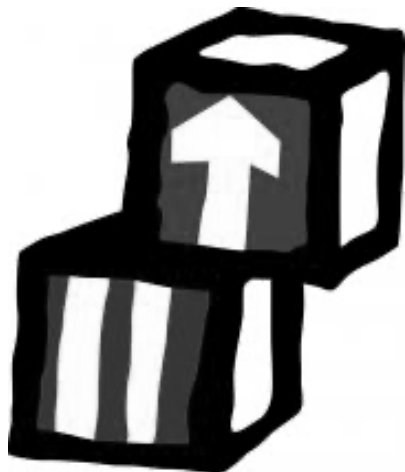


SOUTHWEST HRA

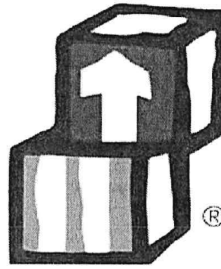
HEAD START



**PARENT
HANDBOOK**

Revised June, 2021

Southwest HRA Head Start
P O Box 264
Henderson, TN 38340
731-989-5111 or 1-800-372-6013
Web site: swhrahs.org



Dear Head Start Families,

Welcome to Southwest HRA Head Start! As you will soon learn Head Start is not just for your child. We believe that everyone in the family is an important Head Start member and our goal is engage and support the family as a whole. As a former Head Start parent, I have spent many years as a part of Head Start and I truly appreciate and believe in the program's philosophy.

This handbook outlines the "normal" procedures that are carried out each day. We know that due to COVID-19, there are modifications that are continuing to evolve. Due to the changes, we are unsure exactly what the program will look like throughout the year. As a result there maybe changes to these policies throughout the year and you will receive notification of those changes as they occur. Our first priority is to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

At the current time, we know that families will not walk their children into the building at all locations. Plans will vary be center, but staff will inform you of the exact procedure at your site. You may be assigned a time slot to arrive for drop off to assist in traffic flow. Families will come into the classroom each afternoon to pick their child.

We also encourage physical distancing among the children and staff. There will be additional changes during the year regarding volunteering and field trips in particular. We will follow the Center for Disease Control guidelines as well as DHS Child Care licensing rules, Office of Head Start recommendations and local Health Department guidelines. So as these guidelines and rules change, we will notify you.

Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding, as we all adjust to necessary changes. Do not hesitate to call me with any questions or concerns.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Vinyard".

Karen Vinyard, Head Start Director

731-609-6620

WELCOME TO YOUR HEAD START CENTER

Center Name: _____

Address: _____

Center Telephone Number: _____

Operation Days: _____

Opening and Closing Times: _____ Lunch Time: _____

Teacher: _____

Teacher Assistant: _____

Family Case Manager: _____ Office Phone#: _____

EMERGENCY EVACUATION;

If during an **emergency**, and **evacuation** is necessary, the primary relocation site is:

The secondary relocation site is: _____

Address: _____

THE SOUTHWEST HEAD START CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF:

- Karen Vinyard, Head Start Director
- Susan Presson, Assistant Director
- Megan Payton, Child Health Services Manager
- Crystal Moore, Early Childhood Development Manager
- Carrie Williams Buck, Family and Community Partnerships/ERSEA Manager
- Jacqueline Bingham, Administrative Assistant
- TBA, Health/Nutrition Assistant Manager
- Donna Moody, Disabilities/Mental Health Assistant Manager
- Laura Chavez-Boyer, Health/Bi-Lingual Services Assistant Manager
- Shelby Jones, ERSEA Assistant Manager
- Gloria Holiday, Family Engagement Assistant Manager
- Angenal Huddleston, Family Services Assistant Manager
- Kelsey Clayton, Data Entry Assistant Manager
- Larry Jones, Network Administrator
- Joey Zehner, Facilities Maintenance Technician
- Jackie Pickle, Facilities Maintenance Technician Assistant
- Tabitha Sampson, Area Manager
- Margie Allen, Area Manager
- Jackie Herron, Site Supervisor
- Patricia Henry, Site Supervisor
- Kim Lovins, Site Supervisor
- Joyce Bass, Coach
- Becky Bridges, Coach

FAMILY CASE MANAGERS:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Lisa Brantley | Candace Cole | Sharla Franklin |
| Kristyl Hansen | Vanessa McClerking | Jeanie Harville |
| Pricilla Shannon | Mary Jones | TBA, FCM-Brownsville |
| Lola Bynum | Shameka Johnson | |

Central Office Telephone: (731) 989-5111 or 1-800-372-6013
Head Start Website: swhrahs.org

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ABOUT CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE DAYS: All our Head Start classrooms will be in operation Monday through Friday (7:30 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.) of each week. All centers will be closed approximately two weeks for Christmas break, one week in the spring to coincide with your county school system spring break, and observance of holidays.

EMERGENCY CLOSING: If your county's public schools are closed for inclement weather, the Southwest HRA Head Start Centers will be closed. Check the Southwest Head Start Facebook page for updates.

ARRIVAL/BREAKFAST: Head Start classrooms are open for children's attendance at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast beginning at 8:00 a.m... Please be sure that your child is on time. It is important that children arrive in time to eat a nutritious breakfast and participate in important classroom activities. All children must arrive by 8:00 a.m. **Children will not be accepted after 8:00.** *Children who arrive late miss many learning opportunities and can disrupt the daily routine for the entire classroom. Please hold your child's hand from the car to the classroom and from class to your car everyday.*

DEPARTURE: The Head Start classroom departure time is 1:45 p.m. This allows the staff time each afternoon to clean the room, prepare for the next day, make home visits, attend classes themselves, etc.

ATTENDANCE: Daily attendance is **VERY IMPORTANT!** Your child cannot receive the full benefits of Head Start when he or she is not in class. If your child is ill and you must keep him/her at home, please inform your child's teacher concerning the illness. A note explaining the absence must come to your child's teacher when your child returns to school after a three (3) day absence or irregular attendance. If your child is not present and your child's teacher has not been notified, the teacher will notify the Family Case Manager within the first hour of the school day.

CHILD SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT: The Tennessee Department of Human Services Licensing Standards mandates we maintain a sign-in and sign-out roster in each classroom. **Parent/Guardian or other responsible adult MUST bring the child into the classroom and sign him/her in.** Also, children **will not** be released under any circumstances to anyone not listed on the "Child Release/Emergency Contact Form" completed on enrollment day. You **MUST** write the names of persons who are allowed to pick up your child on this form. Please update this form if necessary, so the staff has current information regarding who has your permission to pick up your child.

