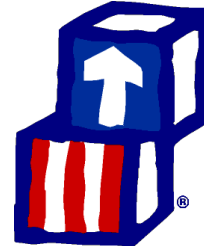


Families First of Minnesota Head Start



Family Handbook 2021-2022



"Ensuring positive beginnings for all young children and their families."

Families First of MN ~ Head Start Olmsted County

Main Office - 126 Woodlake Drive SE - Rochester - 55904

The Place - 1026 East Center Street - Rochester - 55904

Empowerment Center- 930 40th Street NW - Rochester - 55901

Hawthorne - 700 4th Avenue SE - Rochester - 55904

Jeremiah Program -2915 Jeremiah Lane NW-Rochester 55901

Head Start Telephone # (507) 287-2009 or 1-800-462-1660

Fax: (507) 287-2411

Families First of MN ~ Head Start Freeborn County

Brookside Education Center - 211 W. Richway Drive - Albert Lea - 56007

Head Start Telephone # (507) 923-8524 Fax # (507) 379-4865

www.familiesfirstmn.org

**WELCOME TO EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START!
Philosophy . . . Early Learning . . . The Roots of Success!**

We believe that early learning is the “root of success.” Since learning begins at birth, we strive to provide experiences and opportunities to assist parents in providing a “positive beginning” for their children.

We believe that parents are their children’s most important teachers. To assist parents in becoming effective teachers, we work with each family to build and strengthen their parenting skills.

Head Start is committed to providing quality services for the child and his/her whole family. Activities will foster the growth and development of children enrolled, involving parents in the program, and providing them with opportunities to enhance the understanding of child care practice and knowledge. We look forward to a great year!

Head Start Director.....	507 251- 6814
Head Start Associate Director/Child Care Partnerships.....	507 402-2293
Head Start Associate Director/Education.....	507 272-7572
Freeborn County Coordinator.....	507 923-8524
Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator.....	507 884-5775
Health Coordinator.....	507 951-7464
ERSEA Coordinator.....	507 951-4946
Family and Community Engagement Manager.....	507 951-7474
Early Head Start Supervisor.....	507 577-1956
Transportation and Fleet Services Manager	507 951-7490
Nutrition Coordinator	507 208-9942
Place Site Coordinator.....	507 951-7500
Empowerment Center Site Coordinator.....	507 272-7582
Jeremiah Center Site Coordinator.....	507 601-7087



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Start is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, the MN Department of Education and United Way. Services provided in Olmsted, Freeborn, Rice, and Winona counties. Early Head Start serves 222 children from birth to 3 and pregnant moms. Head Start serves 305 children ages 3-5 and their families in Olmsted and Freeborn counties.

Parents of enrolled children are welcome to visit the center any time during the hours of operation. **Parents are asked to refer to this handbook when they have questions, or contact any Head Start staff. Questions regarding program operation and licensing requirements can be answered by calling the Rochester office at (507) 287-2009 or 1-800-462-1660 or the Department of Human Services at (651) 431-6500.**

Parents of enrolled children are encouraged to apply for jobs with Head Start. For job opportunities, please visit our website at www.familiesfirstmn.org or call 507-287-2020.

Head Start carries insurance which covers each child for accident or injury in the classroom, on the playground, on field trips, or on the bus. The program is covered with liability insurance for the program and the Head Start vehicles.

A copy of the Head Start Childcare Program Plan is available upon request.

ENROLLMENT & OPERATIONS OF THE PROGRAM At least ninety percent (90%) of enrolled participants must be from income-eligible families. Priority for enrollment includes families experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, and children with special needs. No child will be denied admission to the program on the basis of disability, race, age, creed, color or national origin. Children who are not initially enrolled are placed on a waiting list. They are also referred to other community programs. Foster children or families experiencing homelessness who move out of the service area can continue to be served.

FAMILIES FIRST HEAD START PROGRAM OPTIONS

(3- AND 4-YEAR OLDS ~ PART YEAR)

Center Based Program Children attend center four days per week for 3.5, 4, or 7.5 hour sessions, depending on available program options. Two conferences and regularly scheduled home visits are required. Preschool children at the Jeremiah Program attend center five days per week from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm for the full year.

Rochester Family Literacy has a partnership with Families First of MN ~ Head Start to extend literacy services to families. Parents work toward acquiring a high school diploma or GED or improving their English language skills. Children play and learn together. Families receive regularly scheduled home visits.

EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM OPTIONS

(PREGNANT MOTHERS – 3 YEAR OLDS ~ FULL YEAR)

Home Based Program Families receive a weekly **90 minute home visit** and **two group activity meetings (socializations) a month**.

