

2021-2022 School Year



EDUCATING children. SUPPORTING families. BUILDING healthy communities.

Parent Handbook

Your Head Start Center Is:

Center Address & Telephone Number:

Center Hours:

Site Director:

Classroom Teachers:

Family Services Coordinator:

Program Nurse:

Emergency Site & Telephone Number:

Our Administrative Offices and Family Centers

Springfield Main Office

30 Madison Avenue
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 788-6522

Holyoke Main Office

662 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 536-0363

Family Center

130 Maple Street
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 417-7779



STRONG children.
AFFORDABLE families.
A HEALTHY, healthy community.

Table of Contents

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & INFORMATION

◇ Greetings from the Chief Executive Officer	3
◇ Parent & Program Partnership Outline	4-5
◇ Rules for Adults in the Program	6
◇ Parent Concerns and Complaints	7
◇ Parental Rights — Personally-Identifiable Information	8-10
◇ Child Protection Policy	11-12
◇ Emergency Preparedness	13
◇ Emergency Contacts, Transportation & Pedestrian Safety	14
◇ Late Pick-Up Policy	15
◇ Closure Practices & Benefits of Regular Attendance	16
◇ Attendance Policy	17

OUR FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH 18

◇ Building the Home to School Relationships & Learning	19
--	----

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY & CHILD GUIDANCE 20

◇ Preparing You and Your Child for Transitions	21
◇ Dressing for the Weather and the Activities of the Day	22
◇ Child Accidents & Medical Accident Insurance	23
◇ Suspension & Exclusion Policy	24-25

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS 26

◇ Parent Meetings, Events & Volunteering	26
◇ Policy Council & Becoming an Employee	27
◇ Workforce Readiness and Training Programs, TLC & Cooking Matters	28
◇ M.I.L.K.: An Initiative that Supports Male Role Models	29

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES 30

◇ Family Services	30
◇ Mental Health & Disability Services	31
◇ Nutrition	32
◇ Health Services	33

HEALTH POLICIES & PROCEDURES 33

◇ Medication Policy & Procedure	34-37
◇ Infectious Disease Policy	38
◇ Tooth Brushing Policy & Information and Toileting/Training Policy	39
◇ Sudden Infant Death Prevention Policy	40
◇ Additional Health Information	41
◇ Disclosures	42

The Department of Early Education and Care is the licensing body for health and safety issues in preschool settings for the State of Massachusetts.

Dear Parents,

We are grateful and honored that for over 50 years, families just like yours have trusted us with their most valuable possessions—their children. This trust has given us the opportunity to educate children, support families, and strengthen the communities that we serve.

We value the relationships that we build with you and your child, and we hope that this relationship will encourage you to reach out when you need to, and to get involved in activities at your child's center. As your child's first and most important teacher, we encourage you to be an active part in your child's education. Your child's teachers are your partners, and your eyes and ears while your children are in their care.

It is our promise to you that we will provide your child with a nurturing, supportive and healthy environment that helps them learn and grow; we will be your partner in getting your child ready to be successful in life; and we will support you in achieving the goals that you set for yourself and your family. This is our promise because we know that our Head Start children and parents are the college graduates, teachers, doctors, and leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Janis Santos'.

Janis Santos
Chief Executive Officer

**“Children are the world’s most valuable resource
and its best hope for the future.”**

John. F. Kennedy



Parent and Program Partnership Outline

About Us

Since 1965 Holyoke • Chicopee • Springfield Head Start, Inc. has been committed to providing low income children and families with a beacon of hope and a source of support for a brighter future. We strive to do so by providing high quality, comprehensive child development services to enrolled children and empowering families to achieve stability in their home environment.

We respect the home culture and language of all the children and families we serve, while helping children progress towards understanding and speaking English. Throughout our time together we hope to learn more about your family culture so that we can provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects your culture, language, and ethnicity.

We offer part-day and full-day preschool programs for families in the communities of Brimfield, Chicopee, Granby, Holland, Holyoke, Hampden, Ludlow, Monson, Palmer, South Hadley, Wilbraham and Wales. Centers are currently located in Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield and Ludlow.

Day-to-day operations of the agency are overseen by the following teams who work together as part of your child's comprehensive services **center team***:

◇ Education

- ◆ This includes teaching staff, educational coaches, and your child's center Site Director. They work together to deliver quality education to your child.

◇ Family Services

- ◆ This includes your Family Services Coordinator (Family Service Coordinator) who works with you to set goals, find resources, and connect your family to services.

◇ Health & Nutrition

- ◆ This includes the nurses, medical assistants and food preparation staff. They work together to make sure your child is safe and healthy.

◇ Mental Health

- ◆ This includes the early childhood clinicians who are available to support the classrooms, and can work with a parent and child when there are behavior concerns.

◇ Disabilities

- ◆ This includes the disabilities staff who are available to support the classrooms, and can work with a parent and child if there are developmental concerns.

◇ Transportation

- ◆ This includes bus drivers and monitors who make sure that all children make it to the center and home safely everyday.

*** Your center team works collaboratively to provide your child and family with the best experience and services possible, and they are always available to help.**

Our Promise to You...

- ... We will always treat you with respect and recognize you as your child's first teacher.
- ... We will welcome and encourage you to visit your child's center anytime he/she is there.
- ... We will be your partner in meeting the needs of your child and family.
- ... We will regularly inform you about your child's progress in school, including a written progress report at least twice per year and a home visit at least four times per year from your child's teachers. However, you should **always** feel free to speak with staff about your child whenever you need to!

If your child has a diagnosed disability you will receive a progress report every three (3) months, and will be promptly notified of concerns or important developments as they happen. Head Start staff is available for individual conferences at your request.

- ... We will encourage you to take part in making decisions about your child's center and the whole program. Your ideas and suggestions are valued, and there are opportunities for you to share them with staff and other parents.
- ... We will give you information on resources within Head Start and the community that you have access to for health, education and family well-being.



In Return, We Ask You...

- ... To partner with Head Start, and be open to new ideas and experiences that could benefit you and your child.
- ... To work cooperatively with teachers, staff, and other parents so that we can maintain positive relationships that will benefit us all.
- ... To be involved in your child's education, and contribute to classroom activities in your own special way. When you show your child that their education matters to you, it gives you a shared experience and they will feel proud of their accomplishments knowing you were there supporting them.
- ... To help us make our program better by offering your ideas, opinions, and suggestions. We appreciate feedback from parents because it gives us the chance to help families in the best possible way.
- ... To ask questions when you are unsure. Teachers and staff are always willing to answer your questions, or help find you the answers you need if we don't know.
- ... To reinforce what my child learns at Head Start by working with him/her at home.

Together we make a great team!

Rules for Adults in the Program

Our centers and events are family friendly, and designed for the children that we serve. In order to make sure that the children are having safe, positive experiences we have rules for adult staff and parents when they are in the program and at our events.



PERSONAL CONDUCT:

- ◇ HCS Head Start is committed to the safety, privacy, and welfare of our children, families and staff. To ensure a respectful and safe space for all, please note there is a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for violence, harassment, bullying, or inappropriate behavior at any Head Start center or at a Head Start sponsored activity. Adults shall not curse or use abusive language in the center (this includes abusive language on clothing). We reserve the right to limit access of a family and or family members/friends from your child's site and other program facilities whenever there is a violation of this personal conduct expectation. Every family shall receive and sign our personal conduct policy.

SMOKING:

- ◇ Due to the acknowledged hazards, both to adult non-smokers and especially young children arising from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, HCS Head Start, Inc. has a NO SMOKING Policy. We provide a smoke free environment for staff, children and participants. Smoking of any substance is prohibited at all times on our property, in our vehicles, and during HCS Head Start sponsored events.

BEVERAGES:

- ◇ Adults are not allowed to have hot beverages in areas where children are present, to prevent any accidental injury. NO ALCOHOL is permitted at any Head Start center or activity.

DISCIPLINE:

- ◇ Physical discipline at the center is prohibited. This includes a slap on the child's hand or bottom. Aggressive verbal discipline, like shouting angrily or humiliating a child, will not be tolerated. Please see Child Guidance Policy on page 20 for more information.
- ◇ Please note all staff at Head Start are Mandated Reporters. Should any reportable activity occur while a Head Start staff member is present that incident will be reported in accordance with MGL Ch119, 51A. Please refer to our Child Protection Policy on page 11.

PRIVACY:

- ◇ Every child and family has a right to their privacy. Adults should not share others personal information that they may see or hear in the center.

PROPERTY

- ◇ We ask that everyone treat our property with respect, including our centers, buses, and parking lots. Please park in designated spots, and be mindful of the cars around you so that damage is not done to vehicles or property located in the parking lot. Destruction of agency property could result in loss of access to the center or appropriate legal action.

Parent Concerns and Complaints Policy

HCS Head Start, Inc. is committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality child development services to every child enrolled in the program. In partnership with parents/guardians, staff will work to resolve any concerns or complaints that may arise throughout the school year. If you bring forward a concern or complaint, the procedure below will be followed:

1. Discuss the matter with someone that you feel comfortable, whether that's a member of your child's **teaching team** or your **Family Service Coordinator (FSC)**, in a timely manner.
 - ◆ Alternatively, every Head Start center has a **Site Director** that is also available to hear your concern or complaint if you do not feel comfortable sharing with your child's teaching team or your Family Service Coordinator.
2. Once a complaint is made, the Center Team and/or a Site Director will work in conjunction with you to resolve the issue.
3. If a resolution cannot be reached or you are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, you have the opportunity to discuss the concern or complaint with the appropriate Program Coordinator and/or Program Manager. The Program Manager and/or Program Director will work with you and staff to resolve the concern or complaint and recommend a realistic and reasonable outcome acceptable to all parties.
4. Should you remain unsatisfied with the Program Manager and/or Program Directors recommended resolution, you may have the complaint heard by the Grievance Committee whose decision will be final and binding.

