



# 2022 - 2023 PARENT HANDBOOK



Head Start  
The Right Start





Head Start  
The Right Start



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# Letter from the Head Start Staff

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Action Pathways Head Start! On behalf of our teachers, staff, administration and governing board, I would like to take a moment to extend my sincerest appreciation for your belief in our ability to offer your child the best education and supportive experience possible.

Action Pathways Head Start believes that education is the key to a promising future for the children in our community.

Building a foundation for lifelong learning begins at an early age, which is the cornerstone of the Early Childhood Education division and Head Start program. We focus on providing the right start in a safe, age-appropriate learning environment for children ages birth to 5.

By enrolling in our program, you have chosen to give your child the right start for their future! Action Pathways Head Start/ Early Head Start centers in Cumberland County have the highest-rated license possible, evidence of our commitment to quality care and education services.

We hold dear the core values of our program to give your child, and your family, a holistic approach to services. We believe that you have a great role to play in your child's success. You are your child's first teacher and we'll be here to support you in any way we can. We want your child not only prepared to enter kindergarten, but excelling with motivation for continued success in life. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have questions. We wish you a happy, engaged and wonderful school year!

Sincerely,  
The Staff of Action Pathways Head Start!

# Head Start Directory

Name of the center my child attends:

Telephone number:

My child's teacher:

## Center Locations

### **Blanton Road**

4623 Blanton Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28303  
Phone: 910-868-2724

### **Fisher Street**

510 Fisher Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
Phone: (910) 491-4770  
Fax: 485-1101

### **Hay/Branson**

925 Davis Court  
Fayetteville, NC 28311  
Phone: (910) 485-4093  
Fax: 485-1101

### **Holland Homes 3039**

Enterprise Ave  
Fayetteville, NC 28306  
Phone:

### **Lewis Heights**

4868 Bickett Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
Phone: (910) 864-4561  
Fax: 864-6768

### **McNeill**

4382 Fox Grove Circle  
Fayetteville, NC 28304  
Phone: (910) 488-1310 Fax:  
488-3920

### **River Commons I & II**

328 Deep Creek Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28312  
Phone: (910) 323-5181 Fax:  
483-1051

### **River Commons III-V**

328 Deep Creek Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28312  
Phone: (910) 323-5181 Fax:  
223-9147

### **Rosemary Street**

260 Rosemary Street  
Fayetteville, NC 28301  
Phone: (910) 480-0027 Fax:  
480-0028

### **Southern Avenue**

2229 Southern Avenue  
Fayetteville, NC 28306  
Phone: (910) 483-3782 Fax:  
483-5053

### **Spring Lake**

612 Samuel Drive  
Spring Lake, NC 28390  
Phone: (910) 960-0776 Fax:  
960-3672

### **Strickland Bridge**

2767 Strickland Bridge Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28306  
Phone: (910) 424-8614 Fax:  
423-1348

### **Topeka Heights 3240**

Camden Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28306  
Phone: (910) 425-8733  
Fax: 424-9154

## Administration

### **Administrative Office**

Robin Harris, Interim  
Deputy Director  
5135 Morganton Road  
Fayetteville, NC 28314  
Phone: (910) 487-9800

### **Action Pathways**

Lonnie Ballard, CEO  
316 Green Street  
PO Box 2009  
Fayetteville, NC 28302  
Phone: (910) 485-6131

# Action Pathways Head Start Components

## Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership Staff

Home Visitation Specialist  
CCP - EHS Coordinator

## Child Development Systems

Health Services Manager  
Disabilities and Inclusion Coordinator  
Nutrition Coordinator  
Mental Health Coordinator  
Nurse

## Child Services

Education Manager  
Education Coordinator  
Head Start Teachers  
Head Start Teacher Assistants  
Early Head Start Instructional Coach

## Family and Community Partnerships

Family Engagement and Community  
Partnerships Manager  
Family Advocate Supervisor  
Family Advocates

# The Head Start Promise

The mission of Head Start guides how we provide services to our families every day.

**Head Start...  
Serving Children  
Empowering Families  
Strengthening Communities  
Through Teamwork and a Commitment to  
Excellence!**

## Philosophy

The Head Start program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs and that children of low-income families, in particular, can benefit from a comprehensive developmental program to meet those needs. The Head Start approach is based on the philosophy that a child can benefit most from a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program to foster development and remedy problems as expressed in a broad range of services, and that the child's entire family, as well as the community, must be involved.

The program should maximize the strengths and unique experiences of each child. The family, which is perceived as the principal influence in the child's development, must be a direct participant in the program. Local communities are allowed latitude in developing creative program designs as long as the basic goals, objectives and standards of a comprehensive program are followed.

Head Start serves children ages six weeks to five years and their families. It is a child-focused program with an overall goal of increasing the social competence of young children in low-income families. *Social competence* means the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Social competence takes into account the interrelatedness of social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.

Head Start services are also family-centered, following the tenets that children develop in the context of their family and culture with parents respected as the primary educators and nurturers. Head Start offers family members opportunities and support for growth and change, believing that people can identify their own strengths, needs and interests, and are capable of finding solutions.

To support the overall goal of improving social competence, Head Start embraces a core set of commitments to:

Establish a supportive learning environment for children, parents and staff, in which the processes of enhancing awareness, refining skills and increasing understanding are valued and promoted

Recognize that the members of the Head Start community - children, families and staff - have roots in many cultures. Head Start families and staff, working together as a team, can effectively promote respectful, sensitive and proactive approaches to diversity issues

Understand that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is a responsibility shared by families, governing bodies and staff and when the ideas and opinions of families are heard and respected

Embrace a comprehensive vision of health for children, families and staff, which assures that basic health needs are met, encourages practices that prevent future illnesses and injuries and promotes positive, culturally relevant health behaviors that enhance lifelong well-being

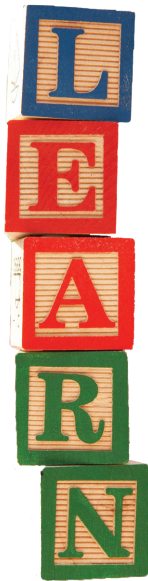
Respect the importance of all aspects of an individual's development, including social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth

Build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual while, at the same time, a sense of belonging to the group is reinforced

Foster relationships with the larger community so that families and staff are respected and served by a network of community agencies in partnership with one another

Develop a continuum of care, education and services that allow stable, uninterrupted support to families and children during and after their Head Start experience

# CHAPTER 1: About Our Program



In this section, you will find information about hours, inclement weather, attendance and proper attire, picking up and dropping off your student, our discipline policy and how we operate.



## Hours of Operation

All Head Start/Early Head Start centers are open from 7:30 am. – 2:00 pm. (please note: times are subject to change). The earliest a child may enter the classroom is 7:30 am with an entrance cut off time of 9:00am. All children must be picked up by 2:00 pm.