Center Based Program Children attend center four days per week, for 7.5-hour sessions and families receive regularly scheduled home visits with two teacher conferences occurring during the year. Children in the Jeremiah Program attend center five days per week from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Child Care Partnership Program Children attend a participating center and families receive regularly scheduled home visits with a Head Start staff person, plus two conferences per year from the center teacher.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Total number of children & Ages</u>	<u>Number of groups</u>	<u>Days and hours</u>
Brookside	<p>36 – Center Ages 3-5 yrs</p> <p>18- 7.5 hour Center Ages 3-5 yrs</p> <p>34– Early Head Start Home Based Ages 0-3 yrs</p>	<p>2 Preschool – Center</p> <p>1 Preschool</p> <p>3 – EHS groups</p>	<p>Mon – Thurs AM 8:00 – 11:30 PM 11:30 – 3:00</p> <p>Full Day 8:30-4:00</p> <p>Full year</p>
The Place	<p>36– Center Ages 3-5 yrs</p> <p>126- 7.5 hour Center Ages 3-5 yrs</p> <p>24 – Toddler Center Ages 18-36 mo</p> <p>8-Infant Center 6wks-18mo</p> <p>35 – EHS Home Based Ages 0-3 yrs</p>	<p>2 Preschool– Center</p> <p>7 Preschool</p> <p>3 – Toddler</p> <p>1 Infant</p> <p>3 – EHS groups</p>	<p>Mon – Thurs AM 8:00 – 12 PM 12 – 3:30</p> <p>Mon-Thurs 8:00 – 3:30</p> <p>Full Year</p> <p>Full Year</p> <p>Full Year</p>
Rochester Family Literacy	17 – Family Literacy Ages 3-5 yrs	1 Family Literacy Partner	5 hours, School Year
Child Care Partner Sites	58 Ages 0-3	8	Full day/Full Year
Empowerment Center	<p>54- 7.5 hour Center Ages 3– 5 yrs</p> <p>8 Infant Center 6 weeks-18 mo</p> <p>12 Toddler Center Ages 18-36 mo</p>	<p>3 Preschool</p> <p>1 Infant</p> <p>1 Toddler</p>	<p>Mon-Thurs 8:00 – 3:30</p> <p>Full Year</p> <p>Full Year</p>
Jeremiah Program	<p>18-Preschool Ages 3-5 yrs</p> <p>16 Infant Center 6wks-18mo</p> <p>27 Toddler Center 18-36 mo</p>	<p>11-Preschool</p> <p>1-Infant</p> <p>2-Toddler</p>	<p>Full Day/Full Year Mon-Fri 7:30 am- 5:30 pm</p>

COMMUNICATION

Head Start makes every attempt to keep families informed through the following:

- Living Tree parent communication app.
- Classroom Newsletters.
- Website www.familiesfirstmn.org.
- Email (Please share your email address with staff).
- GOLD Family App – sign up with your Home Visitor or Teacher.
- Flyers and Handouts - check your child's backpack daily.
- Conferences and Home Visits.
- Phone, including texting.
- Families First - Head Start Facebook page.

We are committed to providing quality services to children and families. If at any time during the program, you are not satisfied with the services your family is receiving, please feel free to contact the Head Start Office at (507)287-2009.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Parents are asked to listen to local radio/T.V. stations for an announcement about center closings or check our Facebook page or Living Tree announcements from your teacher.

The Place, Empowerment Center and Freeborn County classrooms may be cancelled or run without transportation. All days cancelled will be made up. If classes are held without transportation, you will be contacted by your teacher.

Partnership sites (Jeremiah, Hawthorne, and Early Head Start Child Care) will follow their own cancellation policy.

- Radio Stations
 - KROC AM (1340) www.kroc.com
 - KROC FM (106.9) www.kroc.com
 - Y-105 FM (105.3) www.y105fm.com
 - KWWK FM (96.5) www.quickcountry.com
 - KLCX FM (103.9) www.klcxfm.com
- T.V. Stations
 - KTTC www.kttc.com
 - KAAL www.kaaltv.com
 - KXLT www.myfox47.com
- Families First- Head Start Facebook page

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

It is important that your child attend Head Start every day. Children who consistently attend school are more likely to be successful in school and life!

If your child will not be attending center, you must call or text your child's teacher or home visitor within one hour of class start time. If you do not call or text, the absence will be considered unexcused (see the Attendance Policy Parent Guide for more information).

At 85% Attendance – a letter will be sent to your family.

At 75% Attendance – an Attendance Success Plan will be completed with your family.

At 65% Attendance – the ERSEA Coordinator will be in contact with your family about attendance, enrollment, and other placement options in the program.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a privilege, not a guarantee. The goal of the Transportation Department is to provide safe transportation and ongoing safety education for the children and families enrolled in the program. **We will do our best to provide transportation to as many children and families as possible within our one hour limit. Bus attendance is taken daily and monitored weekly. If your bus attendance falls below 75%, your child may lose bussing.**

TRANSPORTATION STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maximum wait is **two (2) minutes at each stop!**
- Ensure children are buckled in child restraints as required by Head Start Performance Standards.
- Release child to an authorized person (age 12 or older), who is listed on the child's emergency card (picture ID may be requested at any time).
- Assist children whenever necessary.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Have the child ready ahead of time.**
- Walk the child to and from the bus each day. Drivers/Monitors will not release the child unless they are escorted from the bus by an approved adult during drop off.
- No Smoking within 20 Feet of bus entrance.
- **Do not** send medication, food, drink, gum or toys with your child on the bus. (Emergency medication can only be on the bus after proper forms are filled out and approved by the Health Coordinator/Transportation Manager.)
- Be at home to meet the child after his/her center day. If no one is home, the driver will contact the school and return the child to center. Your child will not be allowed on or off the bus at any other stops on the route.
 - The teacher/home visitor will call all emergency contact numbers, to find someone to pick the child up.
 - If the parent or other adult listed on the emergency card is not able to be reached within **90 minutes** from the child's regular drop off time, local Law Enforcement will be called. **Head Start staff are not available to watch your children before or after class times.**

FAMILY PICK UP & DROP OFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- Children should not arrive more than 5 minutes before class begins.
- Parents **MUST** pick their child up at the end of his/her class.
- Parents bringing their child to center and/or picking up their child after center must sign in and/or out in the classroom.
- A Head Start staff member must be present when the child arrives and/or leaves.
- Head Start staff are not available to watch your children before or after class times.

