Ratio Chart:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caregivers Required*</th>
<th>Maximum Number of Children &amp; Ages**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maximum of 15 present and no child present is under three (3) years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maximum of 15 present and at least one (1) child up to a maximum of nine (9) children present are under three (3) years of age, but no more than four (4) present are under two (2) years of age.***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Maximum of 15 if ten (10) or more are under three (3) years of age.***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If any child’s physical or mental condition requires special care, if children under 9 living in the home increases the group size, or when a field trip is taken off premises, the number of caregivers required shall be increased by one.

**Before 8 or more children are enrolled, the facility shall be approved by a fire safety inspector and by an environmentalist.

***If over 12 children are enrolled, the additional children shall be of school age and a school age program shall be provided.

You can access the Department’s website at:

http://state.tn.us/humanserv

A wealth of child care information can be found on the Department’s website.

You can:

- Learn more about the rules
- Learn more about the types of regulated care
- Locate a child care provider
- Learn more about the Report Card and Star Quality Program
- Locate the local child care licensing office
- Review the current personal safety curriculum
- View recent correspondence to providers
- Read about new initiatives

- Locate the nearest child care certificate office
- Find info on choosing child care
- Locate a resource and referral center
  And Much More!

**Group Child Care Home Rules**

The full set of the official group child care home rules can be found on the Secretary of State’s Web Site:

http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1240/1240-04/1240-04.htm

**Report Card & Star Quality Program**

http://tnstarquality.org

**Child Care Resource & Referral Centers**

Currently, there are eleven CCR&R centers located throughout the state. The centers help parents find the type of care that is best for their child or children. These community resources also give providers technical assistance to better serve the children in their care. Contact information for the CCR&R centers can be found on the Child Care Services web page.

**Child Care Resource & Referral – Complaint Hotline**

NASHVILLE AREA: 615-313-4820
LONG DISTANCE: 1-800-462-8261

If you have a concern about an existing child care agency or wish to report an illegal operation you can call the Department’s complaint hotline.

**Department of Children’s Services**

Report Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline

1-877-237-0004

Revised Jan 09.
6. Child Discipline

We want children to be successful in Head Start and be excited to come to the center and learn. Your child’s teachers will use the following ways to discipline and direct children:

- Be positive and patient with children.
- Bend down to their level to let children know they are interested and care about them.
- Point out their strengths and praise those who are following the rules.
- Use positive terms when speaking to children. For example, if a child is running in the classroom, a teacher will tell him or her “we walk inside and run outside.”
- Give children jobs as helpers to learn responsibilities and independence.
- Use (CSEFEL) Center on the Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning as a resource to teach children about feelings, how to resolve problems, and how to calm down.
- Redirect children when needed and review the classroom rules every day.
- Help children develop self-confidence and self-control through consistent routines and classroom rules.

- **Hurting children physically, leaving children alone and verbally abusing children is not used in Head Start. In addition, food is never to be used as a reward or punishment.**

HSPS 1302.31 (e) (2) “A program must also provide sufficient time for children to eat, not use food as reward or punishment, and not force children to finish their food.”

7. Suspension/Expulsion Policy

**Head Start Performance Standard (HSPS 1302.17) Suspension and Expulsion (b) (1) “A program cannot expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of a child’s behavior.”**

Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start has a long-standing and continuing practice of preventing the expulsion or suspension of children. Our goal is to prepare young children to succeed in school and suspending or expelling children fails to accomplish this goal. More importantly, suspending or expelling preschoolers is not an age-appropriate method for addressing behavioral problems. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional, such as an early childhood mental health consultant, have been exhausted—and it is unanimously determined by the family, teacher, program, and other service providers that another setting is more appropriate for the well-being of the child in question or that the child’s continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children—all parties, including the receiving program, should work together to develop a seamless transition plan and use that plan to implement a smooth transition.
8. Family Services/Parent Involvement

Family Services and Parent Involvement will include:

