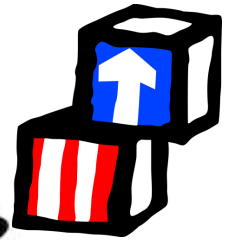


Anoka/Washington County Head Start-Early Head Start (AW)

Serving pregnant women and families with children birth to 5 years old



2025 – 2026 Parent Handbook

A/W Head Start's mission is to provide comprehensive early childhood and family development services that empower children and families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

A program of Anoka County Community Action Program, Inc.

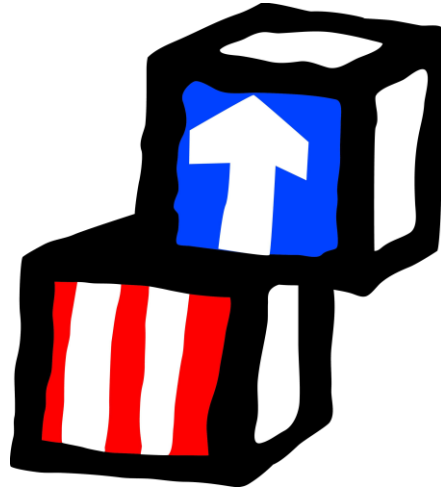
www.accap.org



<https://www.facebook.com/AnokaWashingtonCountyHeadStart/>

ACCAP is an Equal Opportunity Agency in Employment and Client Services.
Upon request, ACCAP will make this document available in alternative formats per requirements of ADA.

Head Start Symbol



- The two squares represent early childhood by suggesting building blocks.
- The vertical stripes represent the child and parent/guardian working together.
- The arrow pointing up represents stairs by which this can be accomplished.
- The Head Start symbol is red, white and blue which represent the U.S.A.



Head Start was established in 1965 to provide a stimulating learning environment in a group setting for children from eligible families. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the State of Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) fund the program. HHS and MDE set guidelines and rules by which all Minnesota Head Start programs operate. Since 1988, Minnesota has contributed state funding to expand Head Start services.

To learn more about Head Start, please visit the Office of Head Start website at:

www.HeadStart.gov



Anoka/Washington County Head Start-Early Head Start Program is a Parent Aware 4-Star rated program. To learn more about the Early Childhood rating system by Parent Aware, visit their website at:

www.parentawareratings.org.

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Welcome to Anoka/Washington County Head Start

Message from the Director



Dear Parents and Guardian,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Anoka/Washington County Head Start (A/W) birth to five child and family development program. Head Start is operated in Anoka and Washington Counties by Anoka County Community Action Program (ACCAP). ACCAP is a private, non-profit corporation that is committed to empowering individuals to achieve their aspirations and dreams.

A/W provides programming that enhances children's growth and development in preparation for later academic and social pursuits. We believe that the early childhood years and the experiences that children have during these years are very important to successful development. We make every effort to provide the highest quality programming for our families. You may already realize that Head Start is not just a program for children. It is also a program for Parents/Guardians and Families. Our staff will help you and your child build the educational, social and emotional foundation needed to be successful in school and in life. It is important for us to provide the type of Head Start services that you need and want. We recognize parent/guardian as the primary educators in children's lives and the support parents/guardian give children as they grow and develop is crucial to their success; as a result, we involve parent/guardian in all aspects of the program and support them in their roles as parent/guardian and providers for their families.

Head Start believes that education is a lifelong process, and that the adults that children come in contact with significantly influence their education. We have excellent staff that realize communication between home and school is essential for your child's development. Engaging in the child's school experience benefits not just the child, but also parent/guardian, teachers, and the wider community.

Our program works with parents/guardians to strengthen their ability to support their child as their first teachers. Parent/guardian education occurs in formal and informal ways throughout the year. An emphasis is placed on helping parents/guardians learn to help themselves, whether looking for health care for their children or searching for a job for themselves. Our overall focus is to enhance a parent/guardian's ability to be a competent parent/guardian, to care for their child adequately, and to move out of poverty into self-sufficiency. On behalf of ACCAP Head Start staff, we hope this year is fun and educational for all. Thanks to each of you for being a part of our program.



Jacqueline Cross
Head Start Director

About this Handbook

We hope you will utilize this 2025-2026 Parent Handbook and Calendar to ensure an understanding of our Head Start program, policies, procedures, and general information. Please take time to thoroughly read all sections of the Parent Handbook, which can be used as a reference tool throughout the school year. This handbook is a parent training tool; the following pages include policies and procedures regarding Head Start Early Childhood Education, transportation services, attendance, Family and Community Partnerships, Recruitment & Enrollment, Health Services, Disability Services, Parent Involvement and Engagement and more.

Head Start policies and information are included which cover all aspects of the Head Start family experience. It is very important for all parents/guardians to read this handbook completely. Throughout this document, Head Start will include Early Head Start. If you flip this handbook over, you will find the 2025-2026 Head Start Parent Calendar. The calendar includes important dates to remember, school closings, and program notes. General information and phone listings are included on the first several pages of the calendar. We have also included

information on health and safety for your family. Please note that not every event is posted on the calendar. Some events are created after the publication of this handbook/calendar, and listed events are subject to change. It is important that you check your child's backpack on a daily basis to find notices on changes in programming, special events and other changes that may occur throughout the program year. It is also important to keep your primary phone number up to date with the program as well, as the program will occasionally send out event notices and emergency closing notices via SchoolMessenger system by providing an automated phone call that will go directly to the primary phone number we have on file for you. If you have any questions about this handbook or any notices that come home with your child, please contact your child's teacher.

Please remember that it is important to call your child's teacher to:

- Report any changes such as phone numbers, addresses, daycares or family needs
- Report an absence or illness

If you have questions during the year, please don't hesitate to ask a Head Start staff member. We are on this educational journey with your family and look forward to working together in the upcoming school year.

General Program Information

ACCAP Services

Head Start is operated in Anoka and Washington Counties by Anoka County Community Action Program, Inc. (ACCAP). ACCAP is a private, non-profit corporation that is committed to empowering individuals to achieve their aspirations and dreams. In addition to Early Childhood programming at Head Start, ACCAP offers the Anoka County community a wealth of resources and programs such as Child Care Assistance, Early Learning Scholarships, affordable housing opportunities, crisis services, energy assistance, homeownership programs, volunteer opportunities and senior programs. If you or someone you know could benefit from any ACCAP services, please visit our website at www.accap.org.

A/W Head Start Mission

A/W Head Start's Mission is to provide comprehensive early childhood and family development services that empower children and families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

What is Head Start?

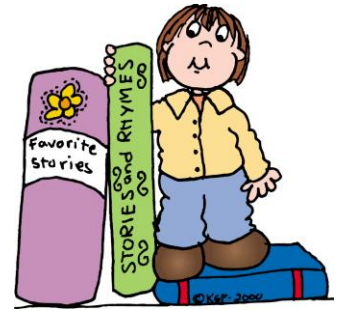
The goal of Head Start is to provide children with experiences that allow them to grow and learn, ensure their success in school, and create the foundation for success in life. Early Head Start (EHS) serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women; its goal is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of very young children and promote healthy family functioning. Children enrolled in Head Start make new friends and increase their social skills by building self-esteem and confidence. Head Start helps children start school and prepare for success.

Our objectives are to:

- Involve families in their child's growth and development
- Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children
- Provide children with educational, health and nutritional services
- Develop the highest quality education for each child
- Meet the changing needs of children, families and the community
- Help families work through transitions successfully
- Link children and their families to any needed community services
- Involve parent/guardian in decision making
- Measure effectiveness so we can continue to improve program quality
- Involve the community and other agencies in supporting the Head Start program

The Head Start Program is a Free Program

The Head Start Program, funded by federal and state grants, provides free services to eligible children birth to five years old, pregnant women, and their families. This two-generational program focuses on child and family development, helps low-income families become self-reliant while helping their children prepare for school success. There are no registration fees or weekly fees for participation in Home-Base, or a Head Start classroom. Children enrolled in partner sites (sites not licensed or managed by ACCAP) may be charged a fee for before- or after-hour care, or for any childcare assistance co-pays.