Please be patient when the bus is late. Reasons we could be late are because of weather, road construction, and changes in the route. Please allow 15-20 minutes before calling.

If a child is to be picked up or dropped off at an alternate address, we must have the parents or legal guardian's permission to do so in writing and the alternate location must be on the child's emergency card. This request should be in the Head Start office **at least 48 hours before the change**. Parents are asked to contact the teacher or home visitor with any changes. **A picture ID will be required of the new person receiving the child.**

IF A CHILD BECOMES ILL WHILE ON THE BUS

- If the bus is close to the child's home, the child will be brought home.
- If the bus is close to the center, the parent or the person listed on the emergency card will be contacted to pick up the child at the center.
- If a medical emergency arises on the bus, all staff are certified in first aid/CPR and busses are equipped with a first aid kit and a cell phone.

AUTHORIZATION FOR CHILD RELEASE

- A child will be released from center or bus only to those names listed on the most recent emergency card.
- The child will not be released to any adult who, in the opinion of the teacher or driver, appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

EVENT TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURE

- Transportation to Head Start events/meetings may be offered, with limited availability.
- If parents have an infant or toddler less than 25 pounds, **parents may need to supply a car seat.**
- If a family has signed up for event/meeting transportation and does not ride when the bus arrives, the family may no longer be eligible for event/meeting transportation.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

A current immunization record must be on file at the time of your child's enrollment.

A current yearly physical examination (health care summary) must be completed and the form on file **within 30 days** of your child's enrollment. If the completed form is not received within this time, your child will be placed on hold and will not be allowed to come to school until the completed current form is turned into the Health Coordinator.

A current yearly dental examination must be completed and the form on file **within 90 days** of the child starting school. If a child does not have a dental home, the Health Coordinator will have the enrolled child seen during mass orientation by the contracted dental hygienists. If a child added is after mass orientation, the home visitor or the teacher will ask the family during the first home visit if they have a dental home. If yes, family will have to request the information from the dental home. If no, contact the health coordinator to have the child's name placed on a list for the next Dental Day and have family sign the "CDHS Dental Day Consent."

Parents are asked to keep their child home if he/she has any of the following:

- Temperature above 100° any time within 24 hours before any school activity.
- Vomiting (more than one time in the last 24 hours)
- Diarrhea (runny, watery or bloody stools)
- Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing (bring a note from doctor and keep sores covered)
- Thick green drainage from the nose along with sinus pressure, fever, or tiredness
- Complaints of a stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms occur (call or see doctor)
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing (call or see doctor)
- A deep, hacking cough
- A painful, red throat, even if no fever is present
- Unknown or unfamiliar rash.
- Red, inflamed or draining eyes or ears
- Head lice and/or nits, ringworm or scabies that is untreated.
- Any infectious disease.
- Unexplained tiredness.
- If unsure, contact the Health Coordinator.

The main goal is to help families meet the physical and emotional needs of their child through:

- Health insurance referral services.
- Medical screenings, well-child and dental examinations, medical and dental follow-up treatment, as needed.
- Referral service for identified health problems and/or emotional concerns.
- Immunization, health, mental health, and nutrition assessments.
- A daily dental hygiene program.
- Providing nutritionally balanced meals.
- If a home visit is scheduled and a child or family member is ill, please contact your teacher or home visitor to determine when the visit could be rescheduled.

MEDICATIONS

Staff cannot give medication until the following steps have been met:

- **A Request/Authorization to Give Medication at Head Start Center** form must be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to the teacher/home visitor **before** any medication can be given to the child. Forms can be obtained from a teacher/home visitor, or the Head Start office.
- Medication **must** be in the original container. Parents are asked to request that the physician or pharmacist put the prescription in two "original" containers so the parent can keep one at home and one at center.
- All medications given will be recorded at the center, and each parent will receive a notice each day giving information about how/when the medication was given. In addition, the Head Start Medication log will be reviewed on home visits.
- Over-the-counter medications are not to be given in accordance to Minnesota Rule 3 licensing. Diapering products can be used with written parental consent.
- Parents and staff must work closely together to monitor any behavior changes that may be caused by a medication.

FIRST AID/ILLNESS, INCIDENT, OR ACCIDENT AT CENTER

- For emergencies 911 will be called.
 - A child would be transported to the nearest available hospital as determined by 911, if emergency medical care is needed.
- The staff will contact the families or emergency contact to pick up the child.
- Necessary first aid procedures may be performed (all staff are trained in First Aid and CPR).
- For non-life-threatening situations, the child is separated from the other children and supervised by a staff member.
- The staff will contact the parent, when needed, to follow up on the illness/injury. The child may need a doctor's written permission to return to center.
- If the illness is contagious, all parents will receive a health alert notification that their children may have been exposed to the illness.
- Staff will fill out a report documenting any accident or incident. Parents will be notified in person, by phone, or by a written note if their child has an accident or incident at center or on the bus.
- All injuries that happen at Head Start and require emergency and/or a doctor's care are reported to the Department of Human Services Licensing Division, and to the Head Start Director.
- Each center has an emergency preparedness plan for emergencies that require evacuation, sheltering, fires, natural disasters, intruders or other threatening situations. Parents will receive a copy of this plan upon enrollment.