When families raise a concern or complaint with staff, parents can expect to:

- ◆ Be treated with respect and dignity,
- ◆ Have the complaint or concern dealt with in a confidential, thorough and timely manner,
- ◆ Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of your concern or complaint.



HCS Head Start asks that when raising a concern or complaint, parents will:

- ◆ Treat staff with respect, courtesy and maintain confidentiality,
- ◆ Bring the concern/complaint forward as soon as possible,
- ◆ Give complete and factual information,
- ◆ Have realistic and reasonable expectations about what course of action is required to resolve the concern or complaint.

30 Madison Avenue
Springfield, MA 01105
phone: (413) 788-6522
fax: (413) 788-6679
TTY: (413) 733-2785



662 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
phone: (413) 536-0363
fax: (413) 536-0928
TTY: (413) 532-2496

ANNUAL NOTICE REGARDING Personally Identifiable Information (PII) AND PARENTAL RIGHTS

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THIS INFORMATION.

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

By law, **HCS Head Start, Inc.** must protect the privacy of your child's Personally Identifiable Information. Information that could be used to identify your child (known as "Personally Identifiable Information" or "PII") includes your child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child. **HCS Head Start, Inc.** retains PII because your child receives Head Start/Early Head Start services from us and it is a part of each child's record with us. We take our obligation to protect the privacy of your child's PII data very seriously. This notice explains your rights and our legal duties and privacy practices.

We are required to give you a copy of your rights in writing every year, including definitions (which cover descriptions of the types of PII that may be disclosed), to whom we can disclose, and list when we do not need to receive your Consent to disclose PII from your child's record.

HCS Head Start, Inc. will abide by the terms of this notice. Should our data and child record practices materially change, **HCS Head Start, Inc.** reserves the right to change the terms of this notice, and will follow the terms currently in effect. Any new provisions we add will affect all PII we maintain from the time the new provisions go into effect, as well as any PII that we may receive in the future. If we revise our practices substantially, we will provide a revised notice

Definitions

Child Records means records that: (1) are directly related to the child; (2) are maintained by the program, or by a Party acting for the program; and (3) include information recorded in any way, such as print, electronic, or digital means, including media, video, image, or audio format.

Confidential means to be kept private with certain specific protections.

Consent means written approval or authorization that is signed and dated. It may include a record and signature in electronic form that: (1) identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic Consent; and, (2) indicates the same person's approval of the information. Consent can be revoked going forward.

Disclosure means to permit access to or the release, transfer, or other communication of Personally Identifiable Information contained in Child Records by any means, including oral, written, or electronic means, to any Party except the Party identified as the Party that provided or created the record.

Party means an entity or individual.



Parent means a Head Start child's mother or father, other family member who is a primary caregiver, foster parent or authorized caregiver, guardian or the person with whom the child has been placed for purposes of adoption pending a final adoption decree.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) means any information that could identify a specific individual, including but not limited to a child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child.

Required Uses and Disclosures of PII

We must use and disclose information contained in Child Records that is PII in a number of ways to carry out our responsibilities. We keep PII in our Child Records. The following list describes the types of uses and Disclosures of PII that federal law requires **HCS Head Start, Inc.** to make and allows us to do so **without your Consent**:

Within this organization for Head Start purposes;

To other organizations for Head Start purposes (including but not limited to Contractors or Delegates/Sub-Recipients that help us provide services to your child);

In connection with an audit or evaluation of education or child development programs or for enforcement or compliance with federal legal requirements (such as to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that funds our work);

For studies to improve child or family outcomes or quality of services;

During Disasters or Health/Safety Emergencies to appropriate Parties (including but not limited to local health departments, police, fire, EMS, etc.);

Pursuant to Court Orders or Subpoenas (so long as we try to notify you in advance unless (1) a court has ordered that neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information provided in response be disclosed; (2) the Disclosure is in compliance with an ex parte court order obtained by the United States Attorney General or his/her delegate concerning investigations or prosecutions of an offense listed in 18 U.S.C. 2332b(g)(5)(B) or an act of domestic or international terrorism as defined in 18 U.S.C. 2331; (3) a Parent is a Party to a court proceeding directly involving child abuse and neglect or dependency matters, and the order is issued in the context of that proceeding; or (4) if there is legal action between **HCS Head Start, Inc.** and a Parent);

For Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Monitoring if the results will be reported in an aggregate form that does not identify any individual;

To Foster Care Caseworkers who have the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement; and,

To appropriate Parties in cases of suspected or known child maltreatment (such as Child Protective Services).

HCS Head Start, Inc. also uses and shares your child's PII when requested by you or when otherwise required by law.

Other Permitted Uses and Disclosures

1) **HCS Head Start, Inc.** may use and share PII in certain limited instances, **without your Consent as long as we notify you first.** We can do this if the PII **relates to a child's enrollment or transfer to officials at a program, school, or school district in which the child seeks or intends to enroll or where the child is already enrolled.**



To do so, **HCS Head Start, Inc.** will notify a Parent about the intended Disclosure.

The Parent will have the opportunity to request a copy of the PII from Child Records to be disclosed and have an opportunity to challenge and refuse Disclosure of the information in the records, before we forward the records to the other Party.

If an entity or a Parent requests that PII be disclosed for enrollment or transfer purposes, you will receive a [Notice of PII Disclosure for Enrollment or Transfer Form](#).

The Notice of PII Disclosure for Enrollment or Transfer Form allows the Parent to challenge and refuse the Disclosure by following the steps in the Form.

If you do nothing or do not follow the steps within the timeframe set forth in the [Notice of PII Disclosure for Enrollment or Transfer Form](#) to challenge or refuse to disclose, **HCS Head Start, Inc.** will go ahead as planned and send copies of the requested PII to the requesting program, school, or school district to further the child's program and ensure continuity through data.

2) Except as described above, HCS Head Start, Inc. will not use or disclose your PII without your written Consent. You may give us written Consent to use or disclose your PII to anyone for any purpose that you choose. You may revoke your authorized Consent so long as you do so in writing; however, **HCS Head Start, Inc.** will not be able to get back any PII we have already used or shared based on your prior permission.

Parental Rights

You have the right to:

- ◇ **Ask to inspect** your Child's Record on-site containing PII that **HCS Head Start, Inc.** maintains. **HCS Head Start, Inc.** will create an opportunity for you to inspect your Child's Record on-site within 2 business days. You do not have the right to remove the original record from on-site nor to take any parts of the original record with you.
- ◇ **Ask for a copy** of Child Records disclosed to third Parties with Parental Consent, free of charge.
- ◇ **Ask HCS Head Start, Inc. to amend** your Child's Record if you believe that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates your child's privacy. You must ask for this in writing, along with a reason for your request. **HCS Head Start, Inc.** will review your request and decide on it within 5 business days. If **HCS Head Start, Inc.** denies your request to amend your PII, we will issue you a written statement explaining why and explain your right to a hearing.
- ◇ **Ask for a hearing** if your request to amend the Child Record is denied. If the issue is not decided in your favor at the hearing, you have the right to place a statement in the Child Record that either comments on the contested information or that states why the Parent disagrees with the program's decision, or both.
- ◇ **Ask to inspect written agreements involving Disclosure of PII.** If a Parent requests, you can come on-site and review a redacted written agreement with a third Party that involves Disclosure of their child's PII. This right does not allow you to take any photos of it or make, or have copies made of the agreement.

Complaints or Questions

If you believe that your child's privacy rights may have been violated or if you have questions, please let us know as soon as possible. Complaints should be directed to Director of Human Resources at (413) 788-6522. Filing a complaint or exercising your rights will not affect the care or services your child receives from **HCS Head Start, Inc.**



30 Madison Avenue
Springfield, MA 01105
phone: (413) 788-6522
fax: (413) 788-6679
TTY: (413) 733-2785



662 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
phone: (413) 536-0363
fax: (413) 536-0928
TTY: (413) 532-2496

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The purpose of the Child Protection Policy is to protect children who have been abused or neglected from further harm. Under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 119, section 51A the Department of Children and Families is mandated to receive and investigate reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. The law dictates that professionals whose work brings them in contact with children are considered **mandated reporters**, and requires them to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. **All Holyoke • Chicopee • Springfield Head Start staff are mandated reporters.**

We ask that you keep us informed if your child sustains an injury at home or during their time away from school, and to understand that staff may ask you about it if they see that your child has an injury when they arrive to school or if your child discloses an injury to them. In circumstances where the cause of injury is concerning, we are required by law to report this information. In many cases, staff will contact and inform the parent/guardian that we have referred to the Department of Children and Families for help.

The Department of Children and Families uses the following definitions:

Abuse: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under the age of 18 which causes, or creates a substantial risk of, physical or emotional injury, or sexual abuse of a child; or the victimization of a child through sexual abuse or human trafficking, regardless if the person in a responsible caregiver.

- ◇ **Physical injury** includes, but is not limited to death; or fracture of a bone, subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ, or any other such nontrivial injury; or soft tissue swelling or skin bruising, depending upon such factors as the child's age, circumstances of which the injury occurred and the number and location of bruises.
- ◇ **Sexual abuse** is defined as any non-accidental act by a caregiver upon a child that constitutes a sexual offense under Massachusetts law or any sexual contact between a caregiver and a child for whom the caregiver is responsible.
- ◇ **Emotional injury** is an impairment to or disorder or the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the children's ability to function within normal range of performance and behavior.

Neglect: The failure by the caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition.

All forms and information requested are the property of HCS Head Start Inc., and may not be reproduced for anything other than their intended purpose .