- Home visits will occur to strengthen family connection.
- During the initial home visit, your family advocate will work with you to write a Family Services Plan and set goals for you and your family.
- Referrals and assistance for emergency or crisis situations.
- Continuing education and job related training.
- Male/father involvement projects such as the “Great Male Read-In”, Male Chow Down, Donuts for Dads, etc.
- Family Literacy programs that include “Readers are Leaders”, a parent/child library at each center, the Imagination Library, trips to plays and the public library.
- Newsletters and other parenting resources.
- Monthly Parent Committee meetings at a time and day that is approved and voted on by parents.
- Kindergarten visits and kindergarten speakers at Parent Committee meetings.
- Opportunities to volunteer at the center or on field trips.
- The Parent & Community Stars Volunteer Banquet.
- Muffins for Moms.
- Opportunities for parents to participate in counseling or receive information on mental health issues.
- Services to Early Head Start pregnant women that include assistance with pre-natal and post-partum care, training and education, and home visits before and after birth.
- Community services and resources that include referrals, community resource books, follow-up services, etc.
- Assistance with obtaining financial aid for college or vocational classes.

9. Community Partnerships

There are many ways parents can become involved in their community:

- Parent Committee: Parent Committee members help staff with developing and conducting programs and activities for their center.
- Policy Council: Parents are elected to serve on the Policy Council that can be compared to a School Board.
- Health Advisory Committee: Parents serve on the Health Advisory Committee which hears and takes action on local, state, and regional issues that affect child and family health care.
- Self-Assessment Team: Parents will receive training and help with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of centers and management.
- Family Literacy: Parents and center staff work as a team to connect classroom child literacy activities with family literacy projects in the home.
- **Transition Partnerships:** Parents will participate in events and meetings to successfully transition their children and family into and from Head Start and Early Head Start. Through these projects, you can learn to become an advocate for your children.

- **Chamber of Commerce Business Expo:** Local Business Expos offer an opportunity for parents to learn about available jobs and training in the community.

- **Career Fairs:** Parents who are seeking work meet with employers to learn about available jobs in their community.

- **Parent Teacher Organizations:** Parents will be encouraged to attend PTA or PTO meetings when their child enters the school system.

- **Local School System:** Pre-K differs from in some areas because it is funded by the Department of Education and Head Start/Early Head Start is funded by Office of Head Start.

- **Health Fairs:** Parents are able to meet and talk with professionals in the community to learn about available resources.
Release of Children Policy

It is the intent and duty of center employees to protect children who are in their care. Parents must also recognize that they are primarily responsible for the safety of their child. On-going communication between parents and staff provides opportunities for them to share information about the center’s Release of Children Policy. Potentially dangerous situations are more likely to occur when children arrive in the morning and are released in the afternoon. The following steps are implemented to ensure children transition to and from the center in an orderly and safe manner.

Parents’ responsibilities are to:

- Provide the name, phone number, and address of three or more adults who can be contacted in an emergency and/or who can bring and pick-up a child. No one who is on the sex abuse registry will be allowed to enter the center or participate in activities sponsored by the center.
- Provide name, address, and phone number of your employer or school.
- Provide a written statement when names of authorized adults are added to or deleted from the emergency contact list in person. Safety policies cannot allow this information to be given over the phone or texted.
- Sign child in upon arrival at the center or bus stop and sign him or her out each afternoon with arrival and departure times. Children are to arrive “dressed for play.” Please do not bring your child in their pajamas unless it is your child’s “pajama day” planned event.
- Deliver your child to classroom or bus using hand-to-hand contact at all times while on premises.
- Release child directly to center staff or bus monitor.
- Bring and pick-up child on time.
- Pick up your child holding his/her hand until they are safely secured in vehicle or have left Head Start property.
- Provide a certified copy of court orders showing who has legal custody or visitation rights of a child if necessary.