FOOD: PLEASE DO NOT SEND SNACKS TO THE CLASSROOM FOR YOUR CHILD. This presents two situations:

- 1) Sometimes the extra food spoils your child's appetite for mealtimes
- 2) Other children can't understand why they don't have the same treats

Your child will be fed a nutritious breakfast and lunch. So, unless your child has been placed on a special diet by a physician, etc. please do not send extra food to the center.

Due to possibility of food spoiling, no food can be taken out of Head Start classrooms or cafeteria.

CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: Head Start children will be honored and recognized on their birthday. A birthday celebration will be held once a month to celebrate all enrolled children's birthdays that month. Head Start will provide a treat for all children after lunch on that day. No outside food will be brought in for birthdays or refreshments for other celebrations. Balloons are also not allowed in the classroom due to safety issues.

VALUABLES: Please **DO NOT** send money, toys, or any other items that your child might lose. Head Start will provide all the supplies and materials your child will need to successfully complete the educational activities in the Center.

BRING TO PARENT ORIENTATION DAY: Bring a full change of clothing in a bag and the bag labeled with your child's name. This will be kept at Head Start for your child. If clothing is soiled, it will be sent home in a plastic bag, and you will need to send another set of clothes the next day.

FIELD TRIPS: Your child's class may take field trips during the year. All field trips scheduled are either close enough to the center for the children to walk (with police supervision if necessary), or special arrangement will be made with parents for transportation to and from the field trip site. You will receive a Field Trip Permission Form with information about the trip at least five days before each trip. If you do NOT want your child to go on a particular trip, you will have to let your child's teacher know by returning the Permission Form before the trip, and plan to keep your child home on the scheduled date. We encourage you to allow your child to go on all trips, as they are a very important part of Head Start. We *encourage you to join us* and assist on field trips. *There must be an adult to accompany your child. If the adult is not on your release to contacts, then the adult will need to complete a volunteer application before going on the trip.* It can be a relative or someone you designate. Meals will not be provided for volunteers on field trips. **Note: Due to licensing, health, and insurance restrictions, we cannot allow siblings or other children to participate in Head Start field trips and/or celebrations in the classrooms.**

VOLUNTEER MEALS: When you volunteer in the classroom for four or more hours in one day, you are invited to have lunch with your child's class at Head Start's expense. Head Start loves volunteers!! **Note: Due to insurance restrictions, we cannot allow siblings or other non-enrolled children in Head Start classrooms or play areas.**

OUTSIDE PLAY POLICY: The Tennessee Department of Human Services Licensing Standards state: "Except in extreme weather conditions, there must be an opportunity for outdoor play for all children who are in care for more than three consecutive hours." (Extreme weather conditions = below 32 degrees, above 95 degrees, rain, snow, sleet, thunderstorms.) In order to keep our license to operate the Head Start Centers, we must abide by this standard, so please dress your child according to the temperature: cool clothing for the warm/hot weather and warm clothing for cool/cold weather. If you have a doctor's statement that your child cannot play outside, please make arrangements to come to the center at the scheduled outside play time to stay in with your child. We are **mandated** to have two adults supervising the children at all times, so our staff **cannot** stay inside with children.

DRESS: Your child will be involved in "messy" activities in the classroom. We paint, play in sand and water and are on the playground. So please do not send your child in clothes that you do not want them to get dirty. We do provide smocks to help cover clothing, but spills and messes do occur. "Flip flops" can be tripping hazards to children, so please make sure all sandals have a back strap on them. By dressing your child in clothing that they can unfasten and refasten themselves, you are encouraging independence. This helps your child to take care of their own needs and feel good about their accomplishment.

SMOKE-FREE: We care about the health of our children and staff; therefore, Southwest HRA Head Start provides a smoke and tobacco free environment. Smoking or tobacco use is not permitted in any Southwest HRA facility or in the presence of children during any Head Start function. Smokeless and electronic cigarettes are also prohibited.

PHOTOS: We request that no pictures be taken in the Head Start classroom. It is very difficult to just take a picture of your child without including other children or names in the photo. While we all like to take pictures, we must also respect the privacy of all, therefore we are requesting that no photos be taken without permission. *A photo booth will be set up for your convenience where you can take a picture of your child and your child only.*

FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS: You will be invited by the teaching staff throughout the year to come into the classroom to share your family's heritage. This could be sharing family pictures, stories, your vacation, hobbies, recipes, traditions, etc. You will also be asked to participate in studies presented in the classroom. For example, when the children study about clothing, you may be asked to bring old baby clothing your child may have worn when they were a baby. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

PLEASE REVIEW THE REST OF THIS "PARENT HANDBOOK" BEFORE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY IN CLASS, SO YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH OTHER SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START RULES, REGULATIONS, AND INFORMATION.

THE HEAD START CLASSROOM

Each Head Start classroom is divided into different learning centers. This promotes the different learning skills and teaches the children that everything has a place.

Dramatic Play/Cooking is a favorite of everyone. Here you will find a child-size bedroom and a kitchen where everything is “just like Mommy’s.” This area promotes social and cognitive skills. Sometimes food is prepared here with the children for their nutrition activity. This little kitchen is not just a toy—it is a valuable learning tool.

Blocks contains various types of blocks, tools, pounding toys, tinker toys, plastic animals and vehicles, wooden trucks, ramps, etc. Here the children can exercise the small muscles in their fingers and, also, the large muscles in their arms and legs while learning spatial awareness.

Toys and Games contains puzzles, form fitters, small blocks, wipe-off cards, sewing cards, and many other activities to keep little fingers busy and help to develop strong minds (cognitive skills).

Music and Movement usually contains a record player, records, CD player and CD’s, a tape recorder, songbooks, a rhythm band set, a television and DVD/VCR (for educational and cultural awareness tapes & DVD’s), a flannel board, and a flip chart. Music gives children a feeling of belonging as they sing together and can be a means of freeing a child from tensions and fears. **Note: The television and DVD/VCR player are used for very short periods of time, please do not send cartoons or movies—they are STRICTLY prohibited.**

Art contains easels, paint, brushes, crayons, various types of paper, scissors, pencils, collage materials, and other materials, that allow the children to explore, experiment, discover and create to their heart’s content. It is in the PROCESS that the child expresses his feelings, ideas, thoughts, and experiences—not in the finished product. Skills practiced in art carry over into every area of learning.