## Inclement Weather Policy

All centers will adhere to the schedule announced by the Cumberland County School System on local radio and television stations. If during inclement weather, Cumberland County Schools is closed to students, but it is an optional teacher workday, Head Start employees are also expected to report to work or to use a vacation day.

## Attendance

Regular attendance at Head Start is important. If you know ahead of time that your child will be absent, please inform the child's teacher. The Family Advocate assigned to each center will contact families of children who have:

1. Irregular attendance
2. Extended absences
3. Missed two (2) consecutive days of school
4. Chronic lateness

We will make every effort to work with you to resolve the problem causing the absence. Vacation during the Head Start school year is considered an unexcused absence, and we cannot guarantee your child's slot will be available when you return. Please be sure to work with your Family Advocate if you have extended time planned away from the center during the program year.

## Parent Transport

Adults transporting children must park in designated parking spaces, enter the center, sign their child into his/her classroom and release them to the Head Start staff present in the class. Parents are required to update their emergency contact information regularly.

## Parking Zones

Handicapped parking spaces are marked by a handicapped parking sign in blue and are provided at each center. These spaces are available to handicapped individuals only. A valid state issued handicapped placard must be displayed when parking in one of these designated spaces. A violation of this North Carolina state law carries a penalty of up to \$250. Do not park in areas designated as "No Parking Zones."

## Attire

Each child must come clean and in clean clothes and shoes. The following will not be allowed in the classroom: flip-flops, heels, heelys, cleats and sleepwear. We cannot be responsible for your child's hair ornaments or jewelry if they are lost or stolen. Early Head Start children are not allowed to wear hair beads or small jewelry while in the classroom because of the choking hazard they present.

Please bring two (2) sets of clothing per season (summer and winter) that will be kept at the center in case of an accident. This set of clothing must be clearly marked with the child's name.

## Visitor's Dress Code

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing during drop off and pick up times and while at Head Start or involved in any Head Start sponsored events. Inappropriate clothing includes: pajamas, anything revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn, transparent or articles of clothing that reveal one's midsection. Shoes are required at all times. Clothing that reveals one's undergarments is also inappropriate. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

## Religious Statement

We provide care for children of families with various religious background and beliefs. We do not teach religious doctrine at our centers; the daily lesson plan, religious activities, instruction or communication -to include decorations - which promote religious beliefs will not be part of the daily curriculum.

## Head Start Discipline Policy

Action Pathways Head Start believes that children need positive discipline. The goal of a discipline policy is to implement behavior management strategies and practices to support children as they regulate their emotions and behavior. Behavior management strategies are implemented to enhance children's social and emotional success in group settings and prevent and address challenging behaviors. Young children need the freedom to evaluate, decide, create and explore; however, they are not experienced or emotionally mature enough to navigate strong emotions and need guidance and supervision.

The Office of Head Start and the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (NCDCEE) have established rules regarding discipline that our program strictly adheres to. Acceptable methods and strategies of positive discipline that may be utilized with Head Start children include the following:

1. Teachers will always reassure children of their safety and welfare and look for opportunities to praise, encourage and reinforce acceptable behavior.
2. Preventive discipline is the key to success. The teachers will be observant and alert in order to spot potential trouble areas and take appropriate action before problems arise.
3. Teachers will set the example for good behavior by exhibiting courtesy, consideration and caring for both children and adults.
4. Children and teachers will establish classroom expectations during the first few days of school and thereafter as needed.
5. Teachers will help children who are exhibiting challenging behaviors by talking with children about the behavior, offering time in the calm down area, redirection, or offering reasonable choices. Teachers will utilize social emotional teaching strategies to support children in learning ways to cope with strong emotions in a healthy way.
6. Children will not be permitted to exhibit aggressive behaviors towards other children or teachers. The teachers will firmly state to the child that the unacceptable behavior will not be allowed. Teachers will redirect the behaviors or allow children time to find calm before addressing the behavior with the child.
7. Children will be told and helped to thoroughly understand any consequences for unacceptable behavior.
8. When possible, teachers will ignore unacceptable behavior and reinforce positive behavior.

Conduct of preschool children, which disrupts normal classroom activities on a frequent or extended basis may indicate developmental or social emotional concerns. In these instances the parents/guardians will be contacted and, together with designated Head Start staff, steps shall be taken to address the concerns.

Corporal (physical) punishment and isolation of a child is strictly prohibited in Head Start. Any Head Start staff member that engages in these methods will face disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

The following rules shall be followed by all Head Start staff, volunteers and service providers:

1. To ensure a child's safety, no child is to be left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors or volunteers while under their care.
2. No child will be handled roughly in any way including shaking, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, biting, kicking, pulling hair or spanking.
3. No child will ever be placed in a locked room, closet or box.
4. No discipline will ever be delegated to another child. (Example: Johnny, go over there and hit Mary.)
5. No food will ever be withheld, or given, as a means of discipline.
6. No child will ever be disciplined for lapses in toilet training.
7. No child will ever be disciplined for not sleeping during rest time.
8. No child will ever be disciplined by using physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.
9. No child will be removed from the classroom unless accompanied by an adult to supervise him.
10. No child will be verbally abused. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. yelling at children
  - b. teasing children
  - c. ridiculing or shaming children
  - d. using threats, abusive or profane language either directed at or in the presence of children, parents or staff
  - e. No child shall be subject to the use of derogatory remarks about the child or child's family
11. No child will be stood where he is facing a corner or wall for punishment.
12. No child will be forced to eat; however, all children shall be encouraged to try new foods.

Effective behavior management strategies includes careful planning, providing children with meaningful and engaging learning opportunities and the use of guidance procedures such as redirection and planned ignoring to support children as they navigate the development of social relationships with peers and teachers. Positive, supportive relationships between staff, children, and parents are important for healthy social and emotional development.

1. Head Start staff will use effective communication with children at all times. Staff will use open-ended questions such as "Why are you upset today?" or "What happened to make you upset?"
2. Staff will use proactive interventions when monitoring and interacting with children in their class.
  - a. Find out what the behavior is and document.
  - b. What causes or triggers the behavior?
  - c. Provide positive behaviors to replace inappropriate behaviors.
  - d. Consistently model positive behaviors.
3. Staff will ensure that children are being monitored at all times to prevent situations from occurring in any environments that would cause inappropriate behaviors.
4. Staff will talk with the children about their expectations and the types of behaviors they would like for the children to display in the classroom.
5. Staff will teach and model the desired behavior they want and expect from children in the classroom.
6. Staff will use positive moments to encourage good behaviors that are being used by children and award the behavior with a positive descriptive praise or positive gestures (high - five, thumbs up, etc.).
7. Staff will avoid giving negative directives to children such as saying "no," "don't" or "stop."
8. Staff will use appropriate tones of voice at all times when interacting with children.
9. Staff will use positive redirections when communicating with children that are displaying inappropriate behavior.