Program Options

A/W has a variety of programming options to meet the needs of the children and families in the communities in which we serve.

Head Start Preschool Center-Based Program

Program staff in the Preschool Center-Based program option will make a minimum of two home visits per child each year. At home visits, staff and parents/guardians will discuss any special needs or interests the children might have. Staff will explain center activities and will help with any paperwork needed. Parent/Teacher Conferences take place three times a year for Center-Based and Home-Based program options. During the conferences, teachers will review your child's physical, developmental, social and emotional progress. Working together, staff and parent/guardian will arrive at common goals for the child. The Individual Service Plan (ISP) will be updated throughout the year. Additional conferences can be held as needed when requested by the parent/guardian or teacher.

Early Head Start Home-Based Program

The Home-Based program option serves pregnant women and children from birth to age five. The Home-Based teacher makes weekly visits to each child's home, which last an hour and a half. The Home-Based teachers leave materials and suggestions for the parent/guardian to use with the child between home visits. Children in a Home-Based program participate in center socialization days that are typically scheduled twice a month when in session. This gives children an opportunity to socialize with other children and explore a different environment.

Home-Based Program Guidelines

- Be at home for the entire scheduled home visit and participate with your child during home visits.
- Continue working with your child at home throughout the week.
- Respect Head Start toys and materials; children can help make sure toys do not get lost or broken.
- Make sure the television and radio are off during the visit.
- Neighbors/friends should be encouraged to call or visit at other times.
- Have your child awake, dressed and fed before the teacher arrives, with the exception of infants.
- Keep your scheduled home visit time since a change could affect other families in the program.
- Read parent/guardian flyers, newsletters and notices to keep up with meetings or schedule changes.
- Only Head Start children who are enrolled in the Home-Based program can attend center socialization days.
- Call your Home-Base teacher if you need to reschedule your visit.
- Let the office know seven days in advance of any address or phone number changes so records can be kept accurate.

Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships Collaborative (EHS-CCP)

The Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) collaborative program option is for families with infants and toddlers. Head Start contracts with local child care centers and family child care homes to provide full day, high quality, comprehensive EHS Services to children aged six weeks to 36 months in child care centers. To qualify for this program, you must meet Head Start income guidelines and currently receive or have applied for a

Child Care Subsidy in Anoka or Washington County. The program currently collaborates with various childcare centers and family child care homes throughout both Anoka and Washington Counties.

If you or someone you know is interested in any of these program options, please fill out a Head Start Application. You can access the application online at www.accap.org, call the enrollment hotline at (763) 783-4314 to request an application by mail or stop by our Administrative Offices in the Family Development Center at 9574 Foley Blvd., NW., Coon Rapids, MN 55433.

Parent/Guardian Information

A/W Head Start's approach to early childhood education is based on the philosophy that parents/guardians must be involved in their children's education; this involvement enhances their role as the primary educator in their child's life. Head Start builds on the strengths of the entire family and makes every effort to include family members in the learning process.

Head Start is a comprehensive program that promotes the total development of children. We seek to provide each child with materials that nurture growth and development. The Head Start program is individualized to the experience and developmental level of each child. Activities are crafted to ensure that all children are both challenged and able to succeed at their own level. We strive to provide a learning environment that fosters physical, mental, emotional, and social growth and experiences.

Head Start attempts to meet the needs of children and their families through health, nutrition, education and physical development services to families and by involving the parents/guardians in the program. In the classroom and during home visits, children listen to and read stories, sing songs, complete art projects, and play games that will develop their motor skills and thinking processes. Parents/guardians are needed and encouraged to participate in all the activities in the classroom and during home visits.

Join the Team

Recruiting families for Head Start is a team effort. Parent/Guardian of enrolled children are encouraged to apply for open positions within Head Start. For job opportunities please visit the agency website at www.accap.org or call 763-783-4300. We encourage and appreciate your participation. You can help recruit by:

- Telling pregnant women and parent/guardians with children ages birth to five about Head Start
- Hang a flyer at local stores, places of worship, etc.
- Displaying flyers at your doctor and dentist's offices
- Distributing flyers and recruitment cards to neighbors with children birth to five and pregnant mothers
- Displaying a Head Start sign on your lawn
- Sharing a creative idea for reaching eligible families in your community with Head Start staff

Head Start Staff

Our staff is comprised of dedicated professionals who are committed to providing high-quality early childhood education and care for your child, while also supporting and encouraging your family. All employed staff members meet or exceed the required guidelines established by A/W and the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) requirements vary for each position. Each classroom or program option is staffed with at least one Lead Teacher, one Assistant Teacher, and a shared Classroom Aide. Bus Monitors and Education Coordinators offer additional services. Specialists also support the Head Start staff, families, and children by providing expertise in the areas of education, health, nutrition, safety, mental health, disabilities, and family and community partnerships. Throughout the year, all staff members engage in staff meetings, orientations, workshops, and in-service training. Staff members undergo training in CPR, First Aid, Food Handling, Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention and Reporting, Universal Health & Safety Precautions, Medication Administration, Emergency Preparedness & Procedures, and other mandated Head Start training courses.

Watch Your Child's Backpack and Facebook

We value and encourage regular communication between parents/guardians and teachers. We will be sending notes and information home with your child in their backpack. Regular items to watch out for are Head Start newsletters, parent meeting notices, event invites, monthly calendar updates and school menus.

Please read all the information carefully and note any changes in schedules or activities. Many of these announcements will be posted on the agency A/W Facebook page, as well. Please like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AnokaWashingtonCountyHeadStart/>



SchoolMessenger

A/W utilizes a SchoolMessenger system to communicate with enrolled families and staff. Periodically, you will receive important messages regarding weather closings, bus route updates, information on family events, reminders about Policy Council meetings, Health Advisory Committee meetings and parent/teacher conferences. Messages will be sent from the number (763)783-4300. If you miss the call, please check your voice messages *before* calling the classroom/center with any questions. Please ensure your best contact phone number is up to date at all times to ensure messages reach you. Contact your child's teacher if you need to update your phone number or any contact information for your family.



Cell Phone Policy

Our priority is the safety and education of all your children. The opportunity to talk with your child and teachers during drop-off and pick-up is an important part of our partnership. Children must be actively supervised at all times while at Head Start, whether it be outside, in the classroom or the hallways at all times for the safety of all. We are requesting that parents/guardians refrain from phone conversations/texting or having your phone on speaker during these times so that children are supervised, and teaching staff can communicate with parents/guardians. Your assistance with this issue is appreciated.



Parent/Guardian Permission for Activities

A/W requires permission for various scheduled activities, including field trips. Parents/guardians will receive prior notification whenever written permission is required for children to participate in field trips and other activities. In the event of newspapers or television stations that request to do a story on Head Start, parent/guardians' written permission to use our programs media release form will be required for the use of children's pictures.

Sibling Policy

The Head Start Sibling Policy states that only Head Start children who are enrolled in the Head Start class may attend class and/or field trips. Unless siblings are in the same classroom, they may not attend classes or field trips, even if their parent/guardian is present. State licensing requires that all children attending a Head Start classroom or participating in any program activity must be enrolled and have a completed file (i.e. current emergency card, physical, immunizations, etc.). Unenrolled siblings of enrolled children are not allowed to attend Head Start during class time, unless for special pre-approved events, such as end-of-year celebrations or other family events; please note that notice will be sent when these opportunities are available. Any volunteer must be 14 years of age or older.