Wipes and Sunscreen Permission Statement

Children will always wash their hands with soap and running water at the following times:

- After diapering/toileting
- Before meals/food related activities
- If hands are contaminated with blood/bodily fluid
- After touching pets/animals

If your child is currently in diapers, we would like to use individual wipes (baby wipes) to clean your child's bottom during a diaper change.

During the year there may be times when you as the parent would like Head Start to apply sunscreen and/or bug repellents to your child. Head Start will supply generic sunscreen and bug repellent that will be applied to your child's skin. If you would like any other sunscreen or repellent applied to your child's skin you will need to supply Head Start with that particular sunscreen and/or repellent.

Families First of Minnesota Head Start Staff use single service disposable wipes to clean children's hands when soap and running water are not available and when diapering my child. Hand washing with soap and water will take place whenever possible and always at the times listed above. The use of sunscreen and bug repellent will be applied to your child's skin as needed due to weather and other conditions. Your consent is given on the parent handbook acknowledgement (according to Minnesota Childcare licensing rules), if you do not wish to give consent, the health coordinator will create an individualized health plan with you.

SCREENINGS - SPECIAL SERVICES - REFERRALS

- Each child is recognized as an individual and staff makes sure all children are included in all classroom activities and work closely with agencies that serve children with special needs.
- Head Start is required to conduct a screening of each child's health and development in the areas of behavior, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills. The program uses the Brigance screening tool for children 0-35 months; the Minneapolis Preschool Screening Instrument – Revised (MPSI-R) tool for children three to six years; and the Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) for children three years to six years. All screenings are research-based, standardized for their age group, valid, and reliable. Staff receives annual training to ensure proper testing and scoring. Families must consent to the screenings, are involved in the process, and are informed of the results. Developmental screening is an important part of understanding how your child learns and helps the program identify any additional support children may need.
- If further assessment is needed, teacher/home visitor and parent/legal guardian will discuss the next step. Upon parental consent, a referral will be sent to the appropriate agency. Families will be supported and encouraged to actively participate in the referral process.
- Staff will help parents/legal guardians find resources, information, and support for their family. One resource is from a federally mandated program through MN Department of Education called Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The purpose of early intervention services is to enhance your child's development, minimize need for special education, maximize your child's potential, and enhance your family through supportive services.
- Families can access additional resources and advocacy help through the PACER Center (www.pacer.org).

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Head Start welcomes children of all abilities and stages in their development to fully participate in the program.

- Head Start plans the environments and curriculum to be fully accessible by designing practices which consider the unique needs of each child and family.
- Practices are least restrictive and support each child's and family goals whether through an IEP/IFSP or based on the family's decision.
- All decisions are made in partnership with the family, school district, teacher, Mental Health Consultant, Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator, Behavior Specialist, supervisors, and other staff as needed to provide a strong support system.
- Head Start encourages families to invite Head Start staff to any meetings about their child's disability or support plans so they can be helpful in creating and following the plan.
- Head Start is required to have a copy of a child's IEP/IFSP so staff can use the agreed strategies and support the child's goals while in the program.

MENTAL HEALTH

- Conscious Discipline is used to promote positive relationships and self-esteem in children and staff.
- Conscious Discipline is a social-emotional and self-regulation learning program that helps empower adults and children to handle conflict. It uses everyday moments rather than a curriculum to teach critical life skills like cooperation, problem-solving, and self-awareness. The program helps adults and children understand that thoughts and feelings are what cause behavior.
- Our School Family believes that learning, teaching, and parenting happens best when everyone feels safe and connected. We create safety by breathing to calm down and focus on what we want (instead of what we don't want); we make connections by encouraging one another, building self-esteem and willpower, and showing empathy; and we solve problems through seeing challenges with positive intent, and setting boundaries with consequences so we can learn from mistakes.
- The program's licensed Mental Health Consultant visits each classroom to observe the children and help families and staff with concerns. They help strengthen teacher's skills in behavior management and make recommendations based on children's needs.
- The Mental Health Consultant can do individual observations in the home or in the classroom, offer suggestions, and help families find additional services as needed. Talk with your child's teacher or home visitor if you are interested in meeting with the Mental Health Consultant.
- The Behavior Specialist is a support for staff and families to help with challenging behaviors. This staff person makes plans to support individual children's success, meets with teachers and families to suggest strategies, and helps interpret behaviors that may need additional support through a referral to the school district or mental health agency.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Smoking is not allowed at **any time** and in **any space** used by the program, including at the bus pick up and drop off stops. Please do not smoke during home visits. If you would like to quit smoking please contact your home visitor.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Head Start supports Parent, Family and Community Engagement in building relationships, which support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and children, and ongoing learning and development which lead to positive change for children and families. Our staff will support you in developing goals, learning about resources and preparing your child for school. Families do their part by participating in their child's learning at home, school and in your community. Share your knowledge with our staff by helping plan activities, events and in the operation of the program through Policy Council.