The primary concern of Head Start is the health, safety and well-being of its children and families. Please be aware that any Head Start staff member, volunteer or service provider who has reason to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected is required by law to immediately report it to the Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Protection Division and the North Carolina Department of Childcare and Early Education (NCDCEE).

# Chapter 2: Specialized Services



In this section, you will find information regarding transition services, mental health services, services for children with disabilities, the Head Start Exclusion Policy and additional services provided to families.

## Transition Services

Transitioning from preschool to kindergarten can be a life changing event for young children. Head Start centers try to make it as easy as possible for both the child and the parent. Parents receive an orientation, transition training, fliers, books, Beginners Day Activities and the opportunity to volunteer in their child's class and interact with classroom activities. Head Start Staff will provide a transition meeting for children transitioning from Head Start to Kindergarten to help support a successful transition.

The parent or guardian may request copies of pertinent health/education information from the students files by contacting the child's teacher or family advocate. The request must be received by May of the current program year. If documentation is requested after May, files may be in storage and the process of receiving documentation will be extended. Files requested after May will require a picture ID from the parent or guardian and a signed release form.

## Services to Children with Disabilities

Early Head Start and the CDSA (Children's Developmental Services Agency of NC) maintain a collaborative agreement to meet the unique needs of children with developmental disabilities. For our Head Start students, Head Start and Cumberland County Schools maintain a collaborative agreement to meet the unique needs of children with developmental disabilities, providing a wide range of services to include: social, educational, nutrition, medical, speech, occupational and physical therapy.

Head Start is inclusive of children with diagnosed disabilities in regular classroom settings with typically developing children. A minimum of 10 percent of all Head Start enrollees are children with disabilities. This 10 percent may be from families whose income exceeds the National Poverty Guidelines for enrollment.

Inclusion in Head Start allows children with various needs and strengths to be in an inclusive classroom setting. This inclusion fosters understanding of individual differences for all children.

## Special Services

Head Start makes it possible for all children with special needs to be identified early in the program year.

- Each child is screened in the areas of speech and language, cognitive, hearing, motor skills and social - emotional development. Parents are notified if further evaluation is needed in any of the areas and are a part of all processes to help their children achieve their specific goals.
- Observations of classrooms are conducted by qualified staff of developmental, behavioral, and social - emotional development of all children. Information is gained to provide necessary support in the classroom as well as provide information an resources to teachers and parents.

## Mental Health

Head Start provides mental health staff for Head Start children and families. The Mental Health Coordinator is available to help teachers and parents encourage behaviors which move children in the direction of cooperation, making friends and appropriate choices, developing a strong sense of self-esteem and coping with behavioral challenges. The Mental Health Coordinator periodically visits the classroom to work with the staff, families and children. If it seems your child could benefit from referral to other resources, a parent meeting will be held and all documentation needed for consent for referral will be gained before any further services are sought.

# Chapter 3:

## Health and Nutrition



In this section, you will find information regarding emergencies, illness, transportation of sick children, administering medication, asthma, nutrition, healthy habits, Head Start's Epidemic Control Policy and other information regarding the general well-being of your children.



## Telephone

For all emergency calls, the telephone is located in the center's office or hallway.

## Emergency Information

Emergency information for all children is located in individual Health/Family Services files. Classroom teachers and center supervisors have access to emergency information for each child. These records contain names, address and phone numbers of the child's parents and emergency contact person, as well as the child's physician and preferred hospital.

## Illness

If your child comes to school when he/she is not feeling well, they will be vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of your child and of the other people at school to keep him/her home when he/she is ill. A child needs to be well to be able to participate actively in the program.

Keep your child at home if he/she has a fever, bad cold, upset stomach, earache, rash or swollen glands. If a child is well enough to come to school, we will expect them to go outdoors with classmates, weather permitting. If your child becomes ill while at school and you are called, please cooperate by picking him/her up promptly.

If your child has a prescribed medication, it must be in the original container with the pharmacist's label, which lists the child's name, date the prescription was filled, the physician's name, the name of the medicine or the prescription and the dosage. Parents must give Head Start staff authorization to administer all medications. **All medication must be picked up by the parent at the end of the year.**

## Transportation of Sick Children

The lead teacher or responsible staff member will be responsible for obtaining permission from the parent to transport the sick or injured child to the doctor or hospital emergency room (by Emergency Medical Service). The Head Start staff must obtain permission from the parent for a child to receive emergency treatment

***It is very important that you immediately inform the program of any changes in address or telephone numbers.***

## Medical and Dental Home

Head Start staff work closely with parents, the Health Department, Department of Social Services and other agencies to ensure health services are provided and all children are enrolled in a "medical and dental home". Parents who receive Medicaid or private insurance are encouraged to use this source of payment for needed health services. All children are required to have an annual medical examination completed and on file within 30 calendar days of entrance into the program, or the child will be excluded from the classroom until the form is returned. An annual dental examination must be completed and submitted within 90 calendar days of entrance into the program. Parents not enrolled in the Medicaid program are encouraged to apply for North Carolina Health Choice Insurance for children. Contact your Family Advocate for assistance to obtain Health Insurance.

Forty-five calendar day health services will be provided for your child while he/she is enrolled in the program. These screenings will consist of speech, hearing, vision and developmental.

North Carolina Immunization Law requires that all children are immunized against childhood diseases. Proper immunizations must be up-to-date and remain up-to-date while in the Head Start program. Children not up-to-date will be excluded until they are up-to-date. You are strongly encouraged to follow-up on all failed screenings in a timely manner. The Head Start staff will assist you with services of hearing, vision, speech, developmental, physical or dental.

All children are mandated to have at least one lead screening for children aged three to five. Early Head Start children may also receive lead screenings at 12 and 24 months. This screening is completed during the child's Well-Check Physical Exam.

## Epidemic Control Policy

No child or staff person will be admitted into the center who is suspected of having a contagious disease. Teachers will complete health checks for each child entering the classrooms. If the child appears ill, the parent will be requested to keep the child at home and seek medical attention as needed.

If it is suspected during the day that a child or staff person has a contagious disease, the child will be taken to the sick area. The parent will be called to come and get the child. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called to pick up the sick child. Every effort will be made to ensure that a responsible adult is contacted to care for the sick the child.

Parents shall be notified if there is an epidemic of a contagious disease at their child's center. A note will be sent home immediately giving you the necessary precautions for you and your child.