Holidays and Celebrations

We focus more on the changing seasons than on the holidays that happen during those seasons. Celebrations respect individual differences by being age-appropriate, held in a safe and familiar setting, and honoring the diverse backgrounds of our families. Parents and guardians are encouraged to share their family traditions with the children. Birthdays are celebrated to help children understand that they were born on a certain day and that their age changes on that day. Recognizing the diversity in religious beliefs, financial constraints and nutritional needs, recognition of children's birthdays in the classroom is limited to acknowledgment of the day and opportunities to make the child feel special on that day.

Birthday Treats

Head Start adheres to strict guidelines for food service at our centers to guarantee the provision of safe and healthy meals. Due to a variety of factors, the following constitutes our Head Start Treat Policy: To ensure the safety of all children, families, visitors and staff, it is Head Start's Policy that **no outside food or beverages** from parents/guardians or staff will be allowed to be brought into the center or classroom to serve children. Food served at Head Start must meet nutrition standards put forth by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Balloon Policy

There is documentation nationwide of incidents pertaining to children choking on latex balloons, as well as having severe allergies to latex. For the safety of the children we serve, no latex balloons will be allowed in any Head Start center or classrooms. Since this safety concern has not been identified with Mylar balloons, this brand of balloon is accepted.



Photographs/Videos/Audios

To protect the privacy of children and their families, visitors are asked to obtain permission from a Head Start teacher prior to taking any photos in any Head Start setting. No photos taken that include children other than your own may be posted on any social media site or used in any way outside of Head Start. At enrollment, parents/guardians sign a media release form allowing staff and/or community partners to take pictures of their child and classroom for internal and/or external use. Parents/guardians have the option to consent to or restrict the use of their child's photo by completing this form. Please see your child's Teacher or Family Service Worker for more information.



Resources

The Anoka County Community Resource Guide and the Washington County Community Resource Guide are listings of community agencies and resources available to families. Resource guides are available on our website at www.accap.org and on the Washington County website. A flyer with instructions on how to access the guide is provided to all families at the beginning of the program year/enrollment. If you want further assistance or are unable to find the necessary information in the resource guide, contact your Family Service Worker for help in finding the appropriate resources.

No Pets Allowed in School

We are dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of all our children at Head Start. Some children are highly allergic to certain animals. Animals can also spread disease or behave in dangerous or unpredictable ways that can cause injury to people with whom they come into contact. Please help us maintain a safe environment for all children by respecting this rule. Only a small fishbowl will be allowed in the Head Start classroom, subject to teachers' discretion. The use of service animals is not subject to this restriction.

Nap/Rest Time

Preschool children need some rest during the day. A quiet nap and rest time will occur daily. During rest/nap time, calming music may be played, lights will be dimmed, and each child will be provided with a cot. Cots are placed so that each child is easily accessed, with clear aisles, so that staff have access to at least one side of each cot. After the children have rested or napped for 30 minutes, they will have the option to get up and engage in a quiet activity. The activities provided will take place in well-lit areas and they do not disrupt the remaining children who are napping. Please speak with your child's teacher as to your child's nap/rest habits. Parents/guardians may provide a small blanket for their child that will be sent home with the parent/guardian for weekly cleaning. Please do not send stuffed animals or toys.



Confidentiality Parent/Guardians' Rights to Access Child Records

Parents/guardians of enrolled children have the right to inspect and review the child's education records and any health records in the child's file. Parent/guardian may request an amendment of the child's education record. Requests to review child records must be in writing. Head Start staff will be available to respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A/W will inform parents/guardians of their rights regarding the disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from child records. The program will not disclose any PII without the parent/guardian prior signed and dated written consent, except as specified above. A hard copy of The Annual Notice of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) document will be provided upon request.

- A/W respects the confidentiality of your family. That means that the information you give us about your family is shared only among staff that need to know.
- Staff are trained to keep information confidential and will only share information with co-workers and supervisors as needed.
- All records are confidential and kept in a locked cabinet.



Adult Conduct Policy & Procedure

Policy: Our goal is to keep children safe and model appropriate behavior for children at all times. Adult behavior directly influences the children in the Head Start setting. It is necessary that all adults maintain self-control and conduct themselves in a manner which promotes respect towards children, parents/guardians, and staff. Loud voices, foul language, negative comments, uncontrolled public anger, or any physical contact by adults is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The use of any controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited at Head Start events, buildings and premises. Non-police personnel are prohibited from carrying any type of weapons.

Head Start Policy on Possession of Firearms

In accordance with the provisions of the Minnesota Citizens Personal Protection Act of 2003, ACCAP bans firearms from all Head Start facilities, agency-owned vehicles and buses. This policy applies to everyone, including those who possess a valid permit to carry firearms.

Unacceptable Items/Actions

Head Start promotes safety for children and families, and we would like your support. Part of Head Start's mission is to help children and families attain self-sufficiency, build self-esteem, and become educated in violence prevention. The following items/actions are not tolerated in our buildings and/or classrooms: alcohol, cigarettes (including e-cigs), drugs, mind altering substances, weapons, and bullying. If any of those items/actions are brought on-site, you will be asked to leave.

Procedure: In the event of a disturbance in the building, staff will attempt to move the parties to an area away from the children and de-escalate the situation. Anyone acting in a way which does not promote a healthy learning atmosphere will be required to leave the center. Police will be called for assistance, when necessary, via internal procedure. Verbal or physical threats of violence, or instances where the police are involved, will result in a meeting with the site supervisor and/or Head Start Director.

A/W Head Start is a Smoke Free Environment. The agency serves as an example to other childcare and community agencies by not allowing smoking in the presence of children, parents/guardians and participants. If you have questions regarding this policy, please talk with a Head Start Coordinator for assistance.

Parent/Guardian Complaints and Grievance Procedures

The philosophy of A/W is to handle each complaint with respect for all parties involved and to address and resolve concerns as quickly as possible. The program encourages open communication between parents/guardians, community members, and staff. All complaints will follow the Client Complaint Procedure to ensure a fair resolution for everyone. Parents and guardians with a concern should first speak directly with the classroom teacher to try to resolve the issue informally. If the concern cannot be resolved, the parent/guardian will be given a Client Complaint Form and a copy of the Client Complaint Procedures and asked to submit their complaint in

writing. The written complaint should include their name, address, contact information, a description of the issue, and the resolution they are seeking. This should be submitted to the Head Start Director.

Anoka County Community Action Program Client Appeal Process*

All clients who have a complaint regarding services received through the Anoka County Community Action Program (ACCAP) need to take the following steps to resolve their conflict. ACCAP's Complaint Procedure is as follows:

1. Contact the staff and try to resolve the problem informally.
2. If the problem cannot be solved informally, the client must put in writing the grievance and submit this to the Program Director within thirty (30) days. The Program Director must respond in writing to the client's complaint within five (5) working days.
3. If the client is not satisfied with the response of the Program Director, the client may appeal to the Executive Director within ten (10) working days. The Executive Director will respond to the client's complaint within five (5) working days.
4. If the client is not satisfied with the response of the Executive Director, the client may appeal within thirty (30) days to the Client Appeals Committee of Anoka County Community Action Program, Inc.
5. The Client Appeals Committee will consider the client's grievance at their next regularly scheduled meeting within sixty (60) days. The client, either in person or through legal counsel or both, shall have the right to address the Client Appeals Committee. The decisions of the Client Appeals Committee shall be final.

* This process will be replaced as needed by client appeal procedures established by alternative funding sources.