Discovery contains magnets, magnifying glasses, thermometers, plants, scales, charts, counting games and books, various experiments, and seasonal or nature objects (bird nests, beehives, colored leaves, seeds, corn, hay, cotton, etc.). Children are constantly seeking simple, understandable answers to their questions. Finding these answers and learning to count are very rewarding experiences.

Every classroom also has a **Library**. This quiet area is complete with a bookshelf and books, child-sized chairs, beanbag or pillow, puppets, and a rug. Some of the books in this area may be supplied and rotated by the local Library.

Another favorite is the **Sand/Water Center**. This area promotes social skills, eye-hand coordination, fine motor development, and creativity—you never know what you may see in this center!

Writing is integrated into every area of learning to encourage recognition of letters and numbers in an everyday setting.

All our classrooms have a child’s **computer** and tablet. These Computers and Tablets have early learning games and activities already installed on them. Before very long the children will pull up their favorite games and operate these computers like “pros.”

No Head Start center is complete without the **outdoors**. They may have swings, slide(s), climbing structures, riding toys, wagons, balls and goal, and various other toys! Also, when weather does not permit the children to go outside, the teachers are prepared to present equipment and activities inside the room that will promote gross motor development (bean bag toss, ring toss, balls and inside ball goal, hippety hops, hopscotch mat, sit-n-spin, etc.

WE HAVE FUN WHILE LEARNING IN HEAD START

The preschool years are very important. We want your child to be as ready as possible for kindergarten. This is not just recognizing letters and numbers. It is also knowing how to learn and getting along with others. We will be using the “*Second Step*” early learning program. Your child will take part in weekly lessons that help them learn skills to:

- help them become better listeners,
- identify and understanding feelings
- handle strong feelings such as worry and anger
- make and keep friends



During the first five months of this program year, you will, also, hear the names “Spot,” “Keisha”, “Jose’, “Megan”, “Ms. Moon”, “Chang”, and “Matthew”. These are the characters in the *Personal Safety Curriculum, “Keeping Kids Safe”* which was developed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. These sessions are presented in small group settings, and deal with self-esteem, feelings, body parts, and touching. The curriculum is intended to give children the knowledge and skills to recognize potentially abusive situations, to reject inappropriate overtures, and to tell an adult what has happened.

The rest of the school year teachers may continue using the *Second Step* Curriculum based on classroom observations and need. When the “*Keeping Kids Safe*”, Personal Safety curriculum is completed, Teachers may use stories/Intentional Teaching cards, or other resources for small group activities.

SOUTHWEST HEAD START CHILD DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Southwest HRA Head Start Program provides an environment which encourages appropriate behavior in children and problem-solving skills. Also, we instill acceptance in each child. Our major goals are to empower each child to have high self-esteem and to teach children how to get along in a group situation. Still keeping in mind that our expectations of child behavior are realistic and nurturing. The classroom will utilize the Second Step curriculum to assist children in managing their own behaviors. We accomplish these goals with a variety of techniques:

1. The staff will model appropriate behaviors on a daily basis. Staff will speak in a respectful and low tone of voice and speaking to children on their eye level.
2. Teaching staff will inform children of expectations by developing rules for the classroom, playgrounds, and other areas as needed. We express the rules in a positive way--the children are told **what to do** rather than what not to do.
3. Staff will give positive praise to children throughout daily activities.
4. Staff will utilize redirection techniques to guide children away from negative behaviors. This could include asking a child to "help" with another activity, attracting their attention with another inviting option, or joining in with play.
5. We use other techniques and strategies from the Second Step curriculum. This might include stories, songs, identification of feelings, etc.
6. A child who displays on-going disruptive/aggressive behavior may be referred for further observation/evaluation. The process for observation/evaluation is: referral sent to Child Health Services Manager who will conduct an individual observation on the child. Once the observation is completed, a parent conference will be conducted. If needed a behavior plan will be developed and implemented, or a referral to a mental health professional for further observations.



HEAD START IS FOR THE DISABLED, TOO

Not every child in Head Start can walk or talk or even think as the others do. These children are disabled. A disabled child is a very special child because he or she needs lots of patience, ongoing testing, special help, and understanding from everyone -- parents, teachers, and other children.

The Program provides those who are in need of special equipment such as standing chairs, braces, wheelchairs, special feeding equipment, and anything else that the disabled child might need so that he or she may function better. The Head Start Program also provides assistance with SSI for Head Start children and families.

Special education advisors, speech therapists, and other consultants come into the classroom to observe the children in order to assure that children with disabilities have access to the full range of needed services that are available. The professionals give therapy to the children and advice and follow-up materials for the teachers and parents on how to teach and work with these special children.

The most important factor in helping a disabled child is another child. Children communicate in their own special language. Many times they can find a response when an adult cannot. All children in Head Start work and play together.

The Southwest Head Start Program has a formal agreement with each county's Board of Education. The agreement states that:

1. The Local Education Agency (LEA) will provide speech and language evaluations, speech therapy, physical therapy, and audio logical services to disabled preschool children who are eligible for such services and to provide certain reports as required by the LEA.
2. The LEA will provide the services of a school psychologist to disabled preschool children who are eligible for such services and to provide certain reports as required by the LEA.
3. The LEA will comply with regulations in the identification, evaluation, placement, and development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed for each disabled child in our Program. This is done with the cooperation of the teacher, the Child Health Services Manager and/or Disabilities/Mental Health Assistant Manager, the professional consultant, the parent, and a representative from the LEA.

The Southwest Head Start Program has developed a systematic process for ensuring the smooth transition of young children with disabilities to the public school Kindergarten-Elementary Program. All information shared between agencies in this process will be within the rules governing confidentiality and the due process rights of parents or legal guardians.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES IN HEAD START



The Health Services component obtains and records a complete medical, dental and developmental history on each child that is enrolled in the Head Start Program. Thorough health screenings are provided by Head Start and parents are responsible for obtaining a well-child physical from the child's healthcare provider and a dental exam by their dentist.

The health screenings include growth assessment (height, weight, age), vision screening, speech and hearing screenings, assessment of current immunization status, other selected screenings where appropriate, and identification of special needs of children with disabilities. The medical examinations include: examinations of all systems to search for certain defects which are common or important in this age group, i.e., skin, eye, ear, nose, throat, heart, lung, groin and lab work including Hemoglobin and lead.