Children will not be allowed to return to the center until the disease or illness has run its course and the physician provides a note stating that the child is no longer contagious. Some of the contagious diseases are, but not limited to: Ring Worm, Chicken Pox, Conjunctivitis (pink eye), Impetigo, Measles, Head Lice, Infectious Diarrhea, Hepatitis, Whooping Cough, Strep Throat, and COVID -19.

## Administering Medication

No drug or medication shall be administered to any child without a permission to administer medication form is completed and signed by the parent, a physician order which matches the medication permission form is obtained from the child's physician, or other authorized health professional. No drug or medication will be administered after its expiration date. No drug or medication will be administered for non-medical reasons, such as to induce sleep.

Prescribed medicine will be in its original container bearing the pharmacist's label which lists the child's name, date the prescription was filled, the physician's name, the name of the medicine or the prescription number and directions for dosage. All medication administered to a child will be documented on a Medication Log and signed by the staff person administering the medication. Any medication remaining after the course of treatment shall be returned to the child's parent or discarded.

## Asthma & Children

Asthma is the most common chronic illness in children. If your child has been diagnosed with asthma, it is extremely important to notify your child's teacher and Family Advocate.

Our goal is for your child to remain symptom free during school hours. In order to provide the best possible care for your child, you must submit the following information on each asthmatic child:

1. Emergency Asthma medication and equipment (spacers, tubing, mask) must be maintained at the center for each asthmatic child when the child enters the classroom.
2. A copy of the current Asthma Action Plan when the child enters the classroom.
3. A signed Medication Authorization Form with the names and dosage of medications that can be administered at school. Must be on file when the child enters the classroom.
4. Notify your child's teacher and Family Advocate of any allergies, irritants or activities that cause asthma or allergy symptoms.
5. Notify your child's teacher and Family Advocate of your child's early warning signs that an asthma attack is progressing and needs medical attention.
6. Notify your child's teacher and Family Advocate if the child is absent due to asthma.

## Secondhand Smoke

Smoking is prohibited on all Action Pathways Child Care campuses: (1) breathing in someone else's cigarette, pipe or cigar smoke can make you and your children sick, (2) children who live in homes where people smoke may get sick more with coughs, wheezing, ear infections, bronchitis or pneumonia, (3) children with asthma may have asthma attacks that are more severe or occur more often, (4) opening windows or using fans or air conditioning will not stop secondhand smoke exposure, (5) according to the U.S. Surgeon General,



secondhand smoke can cause Sudden Infant death Syndrome (SIDS) and (6) secondhand smoke can also cause lung cancer and heart disease

## Healthy Habits

***“A Child’s Health is just as important as a Child’s Education”***

Healthy habits are established in the classroom with daily tooth brushing and an emphasis on proper hand-washing techniques. Family style dining, with balanced nutritious meals, gives children an opportunity to learn about healthy eating habits with support from their peers and teachers. We encourage parents to participate in our Health Services Advisory Committee to help develop policies that foster healthy environments at school and home.

## Nutrition

Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack are provided to all children in the EHS and HS programs. We follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines ensuring that children receive at least 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional requirements. All staff receives in-service training on the principles of nutrition and its relation to child development and family health which promotes healthy eating habits.

Head Start staff follows all necessary precautions for children with food allergies or special diets. To ensure enough food servings are available for the classrooms during lunch, please give a courtesy call to your child’s teacher prior to 9:00 am, if your child will be arriving late. This is to ensure your child will be included in the daily lunch count.

The educational aspect of the nutrition program is incorporated into the daily routine of the classroom through discussions about food during meal times, field trips, story time, role play and family style dining. Family style dining allows the children to participate, to the fullest extent possible, in the food preparation process in the classroom. This includes setting the table, passing out milk and serving their own food items. All the classrooms use child size utensils and equipment to accommodate all children. Children who refuse to eat certain food items are encouraged but not forced. Food is never used as a reward or punishment because that can create eating problems and unpleasant associations with food.

*Children are not to bring food to the program with them.*

*Food brought by parents, during special events or celebrations, must be commercially prepared (store-bought) and in it’s original packaging. The approved list of foods is string cheese, yogurt, fruit/vegetable muffins, salad, fresh fruit (to exclude grapes), english muffins, graham crackers, ginger snaps, vanilla wafers, cheese and other flavored crackers, granola, oatmeal cookies, Nutri-Grain bars, sugar-free Jell-O, vanilla pudding, 100% fruit frozen pops.*

## Infant and Toddler Safe Sleep Policy

According to N.C. Law G.S. 100-91 (15), child care providers for infants 12 months of age or younger are required to implement a safe sleep policy, share the safe sleep policy with parents/guardians and participate in Infant - Toddler Safe Sleep and SIDS Risk Reduction in Child Care Training. To assist in reducing the risks of SIDS, Early Head Start shall implement the following policy:

- Infants 12 months of age or younger shall be placed on their backs to sleep on a firm tight-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib, unless the center receives a written waiver of this requirement from a health care provider. Parent waivers will not be accepted;
- Waterbeds, sofas, soft mattresses, pillows and other soft surfaces shall be prohibited as infant sleeping surfaces;
- No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskin, stuffed toys or other objects will be used in cribs;
- A pacifier will be allowed in the infants' crib while they sleep. When the pacifier falls out of the sleeping infants' mouth it will not be reinserted into the infants' mouth;
- When an infant can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they will always be put down to sleep on their back but allowed to turn to whatever position they prefer;
- When infants 12 months or younger are sleeping, the room temperature will not exceed 75° F; and
- Caregivers will visually check sleeping infants aged 12 months or younger at fifteen (15) minute intervals.

# Chapter 4: Family Services



In this section, you will find information regarding eligibility, enrollment, withdrawal from program, changing information, home visits, Early Head Start, family partnerships, family engagement, volunteering, parent meetings, and additional information you need to know.

## **Ages Served**

Action Pathways Head Start serves six weeks to four and five-year-old children with priority given to children who reach their fourth birthday on, or before, August 31. A child must have reached his/her third birthday before an application will be accepted for the preschool program. Once an eligible child is enrolled in the preschool program, he/she is eligible to attend until he/she reaches kindergarten age.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

Children are accepted into Head Start based on the national poverty guidelines for family income, which are updated annually. At least 90 percent of the students enrolled in Head Start must be from families whose income falls below these guidelines with those with the greatest need being placed first. Action Pathways gives priority for those enrollment slots above the guidelines to the diagnosed disabled, with low-income, disabled children receiving first priority. Applications are screened for eligibility by Family Advocates.

## **Enrollment Process**

Applications for enrollment are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year. After a child has been accepted for enrollment into the program, the parent or legal guardian will be notified to meet with the Family Advocate to complete all of the required enrollment forms. These forms must be signed by one or both parents or legal guardians. Each child must have a medical examination signed by a licensed physician within thirty (30) days after entering the program as well as immunizations required for the child's age.