Shaken Baby Syndrome: Infants, babies or small children who suffer injuries or death from severe shaking, jerking, pushing or pulling may have been victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome. The act of shaking a baby is considered physical abuse, as spinal, head and neck injuries often result from violently shaking young children.

Substance Exposed Newborn (SEN): A newborn who was exposed to alcohol or other drugs ingested by the mother in utero, whether or not this exposed is detected at birth through a drug screen or withdrawal symptoms. A SEN may also be experiencing Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), which are symptoms and signs exhibited by a newborn due to drug withdrawal. NAS is a subset of SEN. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) as diagnosed by a qualified license medical professional is also a subset of SEN.

Domestic Violence: A pattern of coercive controlling behaviors that one person exercises over another in an intimate relationship. Domestic violence poses physical and psychological risks to children, and the following circumstances are cause for reporting:

- ◇ A child was harmed directly or indirectly by a caregiver during a domestic violence incident;
- ◇ A child witnessed a caregiver inflicting violence or using abusive or threatening language against another person

It's important to remember that the Department of Children and Families primary mission is to protect children, and that they will work with you to ensure that your child is safe. Our staff are here to support you, as well. We acknowledge that being a parent/guardian is one of life's most challenging jobs, and we want to support you in handling those challenges. We have many opportunities for parents to explore positive parenting habits through workshops, home activities, outside referrals, and on-site mental health services.

There are community resources available to you if you are feeling overwhelmed, are concerned you cannot provide your child a safe and adequate environment, or feel your child is in physical danger.

Parental Stress Hotline (Available 24/7, free & confidential) — 1-800-632-8188

Department of Children and Families Local Offices

Holyoke — (413) 493-2600
261 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Springfield — (413) 452-3200
140 High Street
Springfield, MA 01105

Van Wart — (413) 205-0500
112 Industry Ave
Springfield, MA 01104

Emergency Preparedness

HCS Head Start, Inc. is committed to providing children, families, and staff with a safe and secure environment. Emergency Preparedness policies and procedures are in place to manage emergency and crisis situations, should they arise. An important component of our Preparedness Plan is **practice**. While practicing, we will make every effort to do so in a way that reassures the children that they do not need to be frightened. In addition, we will notify you of the days we practice so you can be prepared to talk with your child, or answer any questions they might have.

It is important that we work together prior to, and in the event of an emergency. The following are tips to assist us in our emergency preparedness:

- ◇ **Please** let your center team know when your contact information and/or telephone number has changed
- ◇ **Please** familiarize yourself with the location/address of your child's alternative **Emergency Site** (located on the front of this Parent Handbook).
- ◇ **Please** remember that it may not be possible for the staff who are with the children to respond from calls from parents because their focus is the safety of the children. The agency will make every effort to provide you with a way of receiving updates and instructions during an emergency.

*** In the event of an emergency, your first response will likely be to immediately pick up your child. However, we ask that you wait until we give instructions that it is safe to do so.**

The steps we will take in the event of an emergency will be as follows:

1. Assess the situation;
2. Work with Emergency Management Services (police, fire department) to ensure the children and staff are located in the safest location possible in accordance with the emergency;
3. Contact parents/guardians with information and/or instructions; we may do so by phone, by local media, through Emergency Management Services, or a combination of the above;
4. When it is safe to do so, reunite parents/guardians with their children.

In the event of an emergency at your child's center, where for safety reasons, the children must be moved (i.e. a fire or pipe burst), we will move the children to the alternate **Emergency Site** where they can be safe.

In the event of an emergency that requires your child's center to be placed on "lock down," staff will follow lock down procedures that protect the children. At this time **no one** is allowed to leave or to enter the center.

If there is a hazard outside of the center, Emergency Personnel may ask that we lock down the building and may not allow you near the building. Please keep your safety in mind and find a safe place to wait, where the agency can contact you with information and instructions.

We thank you in advance, and please feel free to speak to your child's center team if you have any questions.

Emergency Contacts

For the safety of your child, staff are only authorized to release to you and to the trusted people you list on your child's **Emergency Sheet**. We use this sheet at pick up, if your child becomes ill during the day and needs to go home early, or if your child has not been picked up by the end of their scheduled class time. We will always attempt to contact you before we reach out to the others listed on the emergency sheet.

We ask that you update the emergency sheet **in person** when emergency contact names, phone numbers and addresses change. If anyone that is not listed on the Emergency Sheet comes to pick up your child, we cannot release them **even if they are your friend or family**.

Any person picking up a child will be asked to show a **valid photo ID** (license, state ID, passport, school ID, etc.) before the child is released. This allows us to be sure we are releasing your child to someone you trust.

Transportation & Pedestrian Safety

We understand that getting your child to school everyday can be difficult with a busy schedule. However, transportation for our programs is limited and in many circumstances parents/guardians must provide transportation for their child to and from the center. **Unfortunately, no transportation is provided for families living within one mile of any site or for classrooms scheduled for 6 or more hours per day.** Current transportation availability differs between our program options.



- ◇ At this time there is no transportation available for center-based **Early Head Start** classrooms. The **Home Base** program may be able to provide transportation to bi-weekly play groups for families that can demonstrate a need for assistance with transportation.
- ◇ At this time there is limited transportation available from pre-determined bus stops to several AM and PM **Head Start** classrooms in Holyoke, Chicopee, and Springfield for families that can demonstrate a need for assistance with transportation.

***Children cannot be left unattended in your vehicle while you are dropping off your child. Children cannot be left unattended at a bus stop for pick-up or drop off.**

When at the center, **it is required by law that you shut down the engine of your vehicle** if you will be stopped for more than five minutes. Both the Massachusetts State Law (Chapter 90, Section 16A) and Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection (DEP) **idling reduction regulation** (310 CMR 7.11(1)(b)) prohibit unnecessary idling in order to reduce the health and environmental effects of vehicle exhaust.

If you and your child will be walking to school, the following tips can help you stay safe:

- ◇ Always hold your child's hand when crossing the street or even a parking lot.
- ◇ Always look both ways and check for cars that are turning or backing up.
- ◇ Walk facing traffic, on sidewalks or as far away from traffic as possible on safe paths.

Practice these skills with your children until they show you they are safe pedestrians!

Late Pick-Up Policy

The cornerstone of the partnership we build between teachers and parents is respect, so we ask that parents respect the staff's planning and personal time by being on time for pick up.

The following policy and procedures are in place to ensure that you and your child are safe. When a parent is late and we have not heard from them there can be concern that something may have happened that has prevented the parent from being in contact.



This is why it is important that you call the center staff as soon as possible to inform them if there is an emergency and you will be late or will not be able to pick up your child. Together you can discuss arrangements to have your child picked up. If your child has not been picked up and you have not called to let us know that you will be late, the following procedure will be used:

If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes after their class ends the following steps will be taken:

1. Staff will attempt to call the parent/guardian at the numbers listed in the child's file.
2. Staff will attempt to call the emergency contacts listed in the child's emergency contact list.
3. If staff is still **not** able to make contact with anyone on the emergency contact list, staff will attempt to call the parent/guardian again.
4. If staff are unable to make contact with anyone after trying parent/guardian and all emergency contacts for one hour, and, **deem it appropriate**, staff will contact the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the local Police Department to ensure the safety of the child.

Additional steps will be taken if you are chronically late (we define "chronic lateness" as three or more times in a two week period). If there is a pattern of lateness, the following procedure will be used:

1. Staff will begin attempting to contact the parent/guardian and all emergency contacts immediately upon dismissal if no one has arrived to pick up the child. Staff will repeat attempts to contact as needed until an emergency contact can be reached to pick up the child.
2. If parents continue to not comply with center hours, parents will be required to attend a conference with staff members from the child's center. If the parent remains chronically late, alternative placements within the program will be discussed to better meet the needs of the family.
3. If staff is unable to make contact with anyone after trying parent/guardian and all emergency contacts for one hour, staff will contact the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF), and, **if deemed appropriate**, the local Police Department to ensure the safety of the child.

Closure Practices

In the event of severe weather, HCS Head Start, Inc. will announce any program closures or delays on local television stations and on our website (www.hcsheadstart.org) and/or on our Facebook Page (Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc.) **as early as possible**. Announcements on local television stations are often subject to differences—which can list our name incorrectly or give a confusing message.



The following messages are most common:

- ◇ If Part Day, Early Head Start Expansion, Dose & Duration, and Migrant Seasonal classes are cancelled, our message will normally read “Holyoke •Chicopee •Springfield Head Start Part Day Classes (or half day classes, or AM/PM classes) are cancelled” This means Full day classrooms are still open.
- ◇ If Full Day classrooms are also cancelled our message will read “Holyoke •Chicopee •Springfield Head Start is closed”
- ◇ If Full Day classrooms are delayed, it will be listed as either a one or two hour delay, or possible opening at ____”

The Benefits of Regular Attendance

When your child enrolls in our program, they will begin learning routines, developing relationships with their new friends and teachers, and will start gaining the skills they need to be successful in school and life. Consistently attending school will provide them the best opportunity to learn the skills that they need.



Children who attend Head Start or Early Head Start on a regular basis show significant gains in comparison to children who do not. Research collected by the **National Head Start Association** indicates that:

- ◇ Early Head Start children show significantly better social-emotional, language and cognitive development.
- ◇ Head Start children have better social skills, impulse control and approaches to learning.
- ◇ Head Start children are more likely to have healthy eating patterns and are less likely to be overweight compared to children in other non-parental care.
- ◇ Head Start children have a higher likelihood of graduating high school, attending college, and receiving a post-secondary degree, license, or certification.

We’re here to help your child find their highest potential, so we encourage parents to send their child to school everyday when possible. We understand that children get sick and that family circumstances can impact your child’s attendance. Your Family Service Coordinator and your child’s teachers are here to offer support and to help you and your child gain the best possible outcomes from our program.