Engagement Opportunities include:

- Volunteer in the classroom.
- Volunteer to bus monitor.
- Volunteer to work in the kitchen.
- Volunteer at the office.
- Participate in home visits
- Help on field trips.
- Attend Family Engagement Hours
- Help the teachers with classroom projects.
- Participate in parent meetings at Family Engagement Hours
- Read to your child every day.
- Talk to your child in your home language.
- Play with your child—children learn through play.
- Share your talents and hobbies with children.
- Help organize special events.
- Serve on Head Start's Policy Council.
- Participate in parent trainings and family events.
- Promote the Head Start program to other parents and encourage their participation.
- Participate in community events and organizations.

Male involvement is important in a child's life and we strongly encourage fathers, grandpas, uncles, or any other significant males to participate in our program at any time! If you are interested in sharing a talent or skill, contact your child's teacher, home visitor or the Family and Community Engagement Manager.

VOLUNTEERS AND IN-KIND

- Volunteers are valuable and truly make a difference in the life of a child! Federal funding requires our program to have volunteers which is counted as In-Kind. Did you know that every time you volunteer you are earning money for the program through in kind? You are not only being involved with your child's education, but you are helping our program too! Head Start cannot function without the support of parents. If you are interested in volunteering in your child's classroom, contact your teacher or home visitor.

PARENTS' RIGHTS

What parents can expect from Head Start:

- The opportunity to take part in policy decisions affecting the planning and function of the program (Policy Council and parent meetings).
- To be welcomed in the classroom.
- Parents may visit the center any time during the hours of operation.
- To be given information about your child's progress.
- To be informed about the results of your child's screenings.
- To always be treated with respect and dignity.
- To receive support for each child, thus helping his/her total development as an individual.
- To learn how the program functions, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill staff positions.
- To be informed about community resources (employment, health, education, improvement of family life).
- State law supports participating in your child's school related activities. Please contact your employer for more information.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

What Head Start expects from parents:

- Ensure child attends school every day.
- Participate in home visits and conferences.
- Attend parent meetings and Family Engagement Hours.
- Learn as much as possible about the program and take part in policy decisions.
- Complete Parent Gauge Interview two times per year with teacher or home visitor
- Advocate for your children and family.
- Take your child to medical and dental appointments and follow-up with any treatment needs.
- For the safety of your child, our buildings are secure. Please enter the building only through the main entrance.

PARENT MEETINGS

We invite you to attend parent meetings. The purpose of the Parent Meeting is to:

- Work together with staff and other parents to plan and give ideas about curriculum, health, field trips and meal planning.
- Share, learn, and strengthen parenting skills.
- Voice opinions and feelings.
- Stay informed about classroom activities and Policy Council decisions.
- Meet and make new friends.

In October each parent group will elect a Chairperson, Secretary, and Policy Council Representative(s). Parents can take turns being the Chairperson and Secretary each month for the parent meeting. The elected Policy Council Representative will attend the monthly Policy Council Meetings and the monthly Family Engagement Hours. Head Start staff or immediate family members of Head Start staff are not allowed to serve as Policy Council Representatives.

POLICY COUNCIL

Policy Council is a group of elected parents and community representatives who establish policies and make decisions about program operations. At least 51 percent of the council members are Head Start parents. This group works closely with the Head Start Director and the Family and Community Engagement Manager. The group sets policy based on input from each parent group.

- Meetings are held monthly. The schedule is available from your home visitor.
- Each member will receive information monthly that includes the location, agenda, previous meeting minutes and any other needed information that would help members make informed decisions.
- Interpreters will be provided, if requested.
- Policy Council members represent their parent group and are responsible for giving a monthly report at their parent meeting during the Family Engagement Hour.
- Members receive a childcare stipend or on-site childcare depending upon the need.
- Members also receive mileage reimbursement to attend the monthly Policy Council meeting.

With prior notice, all parents/staff are invited to attend Policy Council meetings, however only the representative may vote.

EARLY HEAD START HOME BASED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT HOURS

The Early Head Start home-based program option includes the opportunity for children and their parents to engage in activities outside their home. In our Head Start program, these group experiences are referred to as "Family Engagement Hours." Family Engagement Hours are offered twice a month and involve children and parents in activities that support child development by strengthening the parent-child relationship and giving parents an opportunity to share their parenting challenges and joys with one another.

- A parent meeting will be held one time per month.)
- Fun activities will be planned for the family.
- Learn new ideas and receive support about parenting skills and child development.
- A meal or snack may be served depending on the time of day.
- Every family will receive information about the Family Engagement Hour ahead of time.

FAMILY SUPPORT/HOME VISITS

Head Start staff will help your family feel more comfortable and informed from the time your child enters the program to the time your child enters kindergarten.

- Head Start uses the Growing Great Kids Curriculum.
- Early Head Start Home Base uses Growing Great Kids Curriculum and the home visits will be completed weekly for 90 minutes in the home with the parent/guardian and child present.
- Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships use a parenting curriculum.
- Home Visitors will help you:
 - develop personal and career goals.
 - strengthen your family.
 - encourage participation in all aspects of Head Start.
- Additional home visits are made as needed or requested by either parents or staff.

A typical home visit includes:

- Getting to know your child and your family so that we can individualize for you.
- A time to do an individualized activity with your child that supports classroom learning. (During this time, you will observe and support your child's developing skills).
- Parenting Education.
- Book/Literacy Time.
- A time to learn about community resources, including food, housing, or emergency services.
- Opportunity to provide input on curriculum, nutrition/menu ideas, Health/Mental Health and services for children with disabilities.