## **Withdrawing From the Program**

If you are planning to move or withdraw your child from the program, please inform the Family Advocate assigned to your family of your plans. We appreciate knowing ahead of time that you will be withdrawing your child for any reason. Children enrolled in the Head Start Program are not automatically transferred into another Head Start center unless there is an opening at the time of relocation. If there is no opening at the time of relocation, we need to re-verify your income to determine eligibility before your child can be placed on the receiving center's waiting list.

## **Change of Information**

If you change your address, phone number or people listed as emergency contacts, please notify your Family Advocate of changes immediately. It is important that this information be accurate at all times. All changes must be done in writing and witnessed by a Head Start staff person.

## **Early Head Start**

Early Head Start is designed to promote healthy prenatal outcomes and enhance the development of infants and toddlers, which is provided in both center-based and home-based options. The home-based program option is conducted by a home visitation specialist making 90-minute weekly visits to the home. The home visits focus on child development, parent-child interaction and parenting goals.

## **Family Partnerships**

Building on strengths, Head Start staff work with families to support them in meeting goals that they have identified. Information, referral and resources will be provided in response to the goal(s) chosen by the parent. Frequent check-ins by phone, site and home visits will be made to check on goal progress throughout the year. All

families are strongly encouraged to participate in the goal setting process within ninety (90) days of entrance into the program.

## **In-Kind**

The federal government requires that 20 percent of the Head Start grant and the Early Head Start grant be matched with contributions from parents and the community. This is called in-kind and consist of volunteering, attending Head Start and Early Head Start activities, donating materials, working on your child's educational goals at home, serving on Policy Council and many other ways. You will be asked to fill out in-kind forms when you give services or materials to Head Start and Early Head Start.

## **Family Engagement**

Family Engagement is an integral part of a successful program for you and your child. Home visits build strong, supportive relationships between staff and parents. Parents meet together for monthly meetings, educational programs and other parent gatherings. Parent workshops are offered that are based on parent interests. Volunteering at Head Start provides the opportunity to gain new skills, develop skills you already have and may be used as job experience!

## **Parent Meetings**

Parent meetings are held throughout the year, with parent-generated topics and speakers. These meetings give parents an opportunity to learn and practice leadership skills, have fun and make site-based decisions. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in these meetings. Parent meetings are generally held at the center your child is assigned. Meeting dates and times are decided during the first parent meeting, which is announced at the beginning of the school year.

## **Volunteering at Head Start**

All parents are encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom. All parents who volunteer will be required to participate in a volunteer orientation. Anyone who volunteers more than 20 hours a week will be required to get a criminal background check and supply the Head Start program with proof of a negative TB tine test.

The following can be counted as donated time for in-kind:

- Time spent taking your child to Medical Exams, Dental Exams, Vision and Hearing Exams, Immunizations or lead testing required by the program.
- Time spent attending a Head Start policy council meeting or reading policy council materials.
- Time spent attending health, education, advisory meetings and reading the materials from these meetings.
- Time spent making games, name tags or other things for the classroom as requested by the Teacher.
- Time spent interacting with children on field trips or other activities with materials from these meetings.
- Time spent at parent nights, parent/teacher conferences or other contact visits as requested by Action Pathways Head Start staff.

## **Fathers and Friends of Head Start**

Fathers and Friends of Head Start have a vision and mission to:

- Support and encourage men to become more active in the lives of children
- Educate staff and parents to effect change in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors toward father figures
- Acknowledge parents as partners in raising their children, even when they do not live in the same household

Fathers and Friends of Head Start began eight years ago. Meeting dates and times are decided by the Fathers and Friends present at the first meeting (TBA). Different activities include: skating, kite flying, bowling, game days, picnics and a host of many more events.

For more information concerning this initiative please contact Cathy Haynes, Family Advocate Supervisor at 487-9800 ext. 2123.

## Parent Training/Parent Curriculum

The parent training using an evidenced based parenting curriculum that focuses on building resiliency in families and helps to create a strong and stable environment for raising children. It is about helping families gain access to the skills and knowledge necessary to form and sustain healthy family relationships. Family Advocates will provide this training to parents who desire to participate.

## Family Engagement Does Make a Difference

\*Studies overwhelmingly confirm that parent/family engagement increases a child's achievement, and in addition, benefit schools and communities. Programs with a well-constructed, consistent parent/family engagement plan have demonstrated benefits for both the children and adults involved." *\*National PTA*

### Benefits for the Family

- Higher achievement and self-esteem
- Better attitude toward learning
- Better behavior
- Better attendance in school
- Better communication between parents and teachers, childcare providers, etc.
- Parents will be more involved in decisions that will affect the child's education, health and safety
- Parents become more accountable
- Parents gain a stronger sense of competence in their role as a parent
- Involved parents strengthen the family
- Involved parents set examples for their children
- Motivated children become students with good chances for bright futures

### Benefits for the Program

- Parents and teachers experience increased communication
- Parents/families become partners in the program
- Parents play a key role in the education of all children, not just their own child's
- Involved parents feel an ownership in the program
- People involved in decision-making tend to make better decisions because they're closely affected by them
- Attendance will increase, and school will become a more interesting place for students
- In schools with strong parent involvement, teachers improved their teaching and reported much greater job satisfaction
- Involved parents develop more positive attitudes toward school and personnel, helping gather support for the schools and bringing in additional resources
- Engaged parents rate teachers higher in teaching ability and interpersonal skills

### Benefits for the Community

- Engaged parents take a more active role in the community
- Persistent involvement makes a difference for all children
- Parents help gather support in the community for schools, become more active in community affairs, increase self-confidence and have more positive self-images
- Parents will become advocates for all children and youth in society.

# Head Start Parent Family Community Engagement Goals

**FAMILY WELL BEING:** Parents and families are safe, healthy and have increased financial security.

- **Examples:** Families live in safe and adequate size housing; Families know how to live a healthy lifestyle; Families are given opportunities for training and schooling to achieve financial security.

**POSITIVE CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS:** Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parent and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.

- **Examples:** Families develop bed time and meal time routines, parents are actively involved in the schooling of their children by talking to their child about school and knowing what the child is learning in school.

**FAMILIES AS LIFELONG EDUCATORS:** Parents and families observe, guide, promote and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school and in their communities.

- **Examples:** Parents attend their child's parent/teacher conferences and parent trainings. Parents read materials sent home in back pack. Parents work with their child's teacher in achieving the learning goals they set for the child at the first Parent-Teacher conferences.