Attendance Policy

Our goal is to help your child enjoy school and reach their greatest potential. In order for your child to get the most out of their learning experience and increase their developmentally appropriate skills, they must regularly attend school. At HCS Head Start, we encourage families to maintain 90% average daily attendance for their child (3 absences or less per month). **Attendance is tracked daily so it is important that you let your child's teacher or center know if they will not be able to come to school.**

If your child is **unexpectedly absent, or does not get on the bus**, and we have not heard from you, we will attempt to contact you to make sure that you and your child are safe. If your child is unexpectedly absent for 2 consecutive days and we are unable to reach you by phone, staff will conduct a home visit and send a follow up letter if no contact has been made. If after 7 consecutive days your child continues to be absent and we have not made contact with you, your child's slot will be discontinued.



We understand that things can come up, so for certain circumstances your child's attendance will be marked as an **excused absence**.

- ◇ Absences will be excused for valid reasons including: illness, bereavement, severe weather, religious holidays, and a maximum of 10 vacation days per school year. Absences due to emergencies can only be excused if the reason is provided. All other absences or absences without reasons will be marked as unexcused. **Seven consecutive unexcused absences may result in discontinuation of your child's slot.**
- ◇ If your child is unable to attend school for **more than 1 week** due to severe illness or emergency circumstances, your center team will need to complete **weekly 90-minute home visits** with you and your child until they can return to school. If your child will be absent for more than 30 days and home visits are not possible, we will need to discontinue your child's slot and will prioritize them for re-enrollment when they can return.

Attendance Plans

If your child is at risk of missing 10% of program days during the school year (18 absences), due to a chronic medical condition or a family circumstance, your Family Service Coordinator will work with you to develop a plan to support your child's regular attendance. Once your attendance plan has been created, follow up will occur as needed. Attendance plans are used to plan out strategies to reduce the barriers you and your child are experiencing that are preventing your child from being in school.

We are always available to assist with family concerns and are here to support you and your child. If your child is unable to attend school due to lack of transportation or your work/school hours, please speak with a member of your center team to determine if there is another program option more suitable for your family.

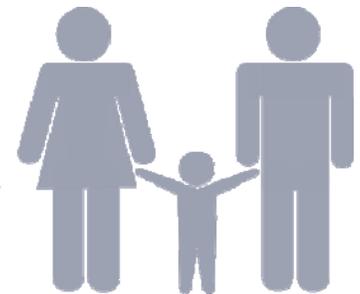
Our Family-Focused Approach

Our primary goal is to prepare your child for a lifetime of success, and you play a very important role in helping us achieve that goal. You are your child’s first, and most important, teacher which means your input is valuable in helping support their growth and development. From birth through age five, your child is developing the critical physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills they need to be successful in school and for the rest of their lives. These skills are built in your home and in our classrooms.

Children learn through everyday activities such as cooking dinner, during bed time routines, when riding the school bus, at health screenings and even during a dental visit. This learning helps your child have the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for **school readiness**.

At Head Start, **school readiness** means:

- ◇ Children are ready for school
- ◇ Families are ready to support their children's learning
- ◇ Schools are ready for children



We recognize that, in order for families to support their child’s learning, they must be able to achieve their **own goals** and have **supportive relationships** that help them get there. Our Family Service Coordinators partner with families to work towards:

- ◇ Parents and families being safe and healthy, and having increased financial security.
- ◇ Parents and families developing warm relationships that nurture their child’s learning and development beginning with transitions to parenthood.
- ◇ Parents and families observing, guiding, promoting, and participating in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
- ◇ Parents and families advancing their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.
- ◇ Parents and families supporting and advocating for their child’s learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.
- ◇ Parents and families forming 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.
- ◇ Parents and families participating in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children’s development and learning experiences.

Building the School-to-Home Relationships & Learning

At HCS Head Start we believe that our role with parents is to be their partner in their child’s learning, and their family’s success. In order to build the positive relationships needed to accomplish those things, our staff participate in **home visits**. Coming to your home helps us get to know your family, and allows us to meet you in the environment you feel most comfortable.

Each family will have two home visits with their child’s teachers and Family Service Coordinators during the school year. However, if your child has a developmental need or an Individualized Education Program (IEP), home visits will be done more frequently. The goal of these visits is to enhance knowledge and understanding about your child’s educational and development progress.

Home visits may also be conducted if your child is seriously injured or is experiencing severe illness and cannot come into the center. At that time, your teaching team will make weekly visits to ensure that your child is still receiving the learning that they need.

Another great way to strengthen your child’s growth and development and partner with their teachers is through **at-home learning**. Practicing daily routines, reading to your child, and working on worksheets together are different ways that you can help your child learn. Your child’s teachers can provide you with **age appropriate activities** and an **in-kind** form to help you track different tasks and exercises you do with your child at home.

When parents engage their children in learning, children develop a love for learning because it becomes an opportunity to spend time together and to show off the skills they are building when they are away at school. Some examples of simple activities you can do with your child are:

- ◇ Counting the number of red cars you see while in the car
- ◇ Having your child set the table for dinner
- ◇ Asking them what new words they learned while at school

In-kind forms are quick and easy to fill out, only requiring the following information:

Date	Name & Signature	Start Time	End Time	Activity Connected with Development/Learning	Total Minutes
9/1/2018	Jessica Day <i>Jessica Day</i>	4:00	4:30	Sorting laundry by color	30

In-kind forms can also be used for time or goods that you donate to your child’s center as well. If you volunteer in your child’s classroom or there is a classroom event, you can sign off on the time that you spent there with your child.

Each year, the amount of in-kind is counted up and reported to our federal office. This helps to show them the generosity and dedication of our parents and our community.

Educational Philosophy & Child Guidance

At HCS Head Start, we believe that parents are their child’s first and most important teacher. No one knows your child better than you do, so we value the knowledge that you bring to the partnership you build with your child’s teachers. In return we provide your child with an active, hands on, play based program that takes into account your child’s family, culture, experience, abilities and needs. **Our classrooms are inclusive of children from all backgrounds and with all levels of ability.** If your child has a disability or is a dual language learner, staff will provide an environment of inclusion that supports and respects you and your child. We understand that children will progress in their own time and we celebrate differences in our classrooms.

We know that children learn best when they feel safe and secure, so our classrooms are designed to be nurturing, supportive and healthy environments for children. When children freely play and explore, they:

- ◇ Learn to share, take turns and play well with others
- ◇ Feel good about themselves and learn to express their feelings
- ◇ Use their imagination and gain independence
- ◇ Learn and use new concepts and vocabulary
- ◇ Learn about the world around them



“When a child needs to be redirected or disciplined, we believe the guidance we provide is an opportunity for the child to learn. Challenging behavior can be part of a child’s, and we work closely with parents to find positive approaches to guiding their child. **Our teachers use positive, non-punitive methods of guidance and discipline which include:”**

- ◇ Respecting and acknowledging children’s feelings;
- ◇ Creating a classroom atmosphere through example and attitude where it is natural and acceptable to express feelings;
- ◇ Developing clear, reasonable, consistent, and age-appropriate rules and expectations for children, and to the extent possible, engage children themselves in the rule-setting process;
- ◇ Working with children to help them solve problems instead of imposing solutions;
- ◇ Reducing the potential need for discipline by anticipating and decreasing instances when problems could arise;
- ◇ Using natural and logical consequences as learning opportunities for children, and;
- ◇ Maintaining a positive approach to classroom management.

Our teachers will never:

- ◇ Engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse or humiliation as a means of discipline.
- ◇ Employ methods of discipline that involve isolation (time out), the use of food as punishment or reward or the denial of basic needs.
- ◇ Engage in any method of physical restraint on a child.

Preparing You and Your Child for Transitions

Throughout the course of your child’s time at HCS Head Start, you may experience a **transition**—this could be a transition from Early Head Start to Head Start, from Head Start to Kindergarten, or even a transition to a new school if you need to. We acknowledge that change can be difficult and that the best way to feel comfortable with it is to prepare! Below is some information on common transitions you might encounter.

The transition out of Early Head Start marks the beginning of a new experience for both you and your child. We will begin working with you when your toddler turns **2 years and 3 months old** to plan for your child’s transition to preschool. Whether you’d like your child to transition into a Head Start classroom, or think that you might be interest in learning about other options for your child, we’d like to stay by your side to offer guidance and information about what to expect.

All children are scheduled to transition out of Early Head Start when they turn 2 years and 9 months old. If your child has a disability and a transition to preschool at that age would not be developmentally appropriate, your child’s teachers or Family Service Coordinator can set up a team meeting to create a **Development Placement Plan** for your child. We will work closely with any agencies your family is involved with to make your child’s transition smooth and to make sure there is a continuity of services. Your child’s teachers and your Family Services Coordinator will meet with you regularly during the months preceding your child’s transition to offer support and guidance.

The transition to kindergarten is an exciting time for preschoolers. Your child will be learning all the skills they need to be successful and will be excited to show you all the new things they are learning to do. Your child's teachers will regularly share your child’s progress with you. Your Family Service Coordinator will give information about kindergarten registration in your community and can provide information about licensed before and after school programs, summer programs, or other child care options if needed.

If your child has a disability, your child’s team will work with your child’s new school to ensure that services and support are in place for your child to have a successful transition. The team will also work to put dual language supports in place if needed.

A transition to another program might be necessary if your family is moving to a new community outside of our service area. Your Family Service Coordinator can assist you with finding another program that meets your needs. If you are able to transport them, your child can continue to receive services at their current site until a transition to another suitable program can be arranged.