HEAD START POSITIVE GUIDANCE POLICY

In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, best practices in Early Childhood Education, and the Department of Human Services licensing requirements, it is the policy of Head Start to provide respectful, responsible, developmentally appropriate guidance for enrolled children. Parents will be contacted if child behavior escalates towards unsafe conditions. If parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be used. The positive relationship between parents and staff is the most helpful factor in supporting children's behavioral needs.

BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY

In order to support each child and make sure classrooms are safe, Head Start does the following:

- Screen every child for concerns at the start of programming and make referrals to the school district and emotional/behavior specialists, as necessary.
- Staff receives regular training and coaching in Conscious Discipline to promote positive behaviors and wellness—families are also given opportunities to learn Conscious Discipline strategies.
- Staff partner with families to address behaviors using positive support (least intrusive methods) before separating a child from the group until behavior is safe.
- Staff document concerns, strategies, and incidents, and make changes as needed to best support each child.
- Access support from the Behavior Specialist, Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator, and Mental Health Consultant to add support in the classroom and/or home.
- Create a Behavior Guidance Plan to address specific concerns and help the team work together towards a goal.
- If all other steps are taken and are not successful, then the team and family will talk about other program options such as adding home visits.

REST AND NAP TIMES

Rest and nap times are part of a full-day classroom routine. Parents receive full policy along with this handbook.

- A cot is provided for each toddler and pre-school child and safely arranged in the classroom.
- Children are welcome to bring a blanket from home.
 - Blankets are washed when soiled or weekly.
- After 30 minutes, children are allowed to get up and participate in quiet classroom activities.
- A crib of safe and sturdy construction is provided for each infant.
 - Firm mattress.
 - Fitted crib sheet only.
 - Placed on backs.
- Soothing music and relaxing atmosphere provided for comfort.

EDUCATION

Head Start implements a research-based curriculum, and screening and assessment procedures that support individualization and growth in the areas of development described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* and support family engagement in children's learning and development. Head Start's goal is to provide developmentally appropriate programming using Creative Curriculum, Growing Great Kids (GK), Conscious Discipline, S.M.A.R.T Curriculum and SEEDS philosophy. We believe that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children.

- Program school readiness goals are set and measured using data from My Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system and (DECA) Devereux Early Childhood Assessment. These outcomes are shared with families in the fall, winter, spring, and summer.
- Individualized goals are set for each child using parent input, assessments, and observations.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their child's classroom experience. Input about the classroom environment is encouraged and welcomed.

A typical preschool or toddler center day includes:

- Large group time.
- Individualized small group time.
- Interest area/free choice time.
- Outdoor play (*please dress your child appropriately for the weather because children will go outside every day unless the temperature or wind chill is below 0° or there is heavy rain.*)
- Meal and/or snack time.
- Rest time (for full day options).
- Tooth brushing.
- Occasional special events ~ field trips, guest speakers, celebrations, etc.
- Regularly scheduled fire/tornado drills & bus evacuations.

PARENT CONFERENCES

- Every Teacher must schedule families for the two conferences to take place at the center and the two education home visits to take place in the home.
- Educational checkpoints must be shared with families no later than 30 days after the season checkpoint date which includes assessment of child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.

HEAD START SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

All children will make progress across all of the My Teaching Strategies GOLD areas of development and learning and at least 85% of 4 year olds beginning the widely held expectations for kindergarten.

Language and Literacy

Children will be able to listen to and understand language and express needs and thoughts appropriately. They will also demonstrate phonological awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, print concepts, and emergent writing skills.

Approaches to Learning

Children will be able to demonstrate positive approaches to learning, including initiative, curiosity, persistence, attentiveness, and cooperation. They will also explore the visual arts, music, dance, and drama.

Cognition and General Knowledge

Children will demonstrate knowledge about self, show a basic understanding of people and how they live, and demonstrate simple geographic knowledge. They will use scientific skills and methods to explore characteristics of living things, physical properties of objects and the environment. The children will also demonstrate reasoning, problem solving skills, number concepts and quantities, number relationships and operations, geometry, patterns, measurement, and comparison.

Social and Emotional Development

Children will regulate their own emotions and behaviors, develop and sustain positive relationships, and participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations.

Physical Development and Health

Children will have current health and dental health examinations and follow-ups. They will demonstrate general health knowledge and care, including nutrition, oral hygiene, exercise, and healthy choices. They will also demonstrate travelling, balancing, gross and fine motor strength and coordination skills.

Program Plan to Support School Readiness Goals

Program data will be reviewed in the fall, winter, spring, and summer. This will result in specific program plans to support school readiness goals. Data will include, but not limited to, My Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment, CLASS Scores, and Minnesota Head Start Association School Readiness Data Results.

NON-ENROLLED CHILDREN IN CLASSROOMS

In order to comply with Minnesota State Department of Human Services' Rule 3 for Child Care Licensing, no other children age 15 years or under are permitted in the classroom during classroom operation. This does not include special events and Family Engagement Hour.

FIELD TRIPS

There may be field trips during the program year. These trips are educationally oriented, and parents are encouraged to volunteer. Parents/guardians must sign a permission form for their child to participate. These forms are sent home with the child several days prior to a field trip. Parent/guardian volunteers are needed on field trips. We are required to have 1 adult with every two children while on these trips.