Staff responsibilities are to:

- Obtain the name and telephone number of three or more adults who can be contacted in an emergency and/or who can bring and receive a child.
- Enter this information and subsequent changes to the list in ChildPlus; print and provide a current report to the center coordinator, bus driver, and teacher.
- Require an unfamiliar person to show picture identification before a child is released.
- Release children only to authorized adults ensuring the adult accepts the child by the hand.
- Comply with certified court orders and only release a child to the person who has legal custody of the child.
- Provide a copy of the Release of Children Policy to parents and center staff. Review/train on its contents to ensure both groups clearly understand their responsibilities in this area (Center Coordinator). Have parent/guardian to sign a Release of Children Policy
- Follow these steps for releasing a child to a person who appears to be impaired:
  ♦ Ask a person who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs to not transport the child.
  ♦ If the person agrees, call the next adult on the emergency contact list.
  ♦ Notify the center coordinator immediately if the person, who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, leaves with a child. Center Coordinator will contact local law enforcement immediately.
  ♦ Document and report the incident to a manager.

Parent Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________
11. Custody Issues

- **Parental Custody:** By law, if parents are legally separated or divorced, each parent has equal access to the custody of the child unless a parent has a court order indicating which parent has custody of the child and/or that the parents have a specific custody schedule. To exclude a parent from picking up a child, Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start must have a copy of the court order on file; otherwise, either parent may pick up the child from Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start with proper identification.

- In most cases, natural parents shall be given reasonable access to their children at Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start and to their children’s official records. Exceptions to this will be made in cases where there are court orders restricting the rights of one or both parents to access a child and/or the child’s official Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start records.

- It shall be the responsibility of the parent, who has a court order restricting the rights of the other parent to access a child, to notify Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start of the conditions of the court order and to provide the center staff a current copy of the court order.

12. Child Transportation Policy

Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start may or may not provide transportation to and from the center for your child. Bus transportation is based on community needs. It is only a service offered and is not required by the Office of Head Start. Your family advocate will inform you of transportation options for your child. These options include: 1) child bus transportation, 2) parent or other authorized adult transportation, and 3) other parent initiated arrangement. If bus transportation is available, parents may also be transported to centers to volunteer. You will also receive information and training about bus and pedestrian safety rules for children and parents within thirty (30) days of the center opening.

**Parents’ responsibilities are to:**

- Provide current and accurate emergency contact persons information and report changes immediately in writing.
- Follow the route schedule and have your child ready to board the bus in the morning.
- **Hand deliver and receive your child at the door of the bus.**
- Accompany your child while crossing the street, hold his/her hand.
- **YOU MUST** be at bus stop or at home at the **scheduled time** to receive your child.
- Understand and accept that your child will only be released to an authorized adult.
- Contact the center coordinator or family advocate to report a delay or an emergency, i.e., a car problem that prevents an authorized adult from being at a bus stop at the scheduled time.
- Ensure that you and your child are properly dressed in the morning and that he/she does not bring food or toys on the bus.
- Teach your child bus and pedestrian safety practices that reinforce and enhance center activities.
- Understand that if there are no authorized adults to receive your child, he/she will be returned to the center and remain there until an authorized adult arrives. This should not happen unless an extreme emergency in the family has arisen.
- Smoking cigarettes or electronic cigarettes are not allowed within 50 feet of the bus or center entrances.
- Respect bus driver and monitors.
- Sign or initial a Bus Attendance Log in the morning and afternoon.

Staff responsibilities are to:

- Inform parents of transportation options.
- Establish bus routes and stops. Inform parents in writing of their child’s bus schedule.
- Ensure bus drivers and monitors are qualified and trained.
- Provide bus and pedestrian safety training to children and parents.
- Release children only to authorized adults ensuring the adult accepts the child by the hand.
- Respect parents and children.
- Maintain a Bus Attendance Log.

Scheduled Bus Routes:

- A fixed bus route with approved stops and arrival and departure times is planned for each bus.
- A scheduled bus route cannot be changed without prior approval from the center coordinator.
- In order for a child to receive transportation services, he or she must have a permanent bus stop.
- A parent cannot telephone a center during the day to change a child’s afternoon bus stop.
- Arrival and departure times for bus stops cannot be altered.