If your family moves to another location within our service area or if your child’s classroom location and hours do not meet the needs of your family, a transfer can be requested at any time. Please contact your Family Service Coordinator if you would like to request a transfer. Once a transfer request has been submitted, it remains active until the transfer can be processed or until the end of the school year, whichever comes first.

Dressing for the Weather and the Activities of the Day

Your child's day with us will be full of learning, exploring and playing. At times, this can get **messy!** Whether we are painting, playing in sand, water and mud; learning to drink from cups with no covers; or learning to serve our own food during our family style meals, being messy helps us learn about the world around us. **For this reason we ask that you dress them in play clothes that will not be ruined if they are stained or soiled.**

Your child will also have the opportunity to **play outside every day** unless the weather is deemed to be too extreme. Agency management and teachers use **Child Care Weather Watch** as a guide when deciding whether or not to bring children outside. If it is safe for play, out we go!

We believe in giving children the chance to have active outdoor play because being outdoors is joyful for children. It gives them a chance to stretch their large muscles, breathe fresh air, take in the sunshine and experience the weather, enjoy the freedom of open spaces and move their bodies differently than they can indoors. Spending time outdoors gives all children an opportunity to explore their senses, practice developing gross motor and fine motor skills, social skills and begin to appreciate and respect living things.

We want your child to **safely** be able to have these experiences so we ask that you keep the following health and safety information in mind when dressing your child for the day:

- ◇ Dress your child in weather appropriate clothing. This would include:
 - ◆ Lightweight shirts, shorts or pants and a light jacket or sweater for warmer weather
 - ◆ boots, snow pants, hats, mittens/gloves, and a warm winter coat for colder weather
- ◇ Children should wear non-skid, fully enclosed shoes. Sneakers best support children's balance and full movement of their bodies. Open footwear such as sandals, flip flops, beach shoes, and "jelly" shoes can cause falls and be dangerous.
- ◇ Strings, jewelry, scarves or items that could become caught on playground equipment are a danger to your child, so avoid dressing your child in these items to prevent accidents and injuries.
- ◇ **Please do not dress your child in valuable items. We are not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.**

* If possible, we ask that you please send a labeled extra set of clothing for your child to keep in their cubby. If your child needs to be changed and has no extra clothing in the classroom, the teachers will lend whatever clean clothing is available.

* **If you need help or assistance obtaining clothing items for you or your child, please reach out to your classroom teacher or Family Service Coordinator.**



Child Accidents



We are committed to providing a safe environment at our centers and take every possible precaution to ensure the safety of children, staff, parents/guardians, and visitors. Despite all precautions, accidents occasionally happen.

When an accident does occur, the child will be attended to immediately in accordance with current first aid practice, ensuring that no other person is put in danger. Once the child is safe, the parent/guardian will be notified.

If the child needs to be seen by a doctor, or go to the Emergency Room, the Program Nurse will be called along with the parent/guardian. A Medical Referral and Child Accident/Incident Information Card (see below) will be given to the parent/guardian.

If the parent/guardian is unavailable, every effort will be made for an HCS Head Start, Inc. staff to accompany the child to the hospital that is indicated by the parent/guardian on the child's Emergency Sheet.

Medical Accident Insurance

HCS Head Start, Inc. purchases group medical accident insurance that **pays for medical expenses** for any injury occurring during sponsored activities in our programs and while traveling to or from such activities.

For example, if a child falls and sustains a serious injury, the accident medical insurance will cover the doctor and emergency room bills incurred as a result of the accident. If an accident occurs at the center and you accompany your child to the emergency room or a doctor's office, **do not present you or your child's personal health insurance ID card**. Instead, HCS Head Start, Inc. staff will provide you with a Child Accident Information Card that explains that our medical accident insurance is "Primary Coverage" that will pay for the medical expenses after the doctor or hospital provides an itemized bill.



You should never be required to pay for medical services at the time your child receives them. If the doctor or hospital has any questions, ask them to call the toll-free phone number shown on the card to verify the coverage. HCS Head Start, Inc. Will also ask you to sign a Claim Form that will be submitted to the insurance company to process costs related to your child's injury.

30 Madison Avenue
Springfield, MA 01105
phone: (413) 788-6522
fax: (413) 788-6679
TTY: (413) 733-2785



662 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
phone: (413) 536-0363
fax: (413) 536-0928
TTY: (413) 532-2496

SUSPENSION & EXCLUSION POLICY

HCS Head Start, Inc. is dedicated to providing high quality comprehensive services in the areas of education, health, mental health, social services and parent involvement to children and families enrolled in our program. Program staff assist all children and families with accessing the supports and referrals they need to be successful, but occasionally, it becomes a concern that Head Start may not be the most appropriate setting for a particular child and/or family if there are significant safety concerns that present a risk to the child, other enrolled children or staff that cannot be otherwise resolved. In accordance with our performance standards (1302.17) and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education & Care licensing regulations, use of suspensions is limited to extreme situations, and only after all other options have been exhausted, which may include but is not limited to:

- ◇ Meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss options to avoid suspension
- ◇ Referrals for child/family for evaluation, therapeutic or diagnostic services; or, review and revise existing IFSP or IEP
- ◇ Exploring supportive options in the classroom including observation, consultation or training
- ◇ Developing a written plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program
- ◇ Exploring options such as services offered through child/family insurance plans and/or state and federally funded grants

Review of a child/family's placement due to potential threats to safety will be deemed necessary in any situation that becomes a safety hazard to an enrolled child or program staff that cannot be rectified by any of the above stated strategies, or that would put HCS Head Start, Inc. in violation of program rules and/or Department of Early Education & Care licensing regulations, such as:

- ◇ If a child displays any behavior or action which, in our professional opinion, jeopardizes the personal safety of that child, other children and/or staff. Examples of these behaviors may include, but are not limited to biting, hitting or kicking, running out of the classroom/building, physically aggressive behavior to self or others and/or any combination of the above. This would also include any behavior/action that may occur on a bus provided by HCS Head Start, Inc.
- ◇ Inability of the child to adjust to group care so that the physical or emotional well-being of the child or others is, in our professional opinion, determined to be at risk.
- ◇ Any violation of Agency Policy or Procedures that may cause a safety concern, or jeopardizes the Agencies' ability to maintain its Department of Early Education and Care License to Operate a Child Care Facility.
- ◇ A Parent/Guardian's continued unintentional/intentional unwillingness to participate in problem-solving efforts with program staff.

The staff of HCS Head Start, Inc. will contact the parents/guardians if any of the above circumstances becomes a concern. If it becomes a behavior concern, HCS Head Start, Inc.'s mental health team behavior management policies would normally be initiated. This plan includes documentation, observation, assessment and intervention. Parent involvement is required throughout the process. When the concern has been identified and a plan has been put into place and the behavior/action, has, in the professional opinion of the agency, escalated in intensity and/or frequency, HCS Head Start, Inc. reserves the right to exclude/suspend a child from the program and assist the parent/guardian find a suitable alternative.

Parents/guardians will be provided with written documentation of the reasons for the termination/suspension. The program will work with the family to assist with the transition of services. If a child is terminated/suspended from our program, it will be the teaching team and Education Supervisor's responsibility to communicate with the appropriate program specialists in order to prepare the child for separation from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.

Opportunities for Parents

We love our HCS Head Start parents and are proud to say many of our staff were once parents, just like you! Being involved with your child's care and education is not only your right, but is a great way for you to build upon your positive relationship with your child, grow your leadership and advocacy skills, and build connections to other parents.

We incorporate many different options for parents to be engaged throughout our program so that there are opportunities for parents to find things that fit their schedule. Here are some ways for you to get involved:

Parent Meetings & Events at Your Child's Center

Throughout the school year the Family Service Coordinators and Teaching Teams plan bi-monthly Parent Meetings. These meetings focus on what your child is learning in the classroom, and include parent-related information about resources that are available in the community. Child care is provided so that parents can have the chance ask questions as well as to meet the other parents in their child's classroom.

As well as Parent Meetings, each of our sites plan several Family Engagement events throughout the year. We encourage families to participate in these wonderful events!

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to get involved and we appreciate your help! If you have a special skill or talent that could be helpful to your child's teacher or center, we always encourage parents to work with their center team to find ways that they can volunteer. This can be a great alternative if your schedule does not allow for you to spend time in your child's classroom/center.

If your schedule does allow for time in the center there are several ways you can volunteer. Volunteering in the classroom, assisting with classroom preparation, and helping in the kitchen are common volunteer options. To become a volunteer in the classroom/center:

1. Let someone from your child's center team know that you're interested in volunteering.
2. Attend a parent volunteer training (offered on an ongoing basis).
3. Based upon the volunteering opportunities you are interested in, you may need to complete a Mantoux (TB) test at your doctor's and complete a Background Records Check prior to volunteering, which will include fingerprinting (\$35 fee).

*** All volunteers in a classroom will be under the supervision of an EEC qualified educator at all times.**

Internships

We welcome any parent enrolled in a college program who is interested in completing field work or practicum hours with us to contact their Center Team or Site Director. To begin we will need information pertaining to the number of hours needed, the type of experience needed and the qualifications needed to oversee the fieldwork/practicum. Internships require Background Checks so please be aware that it may take several weeks for these to be completed.

Policy Council

Do you think that the voices of parents are important for making our program the best it can be? Us, too! That's why we have a governing body of elected parents who work closely with our agency Managers, Directors, Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors to be the representative voice for the parents at their center.



To become a Policy Council Representative you will work with your Family Service Coordinator to run in the election in October, and must be elected by majority vote from the other parents at the center. If you are elected to be the Representative for your center, you will:

- ◇ Attend monthly meetings;
- ◇ Participate in discussions, decision-making and voting on program issues;
- ◇ Serve as a communication link between parents and the Policy Council;
- ◇ Give ideas and suggestions to the Management Team.