ATTENTION: New TN Department of Human Services Licensing Standards requires that a child must have a current well-child exam before attending a childcare program. Your child's physical exam must be turned in on Registration Day.

After a thorough dental examination has been performed the dentist will document any needed follow-up care. Any time the dentist requires pre-medication for dental treatment, the dentist will determine how it is administered. The dental exam must have been completed during the last 6 months. If it is older than 6 months, a new one must be scheduled.

The Head Start Program will arrange or assist in follow-up treatment of all health problems detected. However, the parents are encouraged to secure all needed medical and dental treatment for their child themselves. If assistance is needed in transporting the child for a follow-up visit, the parent will indicate this in writing by signing a permission form for the visit. The parent also has an option to refuse treatment for their child. The Program will offer counseling in such cases and parents will be required to sign a statement refusing treatment for their child.

Sometimes a parent will be concerned about a child's behavior at home or at school or may feel that the child is not developing normally. If (s)he wishes, (s)he may refer the child for mental health services through Head Start or on their own. The mental health professionals, with the help of parent and staff, will then do a careful evaluation of the child and inform the parent whether any problem exists.

Nutrition services offered include meals for children (breakfast and lunch), nutrition assessments, opportunity for menu planning by parents and parent training sessions about nutrition and food and home management, etc.

The teacher in each classroom will check the children's health status daily upon entering the classroom. Any child who appears ill will not be admitted to the classroom. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please do not send them to Head Start:

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| -fever | -a sore throat | -vomiting |
| -diarrhea | -stomachache | -any other contagious illness |
| -earache | -head lice | |

If your child is sick, please notify his or her teacher. If your child becomes ill while at Head Start, you will be notified to pick up your child.

EVEN NICE FAMILIES GET LICE

The best way to keep your loved ones free from lice infestation is to learn how to recognize and treat the problem. Here is the most useful information collected from Dr. Harvey Handler, a family dermatologist, and from the National Center for Disease Control.

There are three varieties of lice that infest humans: head lice (which attach themselves to hair); body lice (which attach to fibers of clothing); and crab lice (which attach to pubic hair). All three types survive by feeding on human blood.

The head louse, about an eighth of an inch long, is grayish-white with dark edges. Its life span is about one month; the female can lay as many as six eggs, or nits, per day, so new generations multiply very rapidly.

The first symptom people experience is persistent itching of the scalp, which is usually worse at the nape of the neck and behind the ears. The itching is caused by an irritating substance that the louse injects into the skin as it draws blood.

It can be difficult to see lice—they crawl very fast and can camouflage themselves by adopting their host's hair color. Look for nits instead. They are small, silvery, tear-shaped eggs securely attached to individual strands of hair, about a quarter inch from the scalp. If you think what you're seeing maybe dandruff, try flicking it away. Dandruff will fly off, nits will not.

Although lice cannot jump or fly, they are easily transmitted in a variety of ways: actual head-to-head contact (children leaning close and sharing a book at school, for example); use of an infested comb or brush; wearing infested clothing (kids sharing team shirts, for instance); hanging a coat on a rack or in a locker with an infested coat; leaning back on an infested car, bus, or airplane headrest; or coming in contact with infested carpeting or upholstery.

Many over-the-counter medicated shampoos to treat lice infestations are available in pharmacies. But you should be aware that these products contain insecticides that may cause eye irritation and allergic reactions. If you use a nonprescription shampoo, many health officials recommend two treatments, seven to 10 days apart.

In addition to treating your child, other family members and your house need to be treated. Wash clothes, bed linens, and towels in hot water – dry on hot cycle for at least 20 minutes. Items such as stuffed animals, headphones and hats that cannot be washed must be cleaned or stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic bag for at least two (2) weeks. Soak combs, brushes, etc., in hot water for at least ten (10) minutes. Vacuum everywhere, including carpets, pillows, mattresses, upholstered furniture, cars and car seats.

Southwest HRA Head Start's Lice Policy is as follows:

Southwest Head Start now has a "No Nit" policy. This means that no child will be allowed to stay in the classroom if nits or bugs are identified. The child will not be allowed to return until they are determined to be nit and bug free by the Head Start Staff.

(Southwest HRA Head Start's Lice Policy continued on next page)

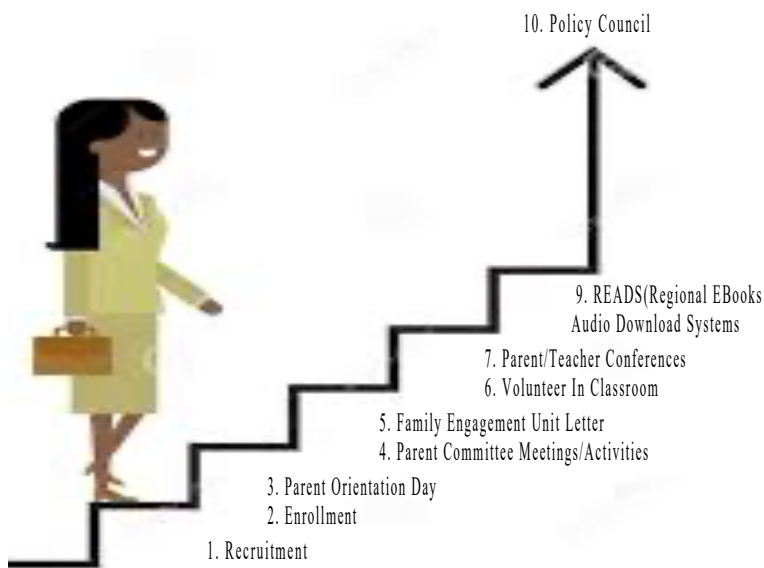
Southwest HRA Head Start’s Lice Policy (continued)

First occurrence – Send home Lice treatment and be sure parents understand how to use the product and discuss cleaning of the home and accessories. The staff will check the child’s head the day the child returns to Head Start to ensure that no nits or bugs are present. **If nits or bugs are found, the child will be sent home.** The Teacher will report this incident to the Child Health Services Manager at the Central Office in order that she may contact the parent by phone concerning the problem.

Second occurrence – Send home instructions on how to use oil treatment to help the parent comb the nits out of the child’s hair. Be sure parent understands how to use the oil treatment and discuss cleaning of the home and accessories. The child will be allowed to return to the Head Start classroom when they are nit and bug free. The staff will check the child’s head the day the child returns to Head Start to ensure that no nits or bugs exist. The staff will also check the child each morning for the next 7 school days to be sure all nits/bugs have been removed. Anytime nits or bugs are identified, the child will be sent home.