**FAMILIES AS LEARNERS:** Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers and life goals.

- **Examples:** Parents will explore possibilities for achieving their own educational goals by attending community educational organizations or online schooling. When possible, parents will be offered volunteer opportunities in the community to help them learn new skills and develop new relationships that will help them in their careers.

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TRANSITIONS:** Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to a new learning environment, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.

- **Examples:** Parents are able to enroll their child into kindergarten and elementary school and to discuss the needs of their child to school personnel.

**FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO PEERS AND COMMUNITY:** Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.

- **Examples:** Parents are willing to participate in groups such as School Parent Associations, parent education groups; Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts; and church groups that help them meet their personal goals and can assist in achieving their family goals.

**FAMILIES AS ADVOCATES AND LEADERS:** Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development or in community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experience.

- **Examples:** Parents are willing and able to take a leadership position in the programs that their children are involved in on the school, local community and state-wide level.



# Parent Code of Conduct

Courteous and respectful behavior between, and among, all program participants is essential for Action Pathways, Head Start/Early Head Start to achieve the program's mission and to provide a safe and positive environment for the children, families and staff. Parents/guardians are expected to follow the Code of Conduct outlined below.

## Standards of Conduct:

All parents/guardians involved with the program will:

- A) Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- B) Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families and other staff members.
- C) Leave no child alone or unsupervised while under their care.
- D) Use positive methods of child guidance and not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation; not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, to the denial of basic needs.
- E) Conducts themselves in a manner that reflects positively upon the program's reputation and upon the children and families the program serves.
- F) Not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contractors if they are involved in the award and administration of contracts or other financial awards.

Action Pathways Head Start/Early Head Start will not tolerate behavior by parents/guardians involved with the program that violates the Code of Conduct. Examples of violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Threats to children, parents or staff.
- Physical or verbal punishment of a child.
- Use any form of verbal abuse, including swearing, cursing, sarcastic language, threats or derogatory remarks.
- Smoking - including cigarettes.
- Sexual Harassment to include unwelcome sexual advances and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Quarrelling, verbal fighting, loud shouting and displays of anger.
- Bringing drugs, alcohol or weapons to program centers or events.
- Physical violence toward child, parents or staff.
- Inappropriate or excessive displays of physical affection between adults.
- Inappropriate dress, including, for example, pajamas, bedroom shoes, see through attire, a low-cut top, bare midriff or clothes with words or pictures inappropriate for young children.

If a parent **violates** the Code of Conduct, Action Pathways Head Start/Early Head Start reserves the right to:

- Restrict access to program activities.
- Contact the Department of Social Services Child Protective Services.
- Contact the law enforcement.

## Procedures:

- A) Staff will report violations to their supervisor immediately. In the absence of the Center Supervisor, the Education manager will be contacted. The Education Manager will notify the Head Start Director.
- B) The center supervisor and another staff will speak directly with the person in violation of any of these codes in private when possible, practical and if safety is not an issue.
- C) When the safety of children or staff is threatened, staff will call law enforcement.



## Head Start Parent's Rights

1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and the operation of the program
2. To be welcomed in the classroom and be treated with respect and dignity
3. To participate, or not, without fear of endangering their child's right to be in the program
4. To be informed regularly about children's progress in Head Start
5. To expect guidance for children from Head Start teachers and staff, which helps their total individual development
6. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase job readiness skills.
7. To be informed about community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of family relationships.
8. To take part in the classroom as an observer or volunteer and to contribute services in whatever way they can toward enrichment of development and learning.
9. To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, by explaining the programs to other parents and encouraging their participation.
10. To welcome teachers and staff to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home to connect learning from the school experience.
11. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and to share in evaluation
12. To take advantage of programs designed to increase knowledge about child development and skills in areas job readiness.
13. To become involved in community programs, which help to improve health, education and family life.

## Head Start Parent's Responsibilities

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major decisions
2. To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives
3. To work with the teacher, staff and other parents in a cooperative way
4. To provide Head Start with required medical information, dental information, and report illnesses to Head Start teacher, Health Services or Family Advocate
5. To drop my child off no earlier than 7:30 am; not later than 9:00 am each morning; and pick my child no later than 2:00 p.m.
6. To call my child's teacher by 8:00 a.m. when my child will be absent or late

## Information/Grievance Procedure

Parents who need information or have concerns about the program should contact the child's teacher first. If the matter cannot be resolved, then the parent should contact the On-site Supervisor. If the parent and the On-site Supervisor cannot solve the problem, an appointment will be scheduled with the Child Services Manager immediately.

If the parent is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Child Services Manager, he/she may then take their concern/complaint to the Head Start Director and then to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer. After reaching the level of Chief Executive Officer, parents who have not had their concern/complaint resolved shall follow the complaint procedure outlined as follows:

1. The right to air the complaint to the Head Start Policy Council
2. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Policy Council, the parent has the right to appeal to the Chairman of the Action Pathways Board of Directors

# Chapter 5: Parents & Head Start Working Together



In this section, you will find information about how parents and Head Start must work together to achieve success. Parent responsibilities and Head Start responsibilities are outlined along with additional information that parents should know to ensure the success of the student.

# Education is a Two Way Street

## Our Part...

In Head Start classrooms, the process of learning is not left to chance. Head Start's goal is to provide an environment that stimulates each child's curiosity and learning. We encourage each child to develop his/her unique pattern of interests, talents and skills. We know that children learn best through interaction with people and objects, and it is through play that they will achieve their educational goals. While we recognize that each child grows and develops at different rates, their individual goals will focus on the following:

1. Language Development: Listening, understanding, speaking and communicating
2. Literacy: Phonological awareness (the sounds of words), book knowledge, appreciation of books, print awareness, pre-reading concepts, early writing and alphabet knowledge
3. Mathematics: Geometry(recognizing, sorting, describing, comparing and naming common shapes  
Spatial Sense (showing growth in matching, sorting, putting in a series and regrouping objects according to one or two attributes such as color, shape or size) and Patterns and Measurements
4. Science: Scientific skills (observing, discussing, drawing conclusions and forming generalizations) and Methods and knowledge (collecting, describing and recording information through a variety of means, including drawings, maps and charts)
5. Creative Arts: Music, art, movement and dramatic play
6. Social and Emotional: Self concept, self control, cooperation, social relationships, knowledge of families and communities
7. Approaches to Learning: Initiative (choosing to participate in an increasing variety of tasks, activities, projects and experiences), curiosity, engagement, persistence, reasoning and problem solving
8. Physical Health and Development: Fine and gross motor skills, health status and health practices

## **Your Part... You are Important to Head Start !**

There are so many different ways that you can participate to make your Head Start experience successful. Here are just a few:

- Attend and get involved in parent meeting/trainings and other Head Start activities
- Volunteer in the classrooms
- Go on field trips
- Set goals and review your child's progress report
- Create opportunities for learning at home
- Be an active participant in your child's ongoing assessment
- Welcome opportunities to meet with teachers on home visits and Parent/Teacher Conferences to share meaningful information about your child
- Be a part of Parent Committees at your child's center

## **Home Visits/Parent Teacher Conferences**

It is a requirement of the Federal Government that a minimum of two (2) home visits and two (2) parent teacher conferences are completed annually. Home visits and conferences are an important part of the Head Start program, which helps to keep parents informed of their child's progress. We ask that you participate in home visits and parent teacher conferences with your child's teacher. Head Start staff will make every effort possible to schedule home visits and conferences at a time that is convenient for you. We ask that you set aside at least forty-five (45) minutes of your time for the teachers to complete home visits and parent teacher conferences. If you are unable to keep the scheduled time, we ask that you contact your child's teacher to reschedule your appointment.