CELEBRATIONS AND BIRTHDAYS

Children are exposed to many different celebrations from many cultures. No specific holiday receives special attention. Birthdays may be acknowledged or celebrated during center time. Parents are welcome to help with planning for their child's birthday. Suggestions include joining your child for lunch, selecting a favorite book to share with the class, reading to your child's class at story time, bringing a favorite item for your child to show-and-tell, or sharing items such as stickers, pencils, removable tattoos etc. For the safety and sensitivity to dietary needs, no food may be provided outside of regular meals and planned curriculum activities.

PETS

To ensure the safety of all children present at center, animals will be allowed as a classroom pet or as a "visitor" only if prior approval of the Health Coordinator is made, parents are notified in advance, and consent is obtained from all parents in the classroom.

DATA PRIVACY/PERMISSIONS

Your right to privacy is protected by the **Minnesota Data Privacy Act**. Private information asked for on all Head Start forms will be used for program planning. You are not legally required to provide this information. However, without the required information, your child may not be able to participate in the program.

Head Start Staff, funding source employees, and state and federal auditors will have access to this information to ensure you are being served properly. Information that identifies you or any member of your household will NEVER BE REVEALED TO ANY OUTSIDE AGENCY WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION.

Families First of MN – Head Start will keep this information on file for several years from the last date it was updated or until program audits are completed, and will then be destroyed. You may review your records during agency hours by contacting the Health Services Manager. Your Home Visitor or Teacher will keep you informed as any screening or assessment takes place and gives you the results. The State of Minnesota mandates that all children ages 3-5 receive an Early Childhood Screening prior to starting Kindergarten. The completion of the Early Childhood Screening does not mean the child is registered for Kindergarten.

Head Start requires written permissions from parent or legal guardian before sharing pictures, videos, or voice recordings outside the agency. We will also need written permission for all media, social media and research purposes. Permissions can be given on the Parent Handbook Acknowledgement page at the end of this booklet.

If you choose to share photos of your child/children in Head Start on your personal Facebook page, please make sure only your child/children are in the picture.

Head Start requires a separate written parent permission before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving a child.

MEALS

- Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Menus are reviewed to ensure compliance with CACFP and Head Start Performance Standards requirements.
- Children attending the center participate in at least two meals during their day.
- Meals at centers are served family style and parents are invited to experience a meal with the children.
- Infants are fed according to the child's individual schedule.
- Adults and children sit together, pass food, and serve themselves.
- A monthly menu will be distributed to parents.
- Parents are encouraged to share menu suggestions and/or concerns.
- Children are offered the opportunity to sample a variety of foods. This is a wonderful time to work on manners, sharing and making nutritious choices. After each meal, the children learn how to clean up their tables.
- If your child has food allergies, a SPECIAL DIET STATEMENT signed by an authorized professional must be on file. Only then will we make the recommended substitution for your child.
- Head Start is sensitive to all cultures and whenever possible, attempts to make accommodations to our menu.
- Coolers are provided for transportation of breast milk and refrigerators are available on site.
- Formula is provided but cannot be sent home.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) [found online](#) at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410,

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If parents have concerns about a situation and/or staff member they are encouraged to express their concerns by following this process:

- Discuss concerns with the Teacher/Home Visitor. (This should be done in private and not in front of the children.) If they are uncomfortable talking to the Teacher or Home Visitor directly, the parent(s) may ask the Policy Council representative from their parent meeting group to attend the meeting. The parent(s) may request an agency interpreter or may bring their own. The Teacher or Home Visitor will report back to his/her Supervisor about the complaint and the results of the meeting with the parent(s). The Teacher or Home Visitor will document the conversation, the plan that was developed, and the expected outcome from the meeting.
- If the concern is still not resolved, the parent(s) will contact the Site Coordinator and schedule a meeting. The parent(s), the Home Visitor or Teacher, the Coordinator and, if the parent(s) request, an Interpreter, will attend the mutually agreed upon meeting. Parent(s) and staff will work together to resolve the concern.

- If the concern is still not resolved to the parent(s) satisfaction, the parent may contact the Head Start Director. The Director will meet with the parent(s) and staff. The Director may review the concern and, within 15 days, send a letter to the parent(s) regarding the concern.
- If the concern is not resolved at this level, the Head Start Director may request that the Executive Director become involved. The Executive Director would then have 15 days in which to address the concern and respond via letter to the parent(s). A copy of this letter would also be provided to the Head Start Director.
- If the concern is still unresolved after the Executive Director's participation, the parent(s) may seek resolution from the President of the Board of Directors of Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc.

REPORTING POLICY FOR PROGRAMS PROVIDING SERVICES TO CHILDREN

Parents receive full program policy with this handbook.

Mandated Reporting

All staff are mandated reporters and must comply with Minnesota Statutes, Section 626.556 regarding the protection of children whose health or welfare may be harmed through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. As required by State law, all staff must report concerns of suspected child abuse and/or neglect to local child protection agencies.

Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect or Licensing Violations.

Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.

- If the alleged maltreatment was committed by a parent, guardian, family childcare provider, family foster care provider and the child is in:
- **Immediate danger** - If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger (such as recent sexual assault or serious physical assault) or the child is abandoned; contact your local law enforcement agency 911 right away. Law enforcement officers can remove a child from a threatening environment to protect the child.
- **No immediate danger** – If the child is not in immediate danger, as soon as you have reason to believe a child has been maltreated, contact your local child protection agency.

Freeborn County	507-377-5400	Rice County	507-332-6247
Olmsted County	507-328-6400	Winona County	507-454-9381

- If the alleged maltreatment occurred in a licensed facility, contact the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at **(651) 431-6600**.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at **(651) 296-3971**.