Policy Council members sit on the council from November to October of the following year. If you are interested in running for a Representative position, please let your Family Service Coordinator know.

Becoming an Employee

There are opportunities for employment at HCS Head Start posted regularly. You can find postings at our main offices, on center parent boards, on our website (www.hcsheadstart.org) and online on employment search services such as MassLive, SchoolSpring, and ECLKC.

A minimum requirement for employment is a High School Diploma, HiSet or equivalent. If you do not have the minimum requirements, please talk with your Family Service Coordinator if you are interested in pursuing your High School Diploma or HiSet. Additional requirements or certifications may be required depending on the position for which you are applying.

To apply for employment, you will need to:

- ◇ Fill out an application for employment at one of our main offices, or submit a resume, and submit proof of qualifications. They must be received prior to the posting deadline.

When the posting closes, all applications are reviewed and interviews are scheduled for qualified candidates.

If you are selected for employment, you will go through our pre-employment process which requires a Background Records Check, drug screening, and other state and federal requirements.

Things to remember:

- ◇ You must have your own transportation.
- ◇ Employees, including substitute teachers, cannot be a member of the Policy Council.

Workforce Readiness and Training Programs

The Two-Generation/Whole Family Approach to Careers is a collaborative model that aligns resources and strategies to assist Head Start families in obtaining new job skills that support career-directed employment positions. The program addresses the gaps in multiple systems that are not well coordinated, making it difficult for parents to work. Through these efforts, we work to open pathways to employment, upward mobility and well-being. This model includes up to 80- hours of intense programming designed to inspire, empower and prepare participants to successfully enter or reenter the workforce.

- ◇ Workforce Readiness Workshops
- ◇ Healthy Relationships and Parenting Workshops
- ◇ Financial Literacy Workshops
- ◇ Job search and coaching opportunities
- ◇ Linkages to training programs
- ◇ Case Management and Support

TLC: Building Healthy Relationships Program

The TLC Program offers evidence-based parenting and relationship building education workshops at no cost to Head Start parents; individuals, couples, and teens. The workshops have flexible program options and provide basic information on building healthy relationships, recognizing the signs of unhealthy relationships, and developing your parenting skills.

The goal of the program is to improve decision making and to build your skills in:

- ◇ Parenting
- ◇ Understanding Your Child's Development
- ◇ Budgeting
- ◇ Conflict Resolution
- ◇ Improved Communication Skills
- ◇ Building a Support Network



If you are interested in TLC, please ask your Family Service Coordinator for more information.

Cooking Matters

Cooking Matters (a national program developed by Share our Strength) is a **6-week class** that educates parents on healthy eating, nutritious recipes and shopping on a budget. During class you'll meet other parents and have the opportunity to socialize while you cook. A certified instructor will guide the class in preparing a meal with provided ingredients. After discussing the nutritional aspects of the meal, each participant takes home a bag of the ingredients used so they can make the meal at home for their family. A highlight of the class is the **grocery store tour**, where you will learn how to read labels and learn about the differences in buying fresh, frozen and canned foods.

This is a popular class and space is limited so you must register to participate.

*Single Cooking Matters pop-up classes are occasionally offered at centers. Talk with your Family Service Coordinator for more information.

M.I.L.K.: An Initiative that Supports Male Role Models

At HCS Head Start we acknowledge male role models as being an important part of a child's healthy development, which is why we have M.I.L.K.—**Men Involved In the Lives of Kids**, an agency wide initiative that welcomes and encourages the participation of positive male role models in the lives of children. Strong relationships with fathers and other positive male role models are an important part of children's development, so we hold events throughout the year that focus on these special bonds. Research shows that when positive male figures are involved in a child's education, the child will...

- ◇ Have stronger coping and adaptation skills
- ◇ Be better equipped to solve problems
- ◇ Stay in school longer
- ◇ Have longer lasting healthy relationships
- ◇ Have higher work productivity later in life

And, that those male role models are more likely to...

- ◇ Have better overall health
- ◇ Have higher self esteem and a more positive self-image
- ◇ Have more satisfaction with work



*Taken from: Dr. Kyle Pruett, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study

We welcome fathers and any other positive male role model whose child attends our programs to participate in any and all activities that happen in the center and classroom. Our goal is to create an environment that supports spending quality time and meeting other men in the community of parents.

Comprehensive Services

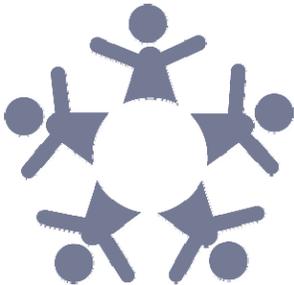
We are committed to providing high quality comprehensive services to the children and families in our program. We offer families support in the areas of social service, mental health, disabilities and health. However, if a child or family is in need of a service that we cannot provide, or if the need requires the assistance of someone with a greater level of knowledge we may recommend that you and your family be referred to an outside agency. When a referral is made or recommended and you grant us permission, we can work collaboratively with the outside agency to make sure that relevant information is being shared.

A referral can be made to an outside agency for a child and/or family when:

- ◇ A parent/child makes a request for service and provides consent;
- ◇ A referral is deemed appropriate or necessary as the result of an agency team meeting and with the parent/guardian's consent
- ◇ A referral is deemed appropriate or necessary as the result of an educational or social-emotional screening assessment and with the parent/guardians consent

The following is information regarding all of the comprehensive services we offer:

Family Services



The Family Services team believes that, when families do well, children do well—and that when both do well the family is at its strongest. Family Service Coordinators (FSC's) work closely with families to act as your partner and to offer support, assistance, and guidance. Throughout the year your Family Service Coordinator will work along side you to identify your family's strengths and goals for the future.

All parents have goals that they set for themselves and their children, and we want to help you accomplish them by creating a **Family Partnership Plan**.

During this process, you will identify a goal, determine what steps need to be taken in order to reach it, and how your Family Service Coordinator might help you get there.

Your Family Service Coordinator can also assist you with identifying resources in the community that could benefit you or your family. Please review your **Resource Guide**, and feel free to ask your Family Service Coordinator if you have questions or are interested in more information on any of the following:

- ◇ Housing or Job Search
- ◇ Health or Dental Insurance
- ◇ Mental Health Resources
- ◇ HiSet and ESL Courses
- ◇ Specialized Services for You or Your Child

Mental Health Services

Early childhood mental health refers to the ways in which young children manage their emotions, form relationships, problem solve in different environments and learn about the world around them. We know that the mental health of young children is linked to the well-being of the people who care for them, and that addressing mental health concerns when children are young makes a positive difference for years to come.

HCS Head Start provides a variety of on-site mental health services and support delivered by Masters level and/or Licensed Mental Health Clinicians. We also work in collaboration with local community mental health agencies to ensure all families have access to mental health services.

Our **strength-based** mental health services and support include prevention and promotion strategies for the classroom and home, early identification and when appropriate, referral to local community mental health providers. Examples of how we can support your child's mental health on-site include:

- ◇ Social-emotional screening and assessment
- ◇ Violence prevention social-emotional curriculum
- ◇ Socialization groups for children (i.e. Yoga and Rainbow Dance)
- ◇ Behavioral Consultation to parents and teachers
- ◇ Classroom observations
- ◇ Advocacy and referral to community mental health agencies
- ◇ Evidence-based and trauma-informed parent and staff training
- ◇ Mental health awareness events
- ◇ Classroom activities that promote building children's self-esteem and emotion recognition
- ◇ Classrooms that are inclusive of all children's learning needs

If you would like to learn more about how we can support you or your child's mental health please contact your classroom teacher, Family Service Coordinator or your Early Childhood clinician.



Disability Services

Inclusion is our philosophy. We believe children learn from each other and the early years of life are critical for learning and growth. When children of different developmental levels and abilities play together, all children benefit. If developmental delays are recognized and addressed during these years, children with disabilities will have a greater rate of success.

Disabilities Staff, Teaching Staff and families work together to:

- ◇ Determine if a child has an educational developmental delay/disability
- ◇ Refer a child to a local education agency and/or early intervention agency for a special education evaluation, and
- ◇ Develop goals and activities that are developmentally appropriate

***Disabilities Staff are also available to parents to discuss concerns or provide information individually or at parent meetings/workshops.**

Nutrition



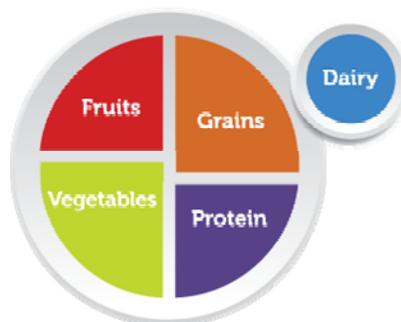
Nutrition is an important part of a child's development, which is why we serve all of our children a healthy breakfast and/or snack and lunch each day. Each meal is planned using USDA guidelines and requirements, and menus are sent home every month so that you know what your child will be offered each day. We encourage parents to provide feedback, as well as ideas, about our menu choices and love to have recipes shared with us!

We serve all of our meals family style and encourage families to participate in meals around a table when possible. Family style meals give children the opportunity to choose what they eat and to socialize with others around the table.

We want parents to feel welcome to participate in meals. With the increase in severe allergies HCS Head Start, Inc. has made some changes regarding the outside food policy. Outside food brought into the classroom for celebrations during the regular school day is no longer allowed. HCS Head Start, Inc. respects and understands that for some classrooms and families, celebrations are important but due to the large number of allergies the health and wellbeing of our children is our priority.