Third occurrence – The Teacher will contact the Child Health Services Manager at the Central Office. Contact will be made with the parents to correct the situation. The Family Case Manager will make a home visit to provide the parent with a housecleaning checklist to help in removing the lice/nits from the home. If assistance is needed concerning cleaning supplies or equipment, the Family Case Manager will contact the Child Health Services Manager to report on the situation and possible assistance.

TEN STEPS TO PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN HEAD START



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The delivery of Social Services starts with recruitment of participants in the Head Start program. The Family and Community Partnership staff reaches out to the family to ensure that the family has the necessary basic needs. Parents and Head Start staff all play a part in making sure each Head Start child is healthy and is school ready. While in the Head Start program, you will be introduced to Parent and Family Engagement activities that will result in the parent and child learning and developing new skills to reach family self-sufficiency and school readiness for the Head Start child. Staff will work with parents to support them in achieving positive outcome goals that will lead to family well-being, relationships building between the parent and child, and ongoing learning experiences for the parent and child. **During the registration process each family will start a Family Profile and Partnership Agreement (FPPA) process. The Family Case Manager will set up a one-on-one contact with the parent to review information in the Family Profile Partnership Agreement.** Families will be given the opportunity to set realistic goals based on the families' desires, concerns, strengths and barriers. Each family will be asked to have at least one goal to work towards while participating in the Head Start program. Goals may be identified as an opportunity for change in the areas of employment, literacy, education, food, shelter, clothing, health/mental health, financial, etc. The staff makes use of existing community resources by referring those families for services. The Head Start Family and Community Partnerships staff may be contacted at any time to assist you with your concerns.

Confidentiality in Head Start is mandated. This means that the information that you share with us concerning your family will only be shared with staff and providers on a need to know basis. Records on the child and family are kept in locked file cabinets. Parents have the right to view any information on your child and family ONLY. To view your child or family records, you must request in writing to your Family Case Managers or available staff at the center, who will retrieve information from the files for your viewing. Requested copies will be made by staff only.



PARENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO HEAD START

The Head Start Program is family centered and is designed to foster the parent's role as the principal influence on the child's development and as the child's primary educator, nurturer, and advocate. Therefore, the Southwest Head Start Program works in close partnerships with parents to develop and utilize parents' individual strengths in order to successfully meet personal and family objectives. In addition, parents are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of Head Start, including direct involvement as **volunteers** and in policy and program decisions that respond to their interests and needs. **FATHERS** as well as **MOTHERS** are invited to participate and get involved!! PLEASE NOTE: Due to the Pandemic and State Licensure our program will not have any in person volunteering in the classroom.

As a Head Start Parent, you can serve as a **volunteer** or observer in the classroom. This will give you the opportunity to see first-hand how your child and other children learn and play throughout the day. You may also pick up some helpful tips on things to do at home with your child. **Volunteers** in the classroom are an important part of Head Start. Your child's teacher will want to know what kinds of things you enjoy doing and she will assign you constructive jobs that fit your personality. For instance, some parents like to read stories to children, some like to help the children with their art projects such as finger-painting or clay models, while others enjoy being outside supervising on the playground. There are field trips to parks, the airport, fire department, library, etc., also picnics or nature hikes that require extra adult supervisions. There will be many visits to the Health Department, doctor and dentist offices during the year that **volunteer** assistance is needed. Parents can **volunteer** their talents by making things for the Center, working with their child on Center/Home Activities that will be sent home, help with Center maintenance, or other work they can do for the Center at home. **FATHERS** are especially needed to volunteer in the classroom and on field trips, or just come to share a special interest or hobby with the children.

Head Start Parents are involved in **decision making and program planning** by serving on the Early Childhood Development, Health/Disabilities, or Family and Community Partnerships/Parent Involvement Advisory Committees or the Policy Council. Policy Council members can also serve on the Personnel and Finance Committees. All parents who have children enrolled in the Head Start program are members of the Parent Committee at their respective Center. Each Parent Committee will elect officers and meet four times a program year to discuss the Center's progress and other matters and at the first meeting will elect a delegate to represent them on the Policy Council. The first meeting will be on program governance. It is the responsibility of the Policy Council to work in partnership with key management staff and the governing board to develop, review, and approve or disapprove policies and procedures concerning the Head Start Program. The Policy Council's membership will be at least 51% parents of currently enrolled Head Start children and one Interested Citizen from each of the seven counties.

Head Start parents will be given the opportunity to participate in Educational Programs which are responsive to the needs expressed by the parents themselves. Parents may also wish to work together on community problems of common concern, such as health, housing, education, and welfare and to sponsor activities and programs around interests expressed by the group. Programs designed especially for **DADS** will be presented throughout the year.

Home visits and Parent/Teacher Conferences are effective means of involving parents in the Head Start Program and also a time to share with them their child's progress. With parents' permission, the Head Start Teacher and Teacher Assistant will visit each home at least twice during the year (with the first visit before the child attends the center). The Teacher will schedule two Parent/Teacher Conferences that will take place at the Center during the year. Activities that can be used in the home by family members that will reinforce and support your child's total Head Start experience will be presented to you at these times and you will receive your child's progress report. Staff, parents, and children will benefit from home visits, conferences and activities.

Although all parents are encouraged to participate in one or all phases of the program, it is not a requirement for enrollment. Whatever your interests, there is a place for YOU in Head Start --- this is true for **DAD** as well as **MOM!!!!!!**

PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

In our Head Start Program, it is mandatory that the staff report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect for the well being and safety of all children. Child abuse comes in the form of physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect. Child abuse can happen anywhere. It is not limited to a particular race, culture, or educational background. Most abusive parents love their children, but in times of crisis may strike out at them, due to stressful or emotional situations. They often feel guilty but are unable to break the cycle without help. It is mandatory in Tennessee that all citizens report any suspected case(s) of child abuse or neglect. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, contact the Tennessee Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals Intake at 1-877-237-0004.

NOTICE

According to state law, any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report this knowledge or suspicion to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services. If a person fails to report their knowledge or suspicion to DCS, *they* are guilty of a misdemeanor.

Taking the law into consideration, staff at all Southwest HRA Head Start Centers will report abuse and neglect to DCS.