What to Report

Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>.

A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extend of the maltreatment and /or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or

recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

The reporting policies and procedures must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request. The Division of Licensing recommends that parents with children currently enrolled in your child care program are informed of the development of the reporting policies and procedures, and provide them with an opportunity to request the information.

Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

It is the policy of the Agency to comply with all provisions of the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. It is the responsibility of all members of the Agency staff to ensure appropriate usage of all technology resources in compliance with CIPA. See specific subheads, e.g., **Safety and Security** for further information on CIPA compliance. Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc. does not allow minors' access to its technology resources making certain requirements under CIPA and Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act inapplicable, specifically educating minors about appropriate online activities and monitoring the online activities of minors.

PARENT/GUARDIAN REMINDERS:

Pre-School Head Start children are required to complete the following:

- A current and complete physical examination.
- An up-to-date immunization record.
- Scheduled home visits.
- A center orientation with parent/guardian.
- A current dental examination.
- A current developmental and social-emotional screening.

Early Head Start children are required to complete the following:

- A current and complete physical examination.
- An up-to-date immunization record.
- An orientation home visit and/or center orientation with parent/guardian.
- Weekly 90 minute home or virtual visits.
- A current developmental and social-emotional screening.

Thank you for letting us be a partner in your child's education. We look forward to seeing you and your family involved in our Head Start program.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Active Calming:

When children become dysregulated it is necessary for adults to co-regulate to help them regain composure and therefore learn how to regulate themselves. Adults “upload” calm within themselves to make space for a pause before responding to the child’s upset, and then “download” that sense of calm to the child through deep breathing and reassuring the child that they are safe. Remember, misbehavior is a call for help so it is the adult’s job as the Safe Keeper to help the child regulate, not join in their dysregulation and upset.

Separation

Children between the ages of six weeks and 16 months, and children with a developmental disability or related condition must *not* be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance. Separation is defined as anytime a staff removes a child from regular activity because of behavior and the child has no choice of activities for a period of time. Some examples:

- a. If the child is away from the group and cannot re-join because the adult determines the child is not safe to re-join the group, this is a separation.
 - b. If the child is not willing to move to a different area to help regulate and the adult is choosing to keep or move a child in a certain area, this is a separation.
 - c. A child choosing to use the Safe Place is not a separation so long as the child is able to go to the center and return to the group on their own accord.
1. If a child must be separated, they must remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where they can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person, and the *Subpart D Form Notice* must be completed. Children must be supervised at all times.

The total time of separation is recorded from when the child was removed from the group until they are able to rejoin the group. If a child is separated multiple times during an instance of dysregulation, the time between separations when the child may still be dysregulated is not recorded.

1. If a child separated from the group three or more times in one day, the child’s parent shall be notified and the parent notification shall be indicated on the daily log; and
2. If a child is separated five or more times in one week, eight times or more in two weeks, the procedures in the Persistent Unacceptable Behavior PRP must be followed.
3. A child who requires separation from the group must:
 - a. Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person;
 - b. The child’s return to the group must be contingent on the child’s stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation; and
 - c. The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops.

Protocol for Behavior Support:

For all levels: If at any point there is an incident or accident such as running away from teachers, behaviors becoming unsafe resulting in a separation, or accidents involving other children, the [Subpart D Form Notice](#) must be completed. If a situation becomes unsafe, it might be necessary to evacuate the classroom to reduce conflict and allow for staff to better co-regulate with the child(ren). In the event of an evacuation, staff must fill out the [Subpart D Form Notice](#). Staff should consider the best routes for evacuation and discuss with the team at the beginning of the program year what they will do in case of emergency and revisit the plan throughout the year.

When staff identifies unsafe or concerning behavior, they establish communication with the family for collaboration and support.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

_____ I, (we) have received a copy of the Head Start Parent Handbook and have reviewed it with the Home Visitor/Teacher.

_____ I, (we) understand the policies and procedures and may contact any Head Start staff, or the Head Start Director, if there are any questions.]

_____ I (we) give permission for my child to be present in the classroom during scheduled Mental Health Consultant classroom observations.

_____ I, (we) have reviewed the Maltreatment of Minors Policy in the Head Start Parent Handbook

_____ I, (we) have been notified of the childcare emergency plan. **(Not Applicable for EHSCCP)**

_____ I, (we) have reviewed the naps /rest policy in the Head Start Parent Handbook. **(Not Applicable for EHSCCP)**

_____ I (we) give have been informed about the wipes and sunscreen policy and give permission for these items to be used. **(Not Applicable for EHSCCP)**

_____ In the event of a minor incident/accident, I would like to be contacted by: Phone: ____ Text: ____ Report Only: ____

Please indicate with a check mark one option from above. You will be given the incident/accident report at the end of the day.

Any use outside of Families First/Head Start will require additional permissions.

(Please print clearly)

(Child's Name– First and Last)

(Second Child's Name– First and Last)

(Signature of Parent(s) or Guardians)

(Signature of Head Start /Teacher)

(Signature of Head Start Interpreter)

Date _____

Class Code: _____



***Staff use only:**

HV/Teacher will scan into Child Plus under the Family Service tab;

Add attachment;

Attachment Type: Parent Handbook form

Description: Parent Handbook

*****Check to make sure attachment is there before shredding this form.*****