Parent Engagement

Parents/guardians can become involved in Head Start in a variety of ways: attend Parent Meetings, attend parent/teacher conferences, ride the bus with your child and assist the bus driver as a bus monitor, volunteer in the classroom, attend events, and serve on Policy Council. Head Start's vision for parent/guardian engagement is to create and maintain a family partnership with all Head Start families and to offer opportunities to:

- Support parent/guardian as primary educators, nurturers, and advocates for their child
- Provide every family with opportunities for significant experience in Head Start
- Ensure that parents/guardians are involved in making policy and program decisions for their Head Start program

The Role of Parents/Guardians in Head Start

Every Head Start program must have effective parent/guardian participation to be successful. There are four major kinds of parent/guardian participation; each is **essential** to an effective Head Start program:

- Participation in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program
- Participation in the classroom as paid employees or volunteers
- Participation in the planning and organizing of activities
- Working with the children in cooperation with staff

Our Head Start program reflects this vision through efforts to carry out the following principles:

- Culture -All aspects of the program support the cultures of the families and the community in which the program operates.
- Program Governance -Parents/guardians have opportunities for participation and shared decision making in every area of the program.
- Individualized Family Partnerships -The staff and program support the expressed interests and needs of each parent/guardian through the ongoing process of personal and family goal setting and partnering of activities and resources to meet these goals.
- Disabilities -All aspects of the program respond to and support children with disabilities and their families.
- Community Resources -Families build the confidence, skills, and knowledge they need to access community resources on their own behalf, with the support of program staff.



- Male Involvement -Our program has special programming to include fathers, supportive male family members and male guardians in engagement activities, especially those activities involving the development of their children.
- Leadership -Parent/guardian, staff and Policy Council members work together and provide leadership to communicate with their community about the interests and needs of Head Start, and they assist in strengthening existing services or bringing in new services that are needed.

Head Start Parent/Guardian Engagement within the Curriculum

- Parents/guardians and teachers discuss curriculum on an ongoing basis.
- Parents/guardians and teachers work together to celebrate individual successes.
- Parents/guardians share information about their heritage and how they celebrate.
- Parents/guardians share their ideas for activities.
- Parents/guardians are welcome to come into the classroom and lead activities.
- Parents/guardians are asked to share home materials that are reflective of their culture.



Parents/Guardian Rights & Responsibilities

As a Head Start Parent/Guardian, I have the RIGHT...

- To be welcomed in the classroom & to be treated with respect and dignity
- To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start
- To receive guidance for my child's total development from Head Start teachers and staff
- To learn about the operation of the program, including the budget
- To participate in major policy decisions by attending Parent Committee meetings and electing a representative to Policy Council
- To choose to participate or not without fear of endangering my child's rights to be in the program
- To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for myself and my family
- To participate in planning and carrying out a program designed to increase my skills in areas of possible employment
- To learn about the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions
- To be informed about community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of daily life

As a Head Start Parent/guardian, I have the RESPONSIBILITY...

- To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions
- To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my child's life
- To take part in the classroom as an observer or a volunteer and to contribute to my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program
- To provide parent/guardian leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parent/guardians and encourage their full participation
- To welcome teachers and staff into my home to discuss ways in which parents/guardian can help their child's development at home in relation to school experience
- To work with the teacher, staff and other parents/guardian in a cooperative way
- To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective
- To offer constructive criticism of, to defend it against unfair criticism of, & to share in evaluating of program
- To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education and recreation
- To become an advocate for future Head Start children by recruiting others to the Head Start program
- To participate in programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and develop skills which could lead to employment opportunities

Head Start Parent Involvement Groups

Head Start Policy Council

A Policy Council must be set up for each Head Start program; one delegate and one alternate from each Parent/guardian Committee (see below) are elected at the October and/or November Parent Meeting. Past parents/guardians and community representatives may also serve on the Policy Council. Training in the roles and responsibilities is provided to Policy Council members. Elected Policy Council representatives attend their first meeting in November and serve for one year through the next November. The Policy Council typically meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Serving on Policy Council allows parents/guardians to develop skills in leadership and policy and to be directly involved in the program planning process.

Head Start Parent Committee

Head Start Preschool Center-Based; Home-Based and Child Care Partnership programs have Parent Committees made up of parents/guardians whose children are enrolled in that classroom/program option. Parent/guardian Committee meetings are held throughout the year. Attendance at parent/guardian meetings is highly encouraged to make the most of the resources and learning opportunities available to families. Parent committees are given a specific amount from the Parent Activity Fund to plan and carry out projects and activities. Attending these meetings is important for understanding the guidelines for using this fund and for voting parent/guardian representatives onto the Policy Council. Notices with the date, time, and other important details will be provided to parents/guardian before each meeting.



Health and Mental Health Advisory Committee

This committee brings together parents/guardians, community representatives and staff with the purpose of improving the overall health functions of the Head Start program. The Head Start family benefits the most with the participation of parent/guardian, and community representatives meeting to discuss current issues and updates on health. The committee meets twice a year, once in the fall and then again in the spring.

Fatherhood Program

All men involved in the lives of children have the opportunity to significantly influence the children's social development, health, and emotional well-being. Children guided by responsible male guardian have the opportunity to experience the unique male perspective. The program celebrates and enhances male parent/role modeling by 1) encouraging responsible fathering/male role modeling 2) helping children and men relate and connect 3) educating men about parent/mentoring 4) creating opportunities for individual and group male involvement and leadership. Anoka/Washington County Head Start receives dedicated grant funding to offer specialized fatherhood programming that fathers or significant males in the child's life are invited to attend throughout the school year. F.R.E.D. (Father's Reading Every Day) is a literacy-based event where significant males and kids participate in story time and an activity. Community Partners are on site to share resources. Fabulous Fun for Fathers is a parent/guardian-child relationship focused event where significant males and their Head Start child can interact in a positive way through different projects and activities. Watch for event invites in your child's backpack or ask the class teacher or Family Service Worker about involvement opportunities.

Employment Opportunities

Head Start parents/guardians are encouraged to apply for positions posted by Anoka County Community Action Program for which they are qualified. See your parent board or go to the Agency website at www.accap.org to view current job opportunities. Applications are available on the agency website and in the Family Learning Center (FLC) at the Coon Rapids Family Development Center. Additional job-seeking materials and resources are also available in the FLC for reference.

Volunteering

Why Volunteer at Head Start? It's all about In-Kind! In-Kind is a word people associated with Head Start you hear quite often. Head Start staff will frequently ask you to sign the In-Kind form – here is why we do this: In-Kind is services and items of value donated by community organizations, parent /guardian and other volunteers in Head Start. (The federal government, Head Start's main source of funding, requires twenty percent of the budget to be from these In-Kind donations, as well as other grants. In-Kind not only helps the program financially, but it also helps the children developmentally.) The program needs volunteers to help every day. Small children need to have a lot of individual attention; therefore, parent/guardian, aunts, uncles, grandparent/guardian, or individuals from the community are needed to interact and assist with children in the classroom, on field trips, on buses and with preparation of upcoming events. The minimum age for a classroom volunteer is 14 years of age.



What is In-Kind?

Recent studies have shown that children are most successful in school when parents/guardians are involved. Volunteering in the classroom, becoming active within the program or with home activities is a great way to become involved in children's education and is included in the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

When you become a part of our program, one of the words you begin to hear is "In-Kind". What is it? Head Start programs are funded by the federal government, but only to a certain point. We must raise 20% of our funds through community support, which is known as In-Kind. In-Kind can be actual cash, donated goods or donated services. In-Kind is the donation of time, space or materials used in the program that would otherwise be purchased. A dollar amount is assigned to all volunteer hours whether in the classroom, within the program or at home. The dollar amount is totaled and helps the program reach the required goals. For every In-Kind dollar that the program is not able to raise, the Department of Health and Human Services could request a return of \$4.00 of the program's funds.