On designated family celebration days when parents are in attendance, food may be brought into the classroom. Parents are expected to monitor what their children can and cannot eat. Foods that are not allowed due to choking—grapes, raisins, nuts, meat with bones, hot dogs, sausage links, raspberries, blackberries, cherries, melon balls, kiwi, berries, popcorn, candy, soda, nut/soy/seed butters, cherry tomatoes, grape tomatoes, dried/shelf stable meat. Additional foods to avoid for children under 12 months of age—hard raw vegetables or fruit, seeds, grains, kernels, pretzel/chips, marshmallows, hard snack crackers, honey, chunks of meat. We work hard to ensure that children with special dietary needs are kept safe. The program asks the caregivers of a child with dietary needs to give consent to post information about that child's dietary needs in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses, so it is a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day. If you have concerns with this practice, you must submit concerns in writing to the Nutrition Department.

Below is an image used by USDA as a guide for proportions, that you can use at home with your family. You can find more information on nutrition at ChooseMyPlate.gov.



Health Services

HCS Head Start, Inc. works closely with children and families in the area of health. Our program has The Health Team that includes a Health Consultant, Program Nurses and Administrative Assistants. The team is able to provide information, support, resources and referrals as needed. In the area of health, we strive to ensure that every child and family is connected with a health insurance carrier, a medical and dental home and has the most up to date information on necessary preventative care for children. We work to do the following:



- ◇ Promote good health and safety for children, parents and staff.
- ◇ Ensure all children enrolled are up to date with necessary health screenings and assist in performing these screenings where needed. Screenings included are: vision, hearing, blood pressure, height/weight, head circumference, visual check of teeth and gums and a hemoglobin screening.
- ◇ Emphasize the importance of identifying health concerns, early referral, and follow-up.
- ◇ Emphasize that updated immunization records, physicals, dental exams, and lead screening results are required by our program.
- ◇ Practice hand washing to prevent the spread of disease and/or illness. Upon entering classroom, it is requested that parents bring their children to the bathroom to wash their hands.
- ◇ Provide children with the opportunity to brush their teeth as part of their daily routine. Our program promotes three types of tooth brushing to meet the needs of the ages of the children we serve.
- ◇ Ensure that all emergency contact information provided by parents/guardians is up to date at all times.

Health Policies and Procedures...



We take the health and safety of your child very seriously, which is why your compliance with all Health Policies and Procedures is required. Our Health Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect **up-to-date information** about our classroom and agency practices.

If you have any questions, always feel free to reach out to your child's teacher, your Family Service Coordinator or a member of the Health Team—we can be reached at (413) 536-0363.

30 Madison Avenue
Springfield, MA 01105
phone: (413) 788-6522
fax: (413) 788-6679
TTY: (413) 733-2785



662 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
phone: (413) 536-0363
fax: (413) 536-0928
TTY: (413) 532-2496

MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Administration of Medication to Children in Centers

Prescription or Non-prescription Medication

Holyoke • Chicopee • Springfield Head Start, Inc. ensures prescribed and non-prescribed medication administration, handling, and storage is maintained by labeling and storing ALL medications in locked file cabinets and / or locked storage container if the medication is refrigerated. **Training is provided annually** to ALL staff members with regards to the above items, the **5 Rights of Medication Administration**, and teaching staff are expected to do **Return Demonstration** with the Program Nurse yearly on **all medications** in their classrooms. Documentation of their training is kept on file.

Teachers are specifically designated as administrators of the medications. Administrators assure there are authorizations in place by the parent / guardian with physician's instructions for all medications administered by staff. An individual record is maintained of ALL medications dispensed to children, records are reviewed regularly with parents / guardians. Any adverse reactions / behavior changes are recorded after dosage of medication is provided. Assistance is provided as needed to parent/guardian in communicating with physicians regarding the effect of the medication on their child.

Teachers and parents complete a **Medication Checklist** when medication needs to be brought into the classroom. Medication administration is explained to the teachers by the parent / guardian and reviewed by the Program Nurse. Medication administration is tracked on a **Medication Administration Sheet** and an **Emergency Rescue Medication Sheet** and reviewed periodically with parent / guardian.

Fill out a Medication checklist completely for each medication brought into center prior to medication being given. **STAFF & PARENT/ GUARDIAN TO DO CHECKLIST** is as follows:

- Medication must be **labeled with child's name**
- Medication must have a **written order from the physician or the Head Start Prescription Medication Form** filled out. Pharmacy label must be on all medications.
- Directions on the medication container must match physician order or **Prescription Medication Form. Call Nurse if that is not the case.**
- Parent or guardian must sign** authorization on Medication Checklist Form for staff to administer medication prior to medication being given

With the exception of emergency medication, **no first dose** of any new medication will be administered in school.

All medications should be given using the **5 Rights Practices of Medication Administrations:**

- ◇ Right Child
- ◇ Right Medication
- ◇ Right Dose
- ◇ Right Time
- ◇ Right Method (Route)

Emergency Rescue Medication

Each new program year Teachers will complete an Emergency Rescue Medication Sheet for any of the following medications: Epi-pen, Inhalers, Nebulizers and Seizure Medications. This sheet will be completed and kept with your Allergy List on the first aid kit which is labeled Rescue Medications.

- ◇ When children drop or transfer from the classroom that child's name will be highlighted and **dropped** will be labeled by their name.
- ◇ Throughout the year as children are newly enrolled and require medication at school, Teachers ensure their information is added to the current years Emergency Rescue Medication Sheet. Program nurses will monitor any new information added.
- ◇ Notify parent/guardian **immediately** after Epi-pen, and Seizure Medications are administered (this information is documented in **Action Notes**)
- ◇ Notify parent/guardian at pick- up or via phone call if inhaler/nebulizer is administered (this information is documented in **Action Notes**)
- ◇ If parent requests notification after each administration of such medications, staff will phone parent immediately, this information is noted on the Child's Health Plan

Site Directors will monitor the Emergency Medication Sheet monthly on the Site Safety Checklist Form.

Clarification on Doctor's Order vs Prescription Medications / Equipment

- ◇ If the script (label) dose and time on the medication does not match the Doctor's Order call the Program Nurse immediately this includes medication equipment such as aero-chamber or nebulizer.
- ◇ Inform parent/guardian that the prescription label does not match the Doctor's Order and that in order to administer medication in the classroom the parent or Program nurse (with parent permission) will need to contact the doctor to assure that the medication is properly administered (Medication Checklist **cannot be filled out** until this issue is completed).
- ◇ The most current doctors order will be followed.
- ◇ Written documentation from the doctor will be filed in child's file.
- ◇ Program Nurse will oversee and expedite the process and document in **Action Notes**.
- ◇ Medication Administration Sheet will be completed according to Doctor's order and placed in labeled medication bag.

Topical Non-Prescription / Prescription Medications

- ◇ **Require written parent/guardian permission.**
- ◇ **Diaper rash** medication or other **ointment & creams** used on open skin must be labeled and used only for that individual child and reported to parent/guardian when used.
- ◇ **Sunscreen, sprays, lotion, creams** or other ointment may be generally used on children but should not be applied to broken skin. Parent/Guardian will sign Topical Medication Form before these products can be used on their child.
- ◇ **Medication Administrative Sheet** will be completed according to Doctor's order for prescription topical medications and placed in labeled medication bag.
- ◇ **The medication sheet will be reviewed** with parent/guardian at center or by phone **after 3 doses** for prescription medication. Enter date and name of staff person who reviews sheet. **For oral non-prescription medications review with parent / guardian weekly.**

Proper Storage and Handling or Medication/Transferring Medications

All medication in its **original container** will be **locked in a cabinet** in a plastic bag labeled with the child's name, date of birth, classroom and picture.

- ◇ Medication requiring refrigeration will be locked in a special container with the child's name, date of birth, classroom and picture on it before being placed in the refrigerator.
- ◇ If a child is transferred to another site, parent and / or guardian will be given the actual medication from the labeled bag and sign off on receipt. The Medication Checklist and Doctors order will be provided to the teachers in the new classroom. A new Medication Checklist is completed with the parent and / or guardian. The previous Medication Checklist and Doctors order is attached to the new Medication Checklist form and placed in a new bag with medication. Once updated the Program Nurse will take the previous Medication Checklist form and file it in the child's file.
- ◇ If a child is being transferred from a classroom to another classroom within the same center, the Program Nurse will be responsible for assuring the Medication is transferred with the child.
- ◇ Teacher will add the medication to the Rescue Medication Sheet.

A Medication Administration Sheet will be kept for each medication administered to a child with date, time, dosage given, adverse reaction/behavior, signature of person administering medication/witness, and verification parent has been notified.

- ◇ If possible, the same staff person should give the medication each day.
- ◇ Another staff person must witness the administering of medication and co-sign the medication sheet.
- ◇ When counting a controlled medication, please count tablets on a clean surface (paper towel/plate)
Be sure the Control Medication Count Sheet is part of the process.
- ◇ Medication Expiration Sheet at a Glance must be posted in a visible area. Dates will be circled in red and staff will check the Medication & Doctor Expiration Form in Red Health Control Folder for confirmation.
- ◇ Medication Administration Sheet will be completed according to Doctors order and placed in labeled red medication bag.

After administering a medication, staff will observe for allergic reactions such as swelling, rashes, breathing difficulties or behavior changes in the child.

The medication sheet will be reviewed with parent/guardian at center or by phone after 3 doses for prescription medication. Enter date and name of staff person who reviews sheet. For oral non-prescription medications review with parent/guardian weekly.

When medication is stopped:

- ◇ **Medication** Checklist and Medication Sheets will be placed in child's folder.
- ◇ **These** forms are not to be sent home to parents.
- ◇ **Unused** medication will be returned to parent/guardian.
- ◇ **Call program nurse** for disposal for all medications not returned to parent/guardian after 2 notices have been sent home.