Further, if a parent or other person enters the center to pick up a child and any staff member believes that this person is acting suspiciously, including as if under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or who may be any reason place the child/children in immediate risk, the following policies have been implemented:

The parent or other person will be asked not to transport the child/children from the center. Another person from the transportation list will be called to provide transportation to the child.

If the parent or other person picking up the child/children leaves with the child/children, the police will be called immediately, the Head Start Director will be notified immediately, and DCS will be notified of the situation.

Caring for someone else's child/children is a particularly important responsibility. We take this responsibility seriously and strive to provide a safe environment for your child/children.



SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

Section: Family and Community Partnerships

Subject: Absentee/Drop Policy

Approved: March 2018

REGULATION REFERENCE:

Head Start Program Performance Standards. 45-CFR 1302.16 (A)(1)(2)(i)(ii)(iv)(3)(b)(c)(1)(2)

POLICY:

The SWHRA Head Start Program will monitor those children who have frequent unexcused absences, excessive absences and tardy attendance in the classroom. To maintain an average daily attendance of at least 85% of the funded enrollment, a drop procedure will be used on those children whose attendance does not improve after intervention of the Family and Community Partnerships Staff.

DEFINITIONS:

Excused Absence Policy Definition: Excused absence means an absence for the following reasons for which there is acceptable documentation or written statement by a doctor or Health Department where this applies:

1. Child hospitalized.
2. Child is incapacitated due to injury or illness.
3. Child contracted communicable disease.
4. Child has other health ailments that temporarily prevents attendance, such as asthma.
5. Death in the family.
6. Child is receiving treatment/therapy (a child cannot attend class because he or she has to receive medical treatment or therapy at the time the class is being held).
7. Temporary family situation.
8. Reasons beyond the control of the program, such as illness which affects the whole center, weather conditions or transportation conditions.

Promoting regular attendance: Each child attendance will be tracked daily to promote positive attendance practices. *The Family Case Manager will check classroom attendance each morning.* To ensure that a child is safe when they do not arrive at school and if the parent has not contacted the teacher within one hour of program start time, the Family Case Manager must attempt to contact the parent. This information is to be documented on the Weekly Absentee Report Form and in Childplus by the Family Case Manager.

Unexcused absence definition: The absence of a child after three or more consecutive days or excessive absences without reasonable documentation from the parent. For classroom sign in sign out purpose a child may be counted unexcused if the parent does not contact the teacher when their child is absent on a day-to-day basis.

Frequent Irregular Attendance: Excessive absence of a child will be closely monitored by the Family Case Manager. Documented occurrences of excessive absences may be grounds for dismissal from the Head Start program. Head Start staff will work with families to assist them with eliminating any problems that may be keeping the Head Start child from attending class.

Tardy Attendance: Those children who are not at the center on or before 8:00a.m.

Late arrivals to the Head Start center: Children will arrive at the Head Start classroom starting at 7:30 a.m. It is the parent's responsibility to have the child at the center on time. **A Social Services home visit will be made to the parent of frequently late children to resolve the situation.** Frequent tardiness may be grounds for dismissal from the Head Start program.

PROCEDURES:

1. The Family Case Manager will fill out a Weekly Absentee Report Form, documenting all follow ups on the form and in Childplus if:
1. The child has been absent three days or more.
2. The child is frequently absent (irregular attendance), or frequently tardy.
3. The parent of an absent child has not contacted the teacher on the morning their child is absent.

2. **The Family Case Manager will fill out a Weekly Absentee Report Form and email to the ERSEA Assistant Manager on Friday of each week. If the attendance is a chronic program the Family Case Manager must contact the Family and Community Partnerships/ERSEA Manager to resolve the issue. This must be documented in Childplus by both staff.**
3. The ERSEA Assistant Manager will check all information turned in to verify actions taken in assisting the parent in sending the child back to class. The Family Case Manager will file a copy of the Weekly Absentee Report form in the Child's file and Family file. The ERSEA Assistant Manager will scan in the Attendance Tab of Childplus.
4. When a child is referred to the Family Case Manager concerning attendance, they will follow the Absentee/Drop Policy as follows:

Unexcused Absence, Excessive Absence or Tardy Procedure:

If a child has missed three or more consecutive days or he/she has been documented for excessive absences or frequent tardiness by the program staff, the following steps are to be followed:

1. Contact the child's parent or guardian through a home visit or other direct contact. **Please Note:** It is always the parent or guardian's responsibility to contact the teacher when the child is going to be absent. During this visit the reason for the child being absent and the date on which the child will return to the Head Start class will be determined and agreed on by the parent and staff. This will be documented using the Absentee Intervention Report Form. If the absences are due to temporary family problems or other circumstances, the Head Start Staff will work with the family by making referrals and contacting community resources that can help resolve the problem. This information will be shared with all involved Head Start staff.
2. If the child has not returned by or on the return date set between parent and staff and they have not made contact with the teacher or Family Case Manager, the parent may be sent a **Drop Letter or contacted of the program's decision.**
3. If a parent cannot be contacted after four school days of an unexcused absence, the Family Case Manager will contact relatives of the family and any community agencies that the family was involved with to make sure the family has not moved from the area. If no final contact is made, then the Head Start program may find it feasible to drop the child from the Head Start Program.
4. If the child misses eight (5) unexcused days during a 10-day period he/she may be dropped from the Head Start Program. Excessive absence of a child will be considered grounds for termination from the Head Start program.
5. If a child has been documented as having a chronic illness, staff will work with the parent to create a Care Plan.

Short Term Exclusion(STE) Process
(for Health, Medical, and Family Situations)

Short-term Exclusion is a process by which the Head Start child has been required by a physician to be absent from the Head Start classroom due to an injury, an acute illness, chronic illness, contagious disease or a family situation validated by the parent that may cause the child to be absent from the classroom for up to ten days. A parent must request for Short Term Exclusion for their child when there is a validated family situation. A family situation includes a family that may have certain religious beliefs (to be validated by their Clergy) and choose to keep the child at home during weeks that special cultural activities are being observed in the classroom or other situations(crisis) that the parent has supporting documentation and can be determined by the Family and Community Partnerships/ERSEA Manager and their Family Case Manager as a valid situation. Each issue will be viewed on a case by case situation.