Volunteer participation is critical to the operation of a successful Head Start program. Head Start parents/guardians are relied on to participate in and have fun with activities that benefit the Head Start program and, most importantly, their child. Head Start regulations define the limits and types of services that can be counted as part of the In-Kind match. A valid In-Kind contribution is one that specifically supports the program, not individual families, and is a service/donation for which Head Start funds would have been used for, if it had not been donated.

We can count the time that you volunteer in the classroom, as well as the time you spend working on your child's school readiness goals that are set by you and the teacher. The goal is to log as many hours for the program as possible, so please let a staff member know if you have any amount of time for us to put on our In-Kind log sheet. The time you spend helping Head Start not only benefits you and your child, but the overall program. You'll have fun, make new friends, expand your skills and most of all show your child that you care about their education and well-being. We greatly appreciate your efforts! Our families make us great!

Education and Early Childhood Development

Head Start involves parents/guardians, staff, and Policy Council members in the development of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom activities and appropriate home-learning activities for each child. Parents/guardians are the most important people in their child's world. They are also their children's first and primary teachers. Supporting children's learning is viewed as a joint effort between teachers and parents/guardians. For many children, this is their first experience at school. Head Start teachers will be working with all the children in the classroom to assist them in developing appropriate social skills. When problems arise between children, teachers



will focus on helping the children learn to talk about the problem instead of hitting, biting or other inappropriate behaviors. Parent/guardians are asked to support our efforts in teaching appropriate classroom behavior and to be patient when any child is struggling to learn how to play in a group.

Because A/W prioritizes safety above all else, implementing policies and procedures of active supervision that require focused attention and deliberate observation of children at all times. These policies and procedures ensure that enrolled children can safely explore their environment and learn.

Child Development Curriculums

Second Step – Social Emotional Skills for Early Learning Curriculum

A/W incorporates ***Second Step (Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning Curriculum)*** into the regular classroom learning. This program works to assist the teacher in identifying and addressing disruptive behavior issues. In addition, children learn how to recognize and understand feelings, make positive and effective choices, manage their behaviors and solve problems with others. Head Start children learn to practice pro-social behavior. By gaining insight into their emotions and learning how to manage them, young children can better maintain focus on academics.

Talking about Touching Curriculum

A key unit of *Second Step* is *Talking about Touching*. The idea of safe touches (touches that make you feel happy and cared for) and unsafe touches (touches that make you feel scared, sad or mad) are presented to children in this unit. This unit teaches children skills to handle situations where children experience unsafe touches whether from adults or other children. During classroom lessons, the children will also learn the Touching Rule: another person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. Children will learn that private body parts are “those parts covered by a swimsuit.” Before this lesson begins, a notice will be sent home to parents/guardian.



Center-Based 3-5 and Home-Based 3-5

Our core curriculum for Center-Based 3-5 programming is the *Creative Curriculum for Preschool*. The fundamental principles of the curriculum guide our classroom teachers in all aspects of planning a comprehensive lesson plan.

The *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is a research-based curriculum that looks at 38 objectives for development and learning that are compatible and aligned with the same 38 objectives for development and learning in the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD) Assessment system. These objectives are also fully aligned with the revised *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework* and Minnesota’s Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. These components are integrated into each one of the comprehensive resources that make up the *Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers*. The curriculum also offers daily opportunities to individualize instruction by helping teachers meet the needs of every learner, with a particular emphasis on English language development.

The Head Start program is most effective when parents/guardians and teachers work together. We encourage feedback and input regarding the curriculum and ideas for new curriculum-related activities. Input can be offered at scheduled parent meetings, during parent teacher conferences, or during regular communication with classroom staff. The studies we use include:

- Ball Study
- Beginning the Year
- Buildings Study
- Clothes Study
- Exercise Study
- Garden Study
- Insect Study
- Music Making
- Reduce Reuse Recycle Study
- Sand Study
- Signs Study
- Simple Machines Study
- Trees Study
- Tubes & Tunnels Study

To enhance this curriculum, the following are used:

- *S.M.A.R.T (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training)*
- *I Am Moving, I Am Learning*: Healthy eating and physical activity
- *Second Step*: Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning
- *Conscious Discipline*: Research-based behavior management curriculum
- *Turtle Technique*: Strategies for coping with anger, disappointment and frustration
- *Handwriting Without Tears*: Promotes a multisensory, developmentally appropriate strategy to increase success with early writing skills through fun interactive activities
- *MarcoPolo Learning*: A classroom engagement platform to enhance curriculum activities. A family component allows a curriculum connection from school to home.

The program's core curriculum for Home-Based 3-5 programming is the *Growing Great Kids™ for Preschoolers: For Home Visiting Programs (GGK PS)*.

The GGK PS curriculum supports home visitors in building trusting and positive relationships with families, particularly through the suggested structure of home visits. Home visitors use the strengths-based approach with families to build relationships and affirm parent/guardian competence. Guidance for home visitors on how to follow the family's lead and jointly plan home visits. Consistent home visiting promotes practices and interactions that research has shown to be effective with engaging families. The curriculum provides guidance for parents/guardians on how to model and support the development of their children's social skills, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and physical skills.

Early Head Start 0-3

The core curriculum used for pregnant women and children (birth to 36 months) is written by Florida State University *Partners for a Health Baby Curriculum*. It is a nationally recognized, researched-based, practice-informed curriculum used by many home visiting models to meet program goals including:

- Improving birth outcomes
- Reducing rates of child abuse
- Strengthening families
- Enhancing child health and developmental outcomes\
- Promoting family stability and economic self-sufficiency

To enhance this curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos* is used in center-based settings. The curriculum is a relationship-based curriculum that is implemented on home-visits, on center socialization days and in the EHS-CCP program, for enrolled children birth to age three. This curriculum defines *what, why* and *how* of providing a high-quality program, guiding the teacher and families together through the components of a developmentally appropriate program. Our program's Family Child Care option uses *The Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care*



Conscious Discipline® in Head Start-Early Head Start

Head Start uses **Conscious Discipline®** techniques to model, praise and reinforce appropriate behaviors in order to help children know what behaviors are appropriate.

Conscious Discipline® is an emotional and behavior-management program that teaches us to be aware of our own emotions, enabling us to engage the higher centers of our brain. Through this, we learn to cope with emotions and manage our responses, rather than reacting impulsively to life events. Conscious Discipline® is based on safety and building strong relationships; it helps decrease power struggles and build life skills in relating to one another. These concepts are from the Conscious Discipline® program and Loving Guidance www.consciousdiscipline.com

Research shows that schools/families using Conscious Discipline® have increased academic achievement and increased quality teaching time both at home and school. This includes improvements in social skills, character development, fostering positive relationships between home and school, and a decrease in impulsivity, hyperactivity, and aggression.

- Head Start accepts a child's positive and negative feelings.
- Head Start gives children words to express their emotions. Once a child can do this, they can make better choices about how they behave.
- Head Start provides opportunities for children to resolve conflicts and positive guidance which may help them to choose acceptable solutions.
- Head Start provides activities that will enable children to practice making decisions in order to develop self-awareness and self-help skills.
- Head Start uses transitions which help children move from one activity to another. This provides closure for a current activity and helps to prevent confusion.
- Head Start sets limits which are developmentally appropriate.
- Head Start offers alternatives to inappropriate behaviors to enable children to be in control and to help them develop their internal controls.
- Head Start tries to be aware of situations that may cause children to lose control and take appropriate steps to prevent what can be prevented.
- Head Start assists children in a nurturing way to locate quiet, non-threatening places to be when they are unable to work through their feelings in a group.

