

# SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

**Section:** Early Childhood Development  
**Subject:** Classroom Start-up (first two weeks)  
**Revised:** February, 1998; February, 2010

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## **REGULATION REFERENCE:**

45 CFR Part 1304 (Nov. 1996) Performance Standards 1304.21(a)(1-5), 1304.21(c)

## **POLICY:**

There will be SIMPLE themes during the initial two weeks of school enrollment. Teaching staff will focus, also, on gentle orientation to the Head Start classroom program. Teachers will provide an emotional climate that communicates warm acceptance and caring for the individual child and parent -- their needs, feelings, and interests. Teachers will communicate at eye level with children and listen attentively to children's questions and responses. These two weeks will also be a time for teaching staff to record their first impressions of each child (form #10 in the health record).

## **PROCEDURE:**

1. Teachers will introduce the learning environment to the children in an informal, unhurried, patient, and meaningful manner. The learning environment includes classroom learning centers, playground, toileting facilities, lunch room or meal set-up, and other areas both indoors and outdoors.

There will be open spaces on bulletin boards for children's initial creative efforts. There will be a moderate variety of materials available, but not everything the classroom owns will be available. For example, initially only a few simple puzzles will be available for children's use, along with other manipulatives. Children's success will be encouraged and facilitated.

2. Teachers will use a tentative schedule which is balanced in regard to active/quiet, indoors/outdoors, teacher/child-initiated activities, and large/small groups.

Learning center time should be at least two hours (30 minutes early arrival time, 60 minutes Interest Center time, and 30 minutes for late leavers). Outside play time should be at least 45 minutes. Children will be encouraged to explore both environments while being introduced to safety procedures.

Teachers will provide the time and support for children to actively explore their new surroundings, to make choices, to problem-solve, and to exercise their bodies' capacity for large and small muscle activity in a variety of ways. Transitions will be interesting and fun. The schedule, with its predictable order, will contribute much to the child's sense of comfort and security. Teachers will tuck a bit of elastic into the schedule and lesson plans and trust their good judgment regarding flexibility.

## First two weeks of classroom start-up

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3. The teacher will introduce daily health routines, including tooth brushing after breakfast or lunch and hand washing before/after eating, after toileting, after playing outdoors or handling any type animal, before/after water, sand and playdough activities. Teachers **will demonstrate all activities.**
4. The teaching staff will lead discussions (in large or small group settings) concerning how many people can work and play together safely and the need for some simple rules of behavior. Together, the group will verbalize (teachers will make experience chart) of three basic rules:
  1. When inside, we use our "inside voices."
  2. We walk in the building.
  3. We keep our hands to ourselves.
  4. We touch **ONLY** our own mat/cat.

Other simple rules may be added as the need arises. Explanations of why and consequences are verbalized by the teaching staff in a "matter of fact" manner.

5. Although paperwork and record-keeping are necessary and require a certain amount of time, our "priority one" is the children in our care. Teaching staff will develop a team approach that enables them to be fully with the children and still fulfill the Agency's paperwork requirements.
6. Let joy reign!! **Play is primary in Head Start.** Lesson Plans will reflect our commitment to "learning through play." If children and teachers are not having fun, something is wrong. Reassess the environment, schedule, lesson plans, and attitudes to make adjustments.
7. During the first two weeks of school, teachers will observe and record their general impression of each child--form #10 in the health record. This record will become the first of **two (2)** Progress Records to be used in conjunction with other information in developing each child's Individual Plan.