The Short Term Exclusion Policy also ensures the health and safety of our children, staff and volunteers. Short Term exclusion due to health issues must be determined by the Child Health Services Manager. Staff and parent must follow all guidelines of this policy to ensure that the child does not fall behind in their academics. This policy also ensures that the child still receives school readiness activities while out of the classroom. This procedure may allow for the child to be counted as present during a Head Start school day if the parent agrees to the following:

1. The teacher will refer all child injuries, acute illness, chronic illness, or contagious diseases to the Child Health Services Manager. The Child Health Services Manager will determine if the child's condition could place that child or other children in a safety or health risk while in the classroom and if he/she should be sent home. If it is determined that due to an injury, illness or disease the child is to be sent home, the Teacher or Family Case Manager will contact the parent to inform them of the determination to send the child home. The Family Case Manager will discuss with the parent concerning the Short Term Policy. If the use of the policy is due to a family situation the Family Case Manager will refer the situation to the FACP/ERSEA Manager. If the parent agrees to the policy a meeting will be set up to discuss the guidelines to be followed.
2. The meeting may consist of the Teacher, Area Manager, Site Supervisor, Family Case Manager and/or Head Start Managers to work on a plan that would continue age-appropriate learning skills during the child's absence in the classroom. If the situation is due to a health problem, a Care Plan will be written and if a situation is due to a family situation, a Short Term Exclusion Family Situation Plan will be written.
3. The plan shall include at least two or more activities each day for the parent to do with the child in addition to the Center-Home Activity newsletter. All activities should be used to increase the intellectual, social, emotional, physical and cultural development of the child. The teacher will give the parent activities to do with the child while the child is out of the classroom.
4. The parent will bring all activities and documentation to the teacher on Friday of each week the child is out of the class. The parent will sign-in each week to verify child's status as short-term exclusion.
5. The parent will bring in a statement from a Health Provider to verify that the child is unable to attend classes. If the Health Provider does not release the child to come back to class, the teacher will give the parent more activities to work on with the child while they are still out of class. After ten days this agreement must be updated if more time is needed or to discuss other options to this plan.
6. If the Short Term Exclusion is due to a family situation, the parent must sign a statement documenting the status of the situation and when the child will return to class.
7. The plan must include the child's return date back to the classroom within **ten** days.
8. If a parent has requested Short Term Exclusion process due to a family situation and it has been validated by the FACP/ERSEA Manager and the Family Case Manager, steps 1-7 will be followed of the Short Term Exclusion Policy.
9. Short-Term Exclusion will be void if the terms of agreement are not being adhered to as planned.

Parent's right to an Appeal

The parent has the right to appeal any decisions made by the Head Start Program by contacting the central office at 1-800-372-6013. This will be the first initial step for an appeal.

**SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START
SHORT-TERM EXCLUSION FORM
(Parent and staff must meet to set up this agreement)**

Head Start Center: _____ Teacher: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Child's Name: _____

Address: _____ Primary Telephone: _____

Reason for parent requesting Short-Term exclusion: _____

I am requesting Short-Term Exclusion for _____ days. My child expected return date is: _____

If for medical reasons is there a doctor's statement: yes no

If yes attach a copy of the statement to this form.

Parent must agree to all the following activities and parent must check yes to all activities below:

I will complete two or more age appropriate activities with my child as instructed by my child's teacher each day my child is out of the classroom. yes no

I will complete activities on the monthly Growing Together Newsletter each day my child is out of the classroom. yes no

I will turn in all activities documentation to the teacher each Friday. yes no

I agree to a home visit or phone contacts from my child's teacher or assistant teacher once a week until my child return back to the classroom. yes no

I understand if any of these activities are not completed on time or if my child does not return back to class on the expected return date this may constitute grounds to void this agreement. yes no

Parent Signature: _____ Date _____

Staff Signatures:

Name _____	Title _____	Date _____
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Name _____	Title _____	Date _____
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Name _____	Title _____	Date _____
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Name _____	Title _____	Date _____
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Name _____	Title _____	Date _____
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Staff Comments: _____

Attach copy to Weekly Attendance Report Form. Place original copy in child's folder.

SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

Section: Family and Community Partnerships
Subject: Termination of Enrollment
Approved: March 2018

POLICY:

SWHRA Head Start program will make every effort to work with the family in keeping the child enrolled in the Head Start Program. Families will be assisted in every way to retain a child in the Head Start program. Children are terminated from the Southwest HRA Head Start program for the following reasons:

1. Parent request termination.
2. Patterns of excessive absences (See Absentee/Drop Policy).
3. A Diagnostic Professional recommending placement of the Head Start child into a program that can better serve the needs of that child. (See P & P in Child Health Services on Mental Health Conferences)

PROCEDURE:

1. If a parent requests that his/her child be taken out of the Head Start Program, the Family Case Manager will fill out the **Data Entry Form** and let the parent sign and date the form. The FCM will email the form to the Data Entry Assistant Manager to enter into Childplus. The Data Entry Assistant Manager will give the form to the FACP/ERSEA Manager to initial the form. The ERSEA Assistant Manager will scan into the Enrollment Tab of Childplus.
2. If the Family moves out of the area the same procedure above will be followed. If the family moves before a form can be signed by the parent, then the Family Case Manager will document this on the form and submit as above.
3. If a child exhibits excessive absences the Family Case Manager will follow the Absentee/Drop policy procedures. (SEE ABSENTEE/DROP POLICY).



SOUTHWEST HRA HEAD START

SECTION: Health

SUBJECT: Mental Health Classroom Observation and Conference

REVISED: March 2018

REGULATION REFERENCE:

Head Start Program Performance Standards, November 2016, 45 CFR 1302.45

POLICY:

After Mental Health Classroom Observations are completed, a conference involving the child's Teacher, parents and/or guardian, the Mental Health Professional who observed the child, the Family Case Manager and the Child Health Services Manager or Disabilities/Mental Health Assistant Manager and Area Manager or Site Supervisor, will be scheduled for children in which special services are recommended.