Our school family believes that learning, teaching, and parenting/caregiving happens best when everyone feels safe and connected. We create safety by breathing to calm down and to focus on what we want (instead of what we do not want); we make connections by encouraging one another, building self-esteem and will power, and showing empathy; and we solve programs through seeing challenges with positive intent, and setting boundaries with consequences so we can learn from mistakes. Staff instruct and engage children in these exercises to alleviate stress, acquire relaxation techniques, and enhance coping skills:

The S.T.A.R. Exercise - Stop, Smile, take a deep breath and relax (release breath slowly).

The Pretzel Exercise (Brain Gym) - Stand: cross your ankles and hold your arms in front with your palms facing each other. Cross your arms and place hands together (like a clap). Fold them under your chin with your tongue pressed against the top of the inside of your mouth; this integrates the brain. Modification: Hug yourself - cross legs standing or crisscross apple sauce (sitting). Breathe in and slowly release your breath.

The Drain Exercise - Hold your arms out in front - make your hands into fists. Tighten muscles in your arms - squint your shoulders up to ears. Tightly squeeze your muscles in your face. Take a deep breath and then breathe out slowly - relax, opening fists to let all of your stress drain out of your hands. Let the mad feelings drain out of body like flowing water.

The Balloon Exercise - Put your hands on your head and lock your fingers together. Breathe deeply - raise your hands over your head as you let your breath fill up a pretend big balloon. Breathe in more and more air, then let the air out as you drop your hands down to head.



Good Things to Remember:

1. It is important to speak in a calm, kind voice.
2. Get down to the child's physical level, if possible. Sit or stoop at a low level so that the child can see your face.
3. Go to the child, avoid calling them from across the room.
4. Speak in short, meaningful sentences that the child can understand.
5. Try to express your request in a positive way. This will help the child learn a better, more acceptable way of doing things.
6. Answer the child's questions but try not to monopolize the conversation
7. Be conscious of your voice, tone and facial expressions, keep them pleasant.

It's "HOW" You Say it That Counts	
<i>Say what you want the child to do</i>	<i>Avoid saying it this way</i>
"Sit down when you slide"	"Don't stand up when you slide"
"Dig in the sand"	"Don't throw the sand"
"Sit in the swing"	"Don't stand on the swing"
<i>Say what you want the child to do</i>	<i>Avoid saying it this way</i>
"Use both hands when you climb"	"Watch it or you'll fall"
"Put the stick down"	"Don't play with the stick, you'll hurt someone"
"Keep the puzzle on the table"	"Don't dump the puzzle pieces on the floor"
"Talk in a quiet voice"	"Don't shout"
"Wipe your hands on the paper towel"	"Don't touch anything"
"Move back on your rug so everyone can see"	"You're in the way, the other children can't see"
"Walk around the swing"	"Watch it, the swing with hit you"
"Put a paint shirt on"	"Don't you want an apron?"
"Walk in the classroom"	"Don't run"

Early Learning Corps (AmeriCorps/Ampact)

A/W has a partnership with Ampact Early Learning Corps to provide literacy and math-rich classroom settings. Do something dynamic – experience life-changing growth as an Early Learning Corps Tutor. Be a hero for Pre-K students who struggle with reading or math skills by serving as an Early Learning Corps Tutor at ACCAP Head Start. Whether you want to explore a career in education, re-enter the workforce, or give back to your community, you can make a difference as a tutor. Ampact Early Learning Corps has helped more than 500,000 students nationwide. You can also help by telling a friend or family member (grandparents make great tutors, too!) about openings at our school and statewide! **If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Monica Torgerson (763) 783-4381, the Internal Coach for our program. Visit Join.ReadingandMath.org for more information about the program** and/or to apply to be a member.

Birth to Five School Readiness Goals and Objectives

School Readiness

Head Start programs are required to establish goals for enhancing school readiness for children, including school readiness goals that are aligned with *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework* in accordance with the Head Start Act. In collaboration with parents/guardian, a curriculum tailored to each child's unique developmental journey is implemented. This curriculum supports cognitive development by helping each child organize their experiences, understand concepts, and build age-appropriate problem-solving and decision-making skills, forming a foundation for school readiness and future school success.

The program focuses on enhancing the development of children pre-natal to five in the areas of physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Focus is on developing the whole child, emphasizing the development of skills, self-esteem and academic preparation. The program's School Readiness Goals and Objectives are designed to cover the domains outlined in the revised *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Birth to Five* and the Minnesota Early Indicators of Progress. These goals and objectives are closely aligned with the core curriculum. Progress is measured through individual observations using the TS GOLD assessment system.

Outcomes

Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD) is used to help teachers keep track of your child's skills, behaviors, and achievements while in Head Start and to report your child's progress to you. TS GOLD consists of development guidelines, checklists and summary reports. All quarterly Outcome Reports are approved by the Policy Council and Governing Board; these reports are available upon request to all parent/guardians. Individual Child Outcomes are reviewed with the child's parent/guardian(s) throughout the program year at each Parent/Teacher Conference.

Head Start-Early Head Start Birth to Five School Readiness Goals and Objectives

Domain	Birth – Three	Preschool 3-5
Social/ Emotional Development: TS GOLD: Objectives 1 & 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishes and sustains positive relationships with familiar adults. 2. Uses those positive relationships as a resource to develop relationships with other adults to meet their needs. 3. Shows interest in, interacts with, and develop relationships with other children. 4. Imitates and engages in play with other children. 5. Expresses a range of emotions through recognition, care and concern towards others. 6. Manages emotions. 7. Shows awareness about self and understanding of others. 8. Shows confidence in their own abilities. 9. Develops a sense of belonging through relationships with others. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engages in and maintains positive, prosocial and cooperative behavior with adults. 2. Engages in and maintains positive interactions, relationships and cooperative play with other children. 3. Uses basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children. 4. Expresses a broad range of emotions and recognizes these emotions in self and others. 5. Expresses care and concern towards others. 6. Expresses confidence in own skills and positive feelings about self. 7. Demonstrates a sense of belonging to a family, community and other groups.
Approaches to Learning: TS GOLD: Objectives 11-14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates increasing management of feelings, emotions, actions and behavior with support from familiar adults. 2. Demonstrates increasing focus, sustained attention, persistence and flexibility in actions and behavior. 3. Demonstrates emerging interest in, curiosity about interactions, experiences and explorations about objects, materials, or events. 4. Utilizes creativity, imagination in play, and interactions with others to increase understanding and learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follows classroom rules and routines through appropriate handling and use of classroom materials. 2. Manages their actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence. 3. Maintains focus and sustains attention with minimal adult support. Persists in tasks. 5. Uses information to perform tasks and demonstrates flexibility in thinking and behavior. 6. Demonstrates initiative, independence and interest in the world around them. 7. Expresses creativity through thinking, communication, imaginative play and interactions with others.
Literacy: TS GOLD: Objectives 15-19		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates awareness of spoken language and its composition into segments of sound. 2. Demonstrates an understanding of how print is used. 3. Identifies letters of the alphabet and produces correct sounds associated with letters. 4. Demonstrates an understanding of narrative structure through storytelling/re-telling. 5. Asks and answers questions about a book that was read aloud. 6. Writes for a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated marks.
Language and Communication: TSGOLD: Objectives 8-10 & 17-19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attends to, understands, responds and learns from communication and language experiences with others. 2. Communicates needs and wants using non-verbal and language to engage others in interaction. 3. Uses increasingly complex language or initiation of non-verbal communication to learn, gain information and converse with others. 4. Understands and uses an increasing number of words in communication and conversation with others. 5. Handles books, recognizes pictures, some symbols, signs, words and comprehends meaning from pictures and stories. 6. Makes marks and uses them to represent objects or actions. 7. Attends to communication and language from others and understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language. 8. Uses verbal and non-verbal communication to get needs met 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands and responds to communication and language from others. 2. Understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others. 3. Understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules. 4. Demonstrates self-expression through increasing use of a wide variety of words that are long, detailed and sophisticated.