When Medication is Brought Into Center — Notify Your Program Nurse

Medication on the Bus

Efforts are made to minimize the transportation of medication. If medication needs to be transported, staff will ensure that:

- ◇ Medication is kept in a temperature controlled locked container.
- ◇ Medication is kept out of reach of children.

For any child who may require emergency medication while riding on the bus:

- ◇ A written plan of care will be developed by the nurse.
- ◇ The plan will be reviewed with the bus driver, center support and teaching staff as needed; nurses will retain the documentation of trainings.
- ◇ All medications should be given using the **5 Rights Practices of Medication Administrations**
 - ◆ **Right Child**
 - ◆ **Right Medication**
 - ◆ **Right Dose**
 - ◆ **Right Time**
 - ◆ **Right Method (Route)**
- ◇ When medication is given, a Medication Administration Sheet will be completed with date, time, and signature of the staff member administering the medication. The other staff member will sign as the witness. This form needs to return to school for child's file.
- ◇ After administering a medication, the **Bus Monitors** will sit near the child to observe for allergic reaction such as: **swelling, rashes, breathing difficulties or behavior changes.**
- ◇ When the bus arrives at the child's bus stop, the bus will inform parent of any medication given to their child while on the bus. Verification of communication is documented on the Medication Administration Sheet.

Infectious Disease Policy

The following guidelines have been put into place to **protect your child** and the other children in the classroom:

- ◇ ***If your child is too ill to participate in the classroom setting, we would ask that you do not send him/her to school. All cuts and broken skin need to be covered before entering school.***
- ◇ **If your child becomes ill at home** or is beginning symptoms (fever, sore throat, severe cough, or stomach pains) consider the following:
 - ◆ Is the child able to participate fully in the classroom?
 - ◆ Will the child be comfortable being in class?
- ◇ **If your child appears ill upon arrival** to school the teacher may ask you not to leave your child in class. It may mean that your child needs to rest at home for another day.
- ◇ **If your child becomes ill at school** or has any signs or symptoms (persistent crying, difficult breathing, unusual lethargy, irritability and/or fever) that require exclusion from the classroom, you will be notified immediately.
- ◇ **If any of the following should occur, your child may return to the classroom setting:**
 - ◆ **Diarrhea**- 24 hours after last episode of diarrhea or when cleared by physician
 - ◆ **Vomiting**- 24 hours after last episode of vomiting
 - ◆ **Fever (temperature 100 degrees or above)** – after fever has been normal for 24 hours
 - ◆ **Severe cold symptoms** – when child is able to comfortably participate in classroom setting
 - ◆ **Head Lice** -- after treatment and all nits are combed out.

The following conditions require a doctor's visit, treatment and a note to return:

- ◆ Strep Throat– may return 12 hours after treatment and fever is gone
- ◆ Scarlet Fever
- ◆ Ringworm
- ◆ Impetigo– may return 24 hours after treatment and all sores are covered
- ◆ Conjunctivitis
- ◆ Pinworm
- ◆ Scabies
- ◆ Pneumonia
- ◆ Fifth Disease
- ◆ Hand, Foot , and Mouth
- ◆ Chicken Pox– may return when all blisters are healed
- ◆ Tuberculosis– until child is non-infectious

For all other infectious diseases not listed above, a doctor's note will be required to return to the classroom.

*** A letter will be sent home to advise parents of any known communicable diseases in your center to prevent the development of new cases.**

All forms and information requested are the property of HCS Head Start Inc., and may not be reproduced for anything other than their intended purpose.

Tooth Brushing Policy & Information

Staff must wear gloves for all tooth brushing and follow the below procedure:

1. HCS Head Start staff will assist each child with age appropriate tooth brushing once a day.
2. Each child will have a labeled toothbrush of its own with **SOFT** bristles.
3. There should be one child at a time at the sink for brushing.
4. Using only a **pea-sized** (pre-school)/ **smear** (toddler) amount of toothpaste, brush for (2) minutes.
5. Have child rinse and spit out toothpaste.
6. All substances will be rinsed out of the sink after brushing.
7. Sink will be **sprayed** with bleach and water solution (2-tablespoons of bleach to 1- quart cool water) after it has been rinsed.
8. Toothbrushes will be rinsed thoroughly.
9. Toothbrushes are stored with bristles up, not touching and then air-dried.
10. Toothbrushes should be checked regularly for bent bristles (**replace immediately**) and replaced all tooth brushes at least every **3 months**.
 - ◇ Tooth brushing should occur **after meals** to develop good oral hygiene
 - ◇ **Prior to one year of age** children's teeth and/or gums should be cleansed with a 2x2 gauze pad and not a toothbrush.
 - ◇ **Tooth brushing begins at age one.** An adult should brush the child's teeth with a **smear** of fluoridated toothpaste, **using toddler toothbrushes**.
 - ◇ **For children age two and older** an adult should assist children with brushing their teeth using a **pea-sized** amount of toothpaste, **using pre-school toothbrushes**.
 - ◇ Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease, but it is preventable. Tooth brushing is one of the main ways you can keep children's teeth healthy.

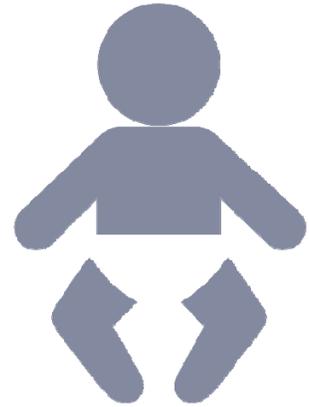
Toileting/Training Policy

We are glad to work with you around your child's toilet training. After families have begun the process at home, please let us know and we will support the child in toilet training while in the classroom. We take a positive approach to toilet training and encourage children as they gain independence. **No child would ever be denied enrollment based on their toileting skills.** Staff communicates with families to obtain feedback on toilet training their children and utilize this information when they are working with children to toilet train. The below basic guidance is followed:

- ◇ Children may use the bathroom whenever necessary with supervision.
- ◇ Parents/guardian and volunteers are not considered agency staff and may not take the children to the bathroom.
- ◇ Children must wash their hands for 20 seconds using friction and drying with individual paper towels after toileting.
- ◇ An extra set of clothing for each child is necessary in case of a toileting accident.
- ◇ Children will be encouraged to take care of his/her needs in case of an accident.
- ◇ Staff will offer assistance as necessary.
- ◇ If children's clothes become soiled from an accident, the dirty clothes will be sent home double bagged (in plastic) labeled with child's name.
- ◇ Staff must check bathroom after each child for spills on floor or toilet seat.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome(SIDS) Prevention Policy

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the diagnosis given for the sudden and unexplained death of a seemingly healthy baby. It is the leading cause of death among infants aged 1-12 months. SIDS is sometimes referred to as crib death.



GUIDELINES for CLASSROOMS:

- ◇ Nap baby in an individual crib, porta crib, playpen or bassinet. (ensure that slats on cribs are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart)
- ◇ Put baby to sleep on his/her back for the 1st year.
- ◇ Put baby to sleep in a crib on a firm mattress.
- ◇ Check on sleeping baby frequently.
- ◇ Children younger than six months of age at the time of enrollment must be under direct visual supervision at all times, including while napping during the first six weeks they are in care.
- ◇ Keep room temperature 68-72°.
- ◇ Burp baby properly during and after feeding.
- ◇ **Do Not** place toys, bedding, pillows or stuffed animals in crib.
- ◇ **No blankets for babies under 12 months.**
- ◇ **Do Not** restrain a baby to keep him/her in a certain sleeping position.
- ◇ **Do Not** cover baby's head or bundle the baby in heavy clothing.

- ◇ **Parents, we suggest waiting until your baby is at least 12 months old to use a blanket to cover him/her. Safe alternative to blankets are sleepers, sleeper sacks, and wearable blankets. We also suggest not to smoke around babies.**

All forms and information requested are the property of HCS Head Start Inc., and may not be reproduced for anything other than their intended purpose.

Additional Health Information

The drinking water in the communities of South Hadley, Granby, Palmer, Ludlow, Chicopee, Springfield, and East Longmeadow is **not fluoridated**. If you have not already done so, our Health Services Advisory Committee strongly suggests that you seek the advice of your child's doctor or dentist in regard to the use of **fluoride** for the prevention of tooth decay. The doctor or dentist may prescribe **fluoride** tablets or rinse for your child.



Should you have any questions or need assistance in this area, please speak with your child's teacher or your Family Service Coordinator.

An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for controlling insects, rodents and weeds is used at HCS Head Start, Inc. sites. Our approach focuses on making the school buildings and grounds an unfavorable habitat for pests by removing food and water sources and eliminating their hiding places. We accomplish this through routine cleaning and maintenance. We routinely monitor the buildings and grounds to detect any pests that are present. Pest sightings are reported to our IPM coordinator who evaluates the "pest problem" and determines the appropriate technique to address the problem. The techniques can include increased sanitation, modifying storage practices, sealing entry points and physically removing the pest.



We only use chemicals when necessary to eliminate pest problems. The school will try to use the least toxic products when possible. When applications are applied, areas will be secured against entry for the specific period of time.

Written notification of pesticide application will be posted and copies made available to parents.

If you have questions, or need further information please reach out to your child's teacher. She/he will have the appropriate person contact you back within 48hrs.



Disclosures

Non-Discrimination

HCS Head Start, Inc. does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors and vendors.

Non-Harassment

It is the goal of Holyoke • Chicopee • Springfield Head Start, Inc. to promote an environment that is free from harassment. Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start, Inc. will not tolerate harassment of any type. “Harassment” means offensive, unwelcome physical or verbal behavior. It can include, but is not limited to; unsolicited comments or conduct related to a person’s age, sex, religion, race, color, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Sexual harassment is also prohibited.