13. Child Attendance

Your child’s attendance at the center is very important. Children who attend regularly learn more and are better prepared for Head Start or Kindergarten. Please follow these attendance guidelines:

- Teach your child, through words and actions that going to the center each day is fun and important.
- Take your child and pick him or her up on time.
- While your child will be late if he or she arrives **thirty or more minutes** after the center opens, he or she will be accepted into the classroom and fed breakfast. **(Parent will be responsible for sitting with late arriving children while they eat breakfast.)**
- Contact the center within 1 hour if your child will be absent.
- Your child’s center will be closed or home visits cancelled for bad weather when local schools are closed. Listen to the radio or television for school and center closing reports.
- Call or talk with your family advocate if you need help to improve your child’s attendance
- Your family advocate or center coordinator will discuss chronic absenteeism and late policies with you.
- Remember if you believe education and regular school attendance are important, your child will believe they are important.

*Failure to pick up your child on time may result in your child being placed on the waiting list.*
**Attendance/Late Policies**

Your child’s attendance at the Head Start/Early Head Start center is very important. A child who comes to the center on a regular basis learns more and will have an easier transition into the school system or next placement. In order for you and your child to have a positive and successful Head Start/Early Head Start experience, he or she must attend the center each day. Both you and center staff have a critical role in ensuring that your child’s center attendance is acceptable.

**Parents are expected to:**
- Recognize the importance of regular attendance and ensure your child is present each day.
- Make sure your child arrives at and departs from the center and bus stop on time.
- Notify your child’s teacher or Family Advocate if your child will be absent or tardy within 1 hour.
- Take your child to the doctor immediately for treatment of a communicable disease.
- Inform your Family Advocate if you need support or assistance to improve your child’s attendance.

**Staff is expected to:**
- Inform parents of the program’s Attendance Policy; provide information about the benefits of regular attendance.
- Recognize and be sensitive to the individual needs of children and their parents.
- Provide family support to improve and promote child’s regular attendance.
- Conduct a home visit with child’s parents if a child has two unexplained absences (such as two consecutive unexplained absences).
- Schedule a Parent Conference for chronic tardiness. (Family Advocate or Center Coordinator)

**Chronic Absenteeism:**
Chronic absenteeism is defined as 1) a child who is absent from the center for two days a week for a period of two weeks, or 2) a child who does not attend the center for four consecutive days without a medical statement or an acceptable excuse. Steps for terminating a child with chronic absenteeism include:

- Center staff identifies a child with irregular attendance or chronic absenteeism.
- The Family Advocate and child’s teacher talks with the parent about the importance of regular center attendance.
- The Family Advocate makes a home visit to offer and provide support and services to the family.
- The Family Advocate informs the parent in writing that his or her child will be placed on the waiting list by a specific date if the child’s attendance does not improve.
- The child is placed on waiting list by the date indicated. (if chronic absenteeism persists)

Termination of a child for chronic absenteeism occurs only after all efforts have been made to keep the child in the program.

**Tardiness:**
It is important that children arrive and depart according to the center schedule. A child who habitually arrives at the center 30 or more minutes behind schedule and/or is picked up 30 or more minutes late will be considered tardy. If this occurs two or more days a week for two weeks, a parent conference will be scheduled on how to improve child’s tardiness. Morning and afternoon arrival times for each bus stop are included on bus route schedules. A driver will wait only five minutes past the scheduled arrival or departure time for a bus stop. A child can miss the bus in the morning if he or she is tardy or be taken back to the center in the afternoon if an authorized adult is not at the bus stop.

__________________________
Parent Signature

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Family Advocate or Center Coordinator

__________________________
Date
14. Parent Activity Fund

Each year $6.00 per child is included in the budget for the Parent Activity Fund. The guidelines for receiving the money are listed below

- The money cannot be used solely for entertainment.
- Program equipment and supplies cannot be purchased with the money.
- The money cannot be spent directly on children i.e., Christmas presents, end of the year trophies.
- Center staff cannot be paid with the money.
- The money can be spent for educational activities such as a dinner for parents with a speaker, a trip to a museum, etc.
- Parents decide and vote as a group at a Parent Committee meeting on how the money will be spent.
- A Parent Activity Fund Request form must be completed and submitted with attached Parent Committee meeting minutes and purchase order.