Domain	Birth – Three	Preschool 3-5
Cognition Including Science and Math TSGOLD: Objectives 20-28	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively explores people and objects to understand self, others and objects. 2. Uses the understanding of causal relationships to act on social and physical environments. 3. Recognizes differences between familiar and unfamiliar people, objects, actions, or events. 4. Recognizes the stability of people and objects in the environment. 5. Uses memories as a foundation for more complex actions and thoughts. 6. Uses a variety of strategies in solving problems such as reasoning and planning ahead. 7. Develops a sense of number and quantity. 8. Uses spatial awareness to understand objects and their movement in space. 9. Uses matching and sorting of objects or people to understand similar and different characteristics. 10. Observes and imitates sounds, words, gestures, actions, and behaviors. 11. Uses objects or symbols to represent something else. 12. Uses pretend play to increase understanding of culture, environment, and experiences. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates knowledge of number names and the count sequence. 2. Recognizes the number of objects in a small set. 3. Understands the relationship between numbers and quantities. 4. Identifies whether the number of objects in one group is more than, less than, or the same. 5. Understands addition as adding to and understands subtraction as taking away from. 6. Understand simple patterns. 7. Measures objects by their attributes and uses those to make comparisons. 8. Identifies, describes, compares, and composes shapes. 9. Explores the positions of objects in space. 10. Observes, categorizes and describes, in scientific talk, objects, materials, organisms, and events. 11. Asks questions, gathers information, conducts investigations and experiments and makes predictions. 12. Analyzes results, draws conclusions, and communicates results.
Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development TSGOLD: Objectives 4-7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uses perceptual information to understand objects and experiences and in directing their own actions and interactions. 2. Demonstrates effective and efficient use of large muscles for movement, position, and exploration of their environment. 3. Uses sensory information and body awareness to understand how their body relates to the environment. 4. Coordinates hand and eye movements to perform actions. 5. Uses hands for explorations, play, and daily routines. 6. Adjusts their reach and grasp to use tools. 7. Demonstrates healthy behaviors with increasing independence as part of everyday routines. 8. Uses safe behaviors with support from adults. 9. Demonstrates increasing interest in engaging in healthy eating habits and making nutritious food choices. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates control, strength, and coordination of large muscles. 2. Uses perceptual information to guide motions and interactions with objects and other people. 3. Demonstrates increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles. 4. Demonstrates personal hygiene and self-care skills. 5. Develops knowledge and skills that help promote nutritious food choices and eating habits. 6. Demonstrates knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.
Dual Language Learners: TSGOLD: Objectives 37 & 38	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children will demonstrate increasing progress in listening to and understanding English. 2. Children will demonstrate increasing progress in speaking English. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children will demonstrate increasing progress in listening to and understanding English. 2. Children will demonstrate increasing progress in speaking English.
Parent, Family & Community Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent/guardian will participate in the program through involvement in various opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent/guardian will participate in the program through involvement in various opportunities.

Parent/Family/Community School Readiness Engagement Road Map

Engagement in school readiness is not limited to your child; it involves the entire family. Head Start wants to engage you, as the parent/guardian, because you are your child’s first and foremost teacher and an individual who has dreams and aspirations for a better life for your whole family. By advancing your own interests through education, training, and other experiences you support and add to your child’s curiosity and enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Our hope is that your involvement with the Head Start program will help you to achieve family well-being, strengthen positive parent/guardian/child relationships, become life-long learners and educators, be involved in transitions throughout your child’s education, become connected to peers and your community and become advocates and leaders. The following chart lists some suggestions to support those outcomes.

School Readiness Parent/Guardian Partnership Chart

School Readiness Outcome	Child	Parent/guardian
Approaches to learning are skills in completing a challenging or frustrating task, following directions, making mistakes and working as a group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning the rules of the classroom • Waiting for their turn • Persistence at a task • Use of a variety of materials for exploring and experimenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing a Family Partnership Agreement and following up on family goals
Creative arts and expression can be in the form of dance, music and play. These all support imaginative thinking and self-expression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free time to play • Singing at circle time • Experiment with materials to create such as paint, clay etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a dance class • Play music while you cook • Attend free community concerts
Literacy skills in learning to listen, understanding what is seen or heard and expressing themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading at circle time • Books and magazines at child level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding your vocabulary will enrich conversations and make them more interesting • Use “words of the day” or “juicy words” to help build you and your child’s vocabulary
Math skills include addition/subtraction, spatial sense, measurement and time concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting shapes and colors • Comparing sizes (big, small, wide, thin) • Counting and take a-ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a plan to save “X” amount of money • Make a clock together • Sort socks with your child while counting size and color • Cook together, measuring ingredients
Children are natural scientists. Curiosity, exploring and asking questions help a child understand the world. Active engagement in observing and experimenting are the best ways to teach science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions “what if”, “what do you think”, “what do you think will happen next?” • Cooking projects, weather projects, gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions • Start a new hobby such as gardening • Take nature walks
Physical health is learning about keeping your body healthy, making right food choices, and learning a healthier life style.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tooth brushing • Active play • Good food choices • Gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise and eat right • Set examples for your children • Learn as a family: better way to reduce/recycle/reuse
Social emotional learning is part of learning cooperation, self-control, independence and building friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning how to share feelings w/ someone else • Make friends • Have regular appropriate chores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as a team • Volunteering and building your network of professional and personal support • Seeking employment
Social studies. Children will learn about and how they relate to others in the world around them. This helps children relate to self, family, neighborhood and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories about other places and people • Books, food and activities from other cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your family history • Read stories about other places • Take your child with when you vote • Advocate in your community
Logic and reasoning is asking questions to help your child to demonstrate a growing ability to remember and connect known information with new info.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puzzles, Water and Sand table • Experimenting with materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at all your choices before deciding • Ask for help or guidance • Look to peers for support
Language development (receptive and expressive) includes the ability to comprehend language and the use of the language in communicating with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in conversations with others • Listens attentively to storytelling • Re-tells a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have conversations with your children • Read a book with your child • Create a play with your child
English Language Development (receptive and expressive) is the development of English language skills for children who speak a home language other than English.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in songs, rhymes, stories in English • Speaks with family and others in home language or English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a class to learn English or other language • Speak with your child in both languages

Behavior Guidance

A/W uses age-appropriate behavior management strategies as a teaching opportunity that show children how to develop, use, and maintain behavioral and social skills. Behavioral Management is not a form of punishment for unacceptable behavior, but a process, in consultation with the parent/guardian and program staff, to address behavioral concerns in the classroom and to encourage and strengthen positive behavior, giving children the skills to manage their own behaviors. Anoka/Washington County Head Start Program has a zero-tolerance policy regarding aggression or violence toward other children or staff. We model positive and acceptable behavior, offer children choices, teach children language for solving problems and talking about their emotions, clearly outline limits and rules and provide redirection when needed.

- Food will never be used as a punishment or reward.
- There will be no punishment for lapses in toilet habits.
- No child will be subjected to physical, verbal, or emotional abuse.
- Separation from the group will be used only as defined under the Separation Policy section.
- The use of physical restraint, other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect the child or others from harm, is prohibited.
- No child will be subjected to corporal punishment or the non-accidental infliction of pain.

Separation Guidance and Persistent Serious Behavioral Concerns

Children will not be separated from the group unless other methods have been tried, deemed ineffective, and the child's behavior threatens their safety/well-being and/or the safety/well-being of other children or staff. Children who require separation from the group will remain within a space where the child can be continuously supervised by a program staff person. When separation from the group is used as a behavior guiding technique, the child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping the behavior that resulted in the separation.