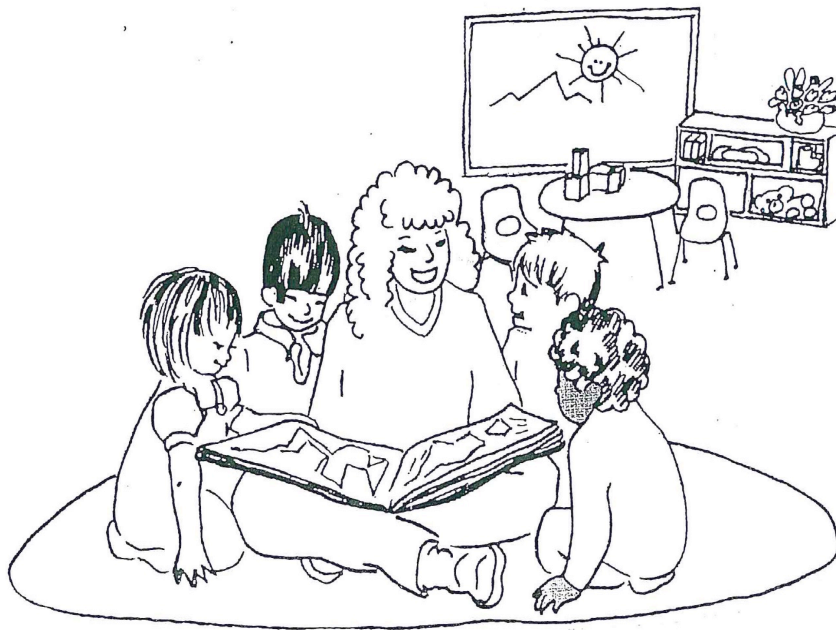
PROCEDURE:

1. Permission for a child to be in attendance for the mental health professional observation of the classroom, will be a part of the SWHRA Agreement Form.
2. After the Mental Health Professional completes his/her observations in the classroom, the Mental Health Observation Forms will be reviewed and signed by the Teacher. The Teacher will then forward the signed forms to the Child Health Services Manager.
3. The Child Health Services Manager will review and sign each individual observation form. The Child Health Services Manager will keep the yellow copy of the signed form in the Central Office in a Bound Notebook labeled "First Mental Health Observation". The remaining form will be sent back to the Teacher to file in the child's official health file.
4. After reviewing the recommendations for each child, the Child Health Services Manager and Disability/Mental Health Assistant Manager will compile the forms belonging to the children in which special services were recommended.
5. A Mental Health Conference will be scheduled for these children. The individuals involved in the conference will include the following: parent/guardian, Teacher, Family Case Manager, mental health professional, Child Health Services Manager or Disability/Mental Health Assistant Manager, Area Manager or Site Supervisor, LEA representative and others whose attendance would be beneficial to the child.
6. The Child Health Services Manager and/or Disability/Mental Health Assistant Manager will call the mental health professional and schedule the conferences and then inform the Family Case Manager of the day and time.

Mental Health Conferences

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7. The Family Case Manager will send a notice of the conference day and time to each parent/guardian at least one week before the scheduled conference. The parent will sign and return the notice stating if he/she will be available to attend the conference. The parent must be present in order to hold the conference.
8. During the conference, the mental health professional will elaborate on his/her observations and recommendations of the child. The Teacher may also present his/her observations of the child. Also during this time, the parent will be given the opportunity to give or deny consent for special services for his/her child and to arrange for the recommended services, if consent is given.
9. After the conference is complete, the mental health professional will complete the "parent conference" section of the "Mental Health Observation" form. Each individual present at the conference will sign and date below the "parent conference" section.
10. Copies of the signed form will be given to the Mental Health Professional and the Disabilities and Mental Health Assistant Manager, to file in the Central Office.



TRANSITION/LITERACY SERVICES IN HEAD START

Transition Services

When children and families transition from one setting to another, they encounter change which requires them to adapt their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to meet the new expectations. When individuals find that they are prepared for these new challenges, transitions become an opportunity for growth and development. Our Head Start program promotes and supports successful transition for enrolled children and families from previous child care programs or home to Head Start, and from Head Start into Kindergarten. During Head Start, parents will be encouraged to attend parent meetings to hear various local school personnel's presentations on transition into Kindergarten. They will also be encouraged to attend a field trip to a Kindergarten class with their child, or attend a local Kindergarten orientation meeting, and compile information needed early in the year to enroll their child into Kindergarten. Head Start will assist parents in acquiring their child's certified birth certificate. During the year, information such as the immunization form, Birth Certificate, Health Summary sheet, and Teaching Strategies Gold Report will be placed into a Transition Folder. Parents will be asked to sign a Transition Folder Release Form so that all this information can be sent to the local school of their choice.

Literacy Services

Our Head Start program promotes family literacy by encouraging parents to develop and use literacy skills which enables them to become more active and effective participants in your community, in the workplace, and in your child's education and development. To better serve our Head Start families literacy needs, Head Start has established collaborative agreements with various other agencies that provide literacy services. In addressing literacy in Head Start, our staff will identify and encourage those Head Start adult family members who are interested in improving their literacy skills to attend HiSET (formerly GED) classes, Vocational school, or college by linking them to agencies who can meet that need. **Our Head Start program will provide financial support by paying the Head Start parent's HiSET testing fee.**

Head Start parents will be encouraged to participate in their child's classroom activities and other activities, such as field trips to parks, fire stations, police departments, etc. In promoting parent and child togetherness time, Head Start has incorporated the READS program that is offers over 100,000 digital e-books, audiobooks, and videos to patrons of public libraries in the state of Tennessee that belong to the Regional Library System. These digital titles can be downloaded or streamed to your personal computer or various portable devices such as smartphones, tablets or e-readers. Please take the time to go on our Head Start website or to READS (Regional EBooks and Audio Download System online.

Southwest HRA Head Start School Readiness Goals Revised 2020

Approaches toward Learning

- Children will be creative in thinking by being flexible and discovering new ideas.
- Children will demonstrate curiosity and motivation in the classroom.

Social and Emotional Development

- Children will learn and follow classroom rules and routines.
- Children will engage in positive interactions through secure relationships with consistent, responsive adults.
- Children will identify feelings and emotions of self and others.

Language and Literacy

- Children will begin to identify sounds of letters.
- Children will engage and respond to written letters and words.
- Children will identify increasing number of letters in the alphabet.
- Children will demonstrate early writing skills.
- Children who are dual language learners will demonstrate increased competency in home language while developing proficiency in English.

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Children will use everyday routines to count, compare, identify patterns, make predictions and problem solve.
- Children will make connections and recall familiar people, place, objects and events.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

- Children will demonstrate control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance.
- Children will demonstrate control of small muscles for self-care, building, writing and manipulation.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

The program does not discriminate based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, immigration status, age, political belief or mental or physical disability, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance, or regulation in determining which children are served. The Head Start program does not discriminate in determining which children are served as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The program welcomes and enrolls children with disabilities and makes reasonable accommodations, and works with the family to implement those accommodations for children with disabilities.