## **Toys**

We ask that children leave personal toys at home. Bringing toys often leads to problems (loss, breakage or conflicts among children). Occasionally, a show-and-tell toy or object may be requested from home; however, no toy guns, violent toys or weapons are permitted.

## **No Weapons Policy**

No weapons, toy weapons or look alike of any kind are allowed on Head Start premises. If a child brings a weapon to a Head Start center, his/her parents will be contacted immediately and a parent/teacher conference will be scheduled to discuss your child's consequences and/or program eligibility.

No one is allowed to bring a gun or weapon into the center, onto the center property or at a Head Start-sponsored event. This rule applies to everyone including those who visit and staff members.

## **Parent Committee**

The Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Committee is comprised exclusively of parents/guardians of children currently enrolled in the program. If you are the parent/guardian of an enrolled child, you are automatically a member of the Parent Committee. Committee meetings are held at each individual center monthly or quarterly as determined by the parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. The Parent Committee serves as a link to the Policy Council, staff, and the community. Topics of discussion and activities for meetings are determined by parents/guardians and supported by staff and agency resources.

## **Policy Council**

The Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council is comprised of a minimum of 22 representative and 22 alternate members who are parents/guardians of enrolled children. The role of the Policy Council is for parents/guardians to participate in policy making and other decisions about the program. Policy Council members participate in program areas, such as Human Resource Management, program budgets, policy development and approval, self-assessment and other functions of the Head Start/Early Head Start program. Policy Council members must be voted on at the center level, and their term of service is from October of the current year through September of the following year. Parent participation and support is crucial in the operation of Head Start/Early Head Start and the continuation of services in Cumberland County.



# Chapter 6: Additional Information, Policy and Resources



In this section, you will find information about how parents and Head Start must work together to achieve success. Parent responsibilities and Head Start responsibilities are outlined along with additional information that parents should know to ensure the success of the student.



# Attendance Policy

Each day is an essential part of your child's preschool experience. Maintaining a regular routine for school will provide benefits to your child, including arriving on time and being in attendance every day. Every time your child is late or absent, they may miss out on activities.

## Policy

All families are encouraged to maintain consistent attendance in the Head Start program. Consistent attendance is defined as present or participating for 90 percent of expected hours or more. Children are expected to be dropped off at their Head Start program no later than 9:00am. This ensures they receive the most from the program and achieve higher goals in learning and development. Head Start staff helps families in identifying barriers to consistent attendance. Staff initiates supports as appropriate. If participation or attendance ceases, staff will make efforts to reengage families to resume attendance. A slot will become available when attendance does not resume and may be considered an enrollment opportunity.

## Areas of Responsibility

1. Parents/guardians must call, send a note, or communicate with Head Start staff to account for each day that their child cannot attend. Parents must give the reason for the absence.
2. The classroom staff is responsible for ensuring that the Daily Sign In/Out forms are completed at the time of arrival and departure, accurately and completely. **If a child is unexpectedly absent, and the parent has not made contact with staff by 9:00 a.m., the Family Advocate will make contact with the parent. If the family cannot be reached by usual means, including by reaching out to Emergency Contacts, the Family Advocate will conduct a home visit or make direct contact with the parent to create an attendance plan.**

## Attendance Plans and Alternative Services

1. If a child has two or more consecutive absences, the Family Advocate will contact the parent to obtain the reason for the absences. If the family cannot be reached by usual means, including by reaching out to Emergency Contacts, the Family Advocate will conduct a home visit or make direct contact with the parent to create an attendance plan.
2. The attendance plan will be designed to support the child's consistent attendance in the program, or if necessary, to plan for alternative services. The attendance plan will be developed by the family and the Family Advocate, typically during a home visit or face-to-face meeting. During the attendance plan meeting, staff will:
  - a) Provide information to the parent about the benefits of regular attendance.
  - b) Identify the reasons for the absences.
  - c) Create a specific plan and identify a date for establishing consistent attendance or alternative services (explained in #3 below)
  - d) In cases of prolonged illness, the Health Coordinator and Nurse) should also participate in developing the attendance plan.
3. Alternative services will be designed to ensure that all children enrolled in Head Start receive services and continue to make progress on their educational goals. Alternative services will be provided by the Teacher, or other assigned staff, and will typically occur during a home visit. Teachers may use online assessment parent activity libraries, as well as classroom supplies, and other learning materials, to provide home-based activities that address all domains of learning in the HS Early Learning Framework with a focus on the skills that the child is ready to learn.
4. Staff must document all communication with the child's family and any alternative services provided.
5. If consistent attendance cannot be established, either by classroom participation or by participation in alternative services, another child on the waiting list must be given the opportunity to enroll in the program. Families should be given numerous opportunities to establish regular attendance, and should be withdrawn from the program only when they are unwilling or unable to participate.



6. If all attempts to communicate with the family have failed using phone, letter, text message or visit to the home, the slot will be considered open for enrollment after a one week period.

## Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma Policy

### Belief Statement

Action Pathways, Head Start, believes that preventing, recognizing, responding to and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care and educating families.

### Background

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death. According to North Carolina Child Care Rule (child care centers, 10A NCAC 09 .0608), each child care facility licensed to care for children, up to five years of age, shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT.

### Procedure/Practice

#### *Recognizing:*

- Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

#### *Responding to:*

If SBS/ABT is suspected, staff will:

- Call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform your supervisor.
- Call the parents/guardians.
- If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

#### *Reporting:*

- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling 1-800-859-0829 or by emailing [webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov).
- Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to the county Department of Social Services phone number: 910-677-2450.

#### *Prevention strategies to assist staff in coping with a crying, fussing or distraught child:*

Staff first determines if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music.

In addition, the facility:

- Allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children.

- Provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed.