15. Fund Raising and Donations

Our Head Start/Early Head Start program does not take part in fund raising. Parents can ask for donations from local businesses and individuals if they and center employees follow certain guidelines. The center coordinator will train parents and center employees on these guidelines before donations are requested. Your center coordinator will be given a Donation Instruction Sheet and you will have a chance to ask any questions. While Head Start/Early Head Start employees cannot ask for or make donations, parents and center staff must work together to make this an organized project that will positively represent your center, your fellow parents, and the program.

16. Special Occasions, Holidays, and Field Trips

The following guidelines are written to help parents and staff understand what to do for parties or celebrations that include food:

- One birthday party will be planned and held each month for all the children whose birthday is in that month.
- Holiday celebrations and birthday parties are held after lunch.
- Food served at a party or celebration is purchased at a store by center staff.
- **Neither center staff nor parents can bring food or drinks to the classroom for these occasions.**
- Each child will receive special recognition on his or her birthday, i.e., the Happy Birthday song, a birthday hat or button.
- Food that center employees will buy and serve for a birthday party, holiday, or celebration will include:
  - 100% frozen fruit popsicles or bars
  - Frozen yogurt bars
- Teachers and parents should talk about the fun time the children will have and the purpose of the celebration rather than the food that will be served.
- Head Start/Early Head Start may provide sack lunches that contain age-appropriate foods that meet the USDA guidelines for children during field trips.
- **Cupcakes and treats cannot be brought into the center due to safety issues for children. Head Start/Early Head Start is required to offer only nutritional snacks.**
- Graduation ceremonies are not held but we celebrate your child’s accomplishments through family celebrations at the end of the year.

17. **Volunteering**

Volunteer Requirements:

All volunteers must read, complete, and sign the following paperwork:

- **Oath of Confidentiality**
- **Job Description**
- **Child Abuse/Neglect/Violent Action form**
- **Volunteer Information form**

A volunteer who accumulates more than 20 hours of time within a week must follow Human Resources pre-employment procedures. Volunteer forms and pre-employment information are available at all locations.

Parent participation in Head Start/Early Head Start is strictly voluntary and is not a condition of a child’s enrollment in the program.

**Stars Program**

Stars can be earned beginning in August when children arrive at the centers. Stars are earned by parents and community volunteers based on the following:

- Volunteering a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes a day (1 star for each additional 30 minutes)
- A grandparent or other relative who is not a child guardian on the Community Volunteer board who volunteers at the center can earn stars as well
- Readers and Leaders calendars (must have minimum of 5 books)
- Attending Parent Committee meetings
- Attending Policy Council meetings

Persons performing community services, e.g. Families First or interns are not eligible for stars.
18. Emergency Preparedness

Each center has an Emergency Preparedness Plan. There are designated emergency locations for each center. All center staff and children will be evacuated to locations if relocation is needed. There are also plans for emergencies when staying in the center. You and your family will be introduced and trained on this information upon your child enrolling to attend Head Start/Early Head Start. This will also be on-going training throughout the program year.
Summary of Licensing Requirements for Childcare Centers

I ______________________________ have received and reviewed a copy of the Summary of Licensing Requirements for Childcare Centers from the Department of Human Services.

____________________________  ______________________
Parent/Guardian Signature          Date
Parent Handbook Statement

Center ____________________________ Child’s Name ____________________________

I, ____________________________ have received a copy and I

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

have been trained on the Northwest Tennessee Head Start/Early Head Start
Handbook. Head Start/Early Head Start Staff explained the purpose of the
handbook and reviewed its contents with me.

Parent/Guardian Signature ____________________________ Date ____________

HS/EHS Staff ____________________________ Date ____________

Original: Child’s Folder