### **Prohibited behaviors**

Behaviors that are prohibited include (but are not limited to):

- shaking or jerking a child
- tossing a child into the air or into a crib, chair or car seat
- pushing a child into walls, doors or furniture

### **Strategies to assist staff members understand how to care for infants**

Staff reviews and discusses:

- The five goals and developmental indicators in the 2013 North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development; [ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF\\_forms/NC\\_Foundations.pdf](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF_forms/NC_Foundations.pdf)
- How to Care for Infants and Toddlers in Groups, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, [www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups)
- **Including Relationship-Based Care Practices in Infant-Toddler Care: Implications for Practice and Policy, the Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers, pages 7-9;** [www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr\\_inquire\\_may\\_2016\\_070616\\_b508compliant.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr_inquire_may_2016_070616_b508compliant.pdf)

### **Strategies to ensure staff members understand the brain development of children up to five years of age.**

All staff members complete training on SBS/AHT within the first two weeks of employment. Training includes recognizing, responding to and reporting child abuse, neglect or maltreatment as well as the brain development of children up to five years of age. Staff review and discuss:

- Brain Development from Birth video, the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families: [www.zerotothree.org/resources/156-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/156-brain-wonders-nurturing-healthy-brain-development-from-birth)
- The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child: [developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-eed/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-eed/)

## **Child Maltreatment Policy**

Action Pathways Head Start recognizes that a child of any age, sex, race, religion and socioeconomic background can fall victim to child abuse and neglect. It has been established that a large number of children who are abused and neglected are never reported to the authorities who can help them or their families receive needed help and support. In addition, Head Start recognizes that child abuse and neglect is a community problem, which must be attacked through a combined effort of concerned citizens, agencies and professionals working together to effectively identify, prevent and treat this national malady.

In order to deal effectively with suspected child abuse and neglect in Action Pathways Head Start the following procedures will be strictly followed:

- Any Head Start staff member, volunteer or service provider who has reason to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected will immediately report it by telephone to the Department of Social Services (DSS), Child Protection Division.
- The complainant will then notify the Family Services Manager of the action taken.
- Protective Services, DSS will make a decision whether or not to screen the report or to assign it for investigation.
- If the report is screened, the complainant will be notified in writing by Protective Services, who will send the report via the Family Services Manager.

- If the report is assigned for investigation, the complainant will be notified of any action taken to include the filing of a juvenile petition. If the complainant disagrees with the decision of Protective Services, DSS, North Carolina law allows for an appeal process through the District Attorney. Notification of the results of
- the investigation will be provided to the complainant through the Family Services Manager.
- It is vital that Head Start staff realize that once a report is made that a petition may be filed in juvenile court and they could be subpoenaed.
- All reports of child abuse will be referred to law enforcement for investigation and in some cases criminal charges may be filed.

North Carolina General Statutes require that Protective Services, DSS have access to the child and there is no requirement that Head Start or service providers be present during questioning or examining of the child.

The primary concern of Head Start is the health, safety and well-being of its children and families.

All steps taken regarding child abuse and neglect will be in full compliance with all statutes from the "North Carolina Juvenile Code Pertaining to Child Protective Services".

All Head Start classroom staff, bus drivers and other staff in contact with children will be provided with a copy of this document and the statutes by the Family Services Manager.

## Process for Reporting and Documentation of Parent Concerns/Allegations

The following process will be followed when receiving a concern or allegation of child maltreatment from parent/guardian or third party:

1. The staff member will document the concern received from the parent or guardian.
2. A written statement from the parent/guardian will be requested describing the concern.
3. If there are any bruises or marks on the child, a photo of the affected area will be requested or taken and included with the written statement.
4. If the parent suspects child maltreatment they are encouraged to contact the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education Intake Department at (800) 859-0829 to make a report.
5. The staff member receiving the concern will notify their direct supervisor immediately.
6. The supervisor will notify the appropriate service area manager immediately.
7. The child services managers will notify the Head Start Director immediately of the parents' concern.
8. The appropriate Head Start staff will initiate an investigation.
9. The child services managers will notify the parent of any further actions that will be taken.

## Emergency Preparedness

The safety of Action Pathways, Inc. Head Start children, staff and families is the highest priority during an emergency. An Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed by supervisors of each Head Start Center to ensure the safety of children, staff and visitors on Head Start property during a human-generated or natural weather disaster.

Experiencing a disaster is hard enough for adults. Imagine what it must be like for children. Getting prepared for an emergency is not an adult-only affair; it involves preparing children in the classroom and in your homes. A family's preparedness activities can be key to helping children stay safe and overcome their fears.

Head Start staff will talk with your children and provide activities to prepare them for the kind of emergencies that can happen in their community. Chances are high that your child knows that emergencies can happen; your child may already feel worried or anxious about a disaster happening where you live or at school. Encourage your children

to talk about any fears they may have; reassure them that getting prepared will help keep them, their friends and family safe. Let your child know that there are many people who will be on hand to help in an emergency, such as Head Start staff, police officers, fire fighters, and health officials.

You will receive a copy of your center's Emergency Preparedness Plan. In the event of an emergency, you will know the procedure for locating and receiving your child.

## **Safety and Welfare Statement - Sex Offenders**

Action Pathways Head Start is concerned about the safety of our children. As a part of our continued effort to provide a safe environment for all children and protect them from any danger, we are ensuring that our Head Start parents/guardians and staff are notified and adhere to the following relating to the release of children;

*According to the North Carolina Sex Offender and Public Protection Registration programs, a sex offender is prohibited from going to the following:*

- a. The premises of any place intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors, including, but not limited to, schools, children's museums, child care centers, nurseries and playgrounds;
- b. Any place where minors gather for regularly scheduled educational, recreational or social programs.

In adherence to this, NO person who is registered as a sex offender is allowed to enter or loiter within 300 feet of any Head Start center. This policy does NOT differ for registered sex offenders who are parents/guardians of a child enrolled in the program.

Furthermore, a registered sex offender who is a parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the program will NOT be permitted to attend Head Start programs or activities held off-site.

Children will only be released to adults 18 years and older. All designated adults must present photo identification before a child can be released to them.

A child will not be released to a known sex offender or any other person that is deemed by staff to be intoxicated, not in their right frame of mind or incapacitated in any way.

Parents and/or law enforcement will be contacted immediately if any of the above circumstances exist.

## **End of Year Transition Activities**

Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms will participate in fun-filled end of the year activities. Transition Celebrations will be scheduled during the last two days of school. During the Transition Celebrations, children may perform songs, finger plays, skits or attend outside playground activities. During this celebration, your child will share many of the school readiness skills learned throughout the school year.

Parents and family members are invited to attend this memorable end of year celebration. Don't forget the camera: you will want to make sure you have a record of this milestone in your child's life.

**We look forward to a great  
2022-2023 school year!**



Head Start  
The Right Start



**Action Pathways, Inc.**  
**Head Start**

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