When a child exhibits serious behavioral concerns (including physical and verbal aggression, and disruptive behaviors to staff or other children) that endanger the safety of themselves, other children or staff and interventions/strategies outlined in our programs Behavior Guidance Policies and Procedures remain ineffective, the following steps will be taken:

1. The behavior will be documented.
2. The child will be removed from the classroom, if necessary, under the supervision of a staff member.
3. The parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child immediately. The child will remain with the staff until the parent/guardian arrives.
4. Before the child can return to the center, a conference that includes the parent/guardian, teacher, Education Coordinator, members of the Child Study Team and any other relevant professionals **must be immediately scheduled** to develop a workable consistent plan of action between home and the center. To help the child safely return to the program the program will collaborate with parents/guardians, mental health consultants, and appropriate community resources as needed. Additional program supports; services and referrals will also be explored.
5. If the parent/guardian decides to refrain from attending the conference or the behavior continues, the program will make a decision in collaboration with the mental health consultant based on the individual circumstances of the particular child and situation. This may include another service option being offered, e.g., Home Based services or a more appropriate early childhood education option.
6. In extreme situations where a child endangers self or others, the child may need to temporarily remain at home until a Child Study Team meeting is completed, and the services needed are in place.
7. Children that receive bus services and display challenging or extreme behaviors on the bus may lose their transportation privileges. (Please see pages 31-36 in this Parent Handbook for further information on busing policies and procedures.)

Health & Nutrition Services

The Objectives of Health Services

- Provide a broad range of resources for medical, dental, mental health and nutrition services
- Provide health education for parents/guardians, children and staff
- Promote preventative health services and early intervention
- Link families to an ongoing system of health care

Medical and Dental

Physical exams and dental exams are required for all enrolled students. Vision, hearing, height and weight screenings are provided, including referrals for follow-up if needed. Minnesota Law requires immunizations to be up to date for children in a program like Head Start. The importance of oral health is taught to the children, and they brush their teeth daily at Head Start.

Nutrition

Every child enrolled in a Full Day program receives two nutritious, balanced meals and a snack which meets at least two-thirds of their daily needs. Breakfast is served during Home Base Socialization Days.

Outdoor Play

Medical and early childhood experts widely agree that outdoor play is vital for children's healthy development. It offers opportunities for self-directed physical activity that promotes health and helps reduce obesity. Minnesota childcare regulations support this by requiring outdoor activities be on the daily schedule. (Minnesota Rules, part 9503.0045, subpart 1, item I). Staff will monitor weather and air quality daily to ensure the safety of children and staff.

Children will scheduled outdoor time daily, however we will keep children inside following these guidelines: **During winter, if the wind chill is minus ten (10) and/or the temperature is "zero (0) degrees or below". During the summer, if the heat index is at or above 90 degrees. During any time of year, if the air quality is in the red zone based on metrics from the AirNow website.**

Clothing and Footwear

Please send your child in clothing and footwear appropriate for inside and outside play and appropriate for the weather throughout the year. Many activities involve climbing, kicking balls, riding bikes and running. Please protect your child's feet with closed-toed shoes, and sandals should have back straps for safety. Please also send appropriate outside gear with your child during winter months: boots, snow pants, hat, gloves/mittens and a winter coat. It is suggested that all outerwear be labeled with your child's name. If these items are unobtainable, please talk to your Family Service Worker and they will provide resources.

Sunscreen

Sun protection is a serious consideration when children play outdoors. Please apply before coming to school as you feel necessary. Families may provide their own sunscreen with written documentation from a doctor.



Wellness Policy

Anoka/Washington County Head Start involves parents/guardian, teachers, management and community partners to provide appropriate physical activities, nutritious meals and encouragement for these activities to extend into the home environment. This is supported through parent education and information sent home in backpacks. The complete Wellness Policy is on file in Health Services and available to all parents and guardians.

Center Emergency Procedures

The safety of all children and staff in our centers is very important to us. To maintain a safe environment, it is necessary that we practice our emergency procedures by having emergency drills. We will be conducting various drills throughout the school year. The students and staff will be practicing three primary emergency drills each year. They are “fire drills,” “lockdown drills” and “tornado drills.” Each type of drill is explained below.



FIRE DRILLS

The school will conduct a “fire drill” each month that school is in session. This is a building fire code requirement as well as a requirement by Head Start Program Performance Standards. We want each student to understand and be aware of the importance of this drill and to not be afraid if the fire alarm is sounded. By practicing, they will know what to do and how to do it. “Stop, drop and roll” (a fire safety technique) is taught to the children.



LOCKDOWN DRILLS

The school will conduct two lockdown drills during the school year to secure the building and safely shelter all students, staff, and visitors inside the building. The purpose of this drill is to keep the students safe from any danger outside or inside the building. During a lockdown drill, all perimeter doors will be locked and remain locked until the drill ends. During an actual lockdown, doors will remain locked until the threat or issue is resolved. To ensure everyone remains safe, no one will be allowed to enter the building or leave the building during a drill or, during an actual lockdown, until the authorities give clearance.

TORNADO DRILLS

The tornado or severe weather drill will be conducted once each month from April through October. The purpose of this drill is to be prepared to move to a safe location within the building in case of severe weather or tornadoes. Please remember that these emergency drills are meant to help keep our centers as safe places to learn and work.



In case we need to initiate any of the above emergency procedures, you would be notified as soon as we are in a safe enough location to do so. In the event of a fire or emergency evacuation, please call our Head Start office at (763) 783-4300 or the ACCAP office at (763) 783-4747 for further information. If you have questions about these emergency drills or other safety concerns, please contact Health Services at (763) 783-4370.

Center Evacuation

In the event of a situation requiring relocation outside of the local area of the facility, such as fire or other dangers threatening the safety of the occupants of the facility, all staff and children will relocate as a group to the pre-designated relocation site unless otherwise directed by emergency service personnel. A director, coordinator or designated staff will notify the main office. Teachers and program staff will walk with children, and when possible, buses will transport children and staff to predetermined safe locations. Program staff will contact parents or guardians to inform them of the situation and provide directions to the relocation site. Telephone numbers will be obtained from the family emergency contact cards. Supervisors, coordinators and designated staff will be responsible for picking up the emergency packs, emergency contact information and ensuring the notification poster is attached to the facility entrance providing the relocation site and contact information. Children will only be released to authorized pick-up persons. All media inquiries must be directed to the director.

Pre-designated relocations (to verify or ask questions call (763) 783-4300 – Program Office)

Attendance Site	Relocation Site	Relocation Telephone #	Transportation Plan
Family Development Center (FDC)	MN Occupational Health 600 Coon Rapids Blvd Coon Rapids, MN 55433 Overflow Site: Crayon Box Child Care Center 9554 Foley Blvd. Coon Rapids, MN 55433	(651) 968-5201 (763) 784-4386	Head Start staff and children will walk to Diversified. Staff will inform ACCAP main office of the situation. Parent/guardian will then be informed of the situation and where their children can be picked up or if the Head Start bus can transport children home.
Forest Lake	Lakes BP 1107 East Highway 97 Forest Lake, MN 55025	Karl (651) 464-1667 or (651) 755-0031	Children and staff will walk across 11 th Street to the strip mall location. Staff will inform Head Start administrative office of the situation. Parent/guardian will then be informed of the situation and where their children can be picked.
Newport	Newport Lutheran Church 900 15 th St. Newport, MN 55055	Pastor Sue Gravelle (651) 459-2447	Head Start will transport children and staff to the relocation site. Staff will inform the Head Start administrative office of the situation. Parent/guardian will then be informed of the situation and where their children can be picked up.
Oakdale	Tartan High School 828 Greenway Ave N. Oakdale, MN 55128	(651) 702-8600	Children and staff will walk to the Tartan High School. Staff will inform Head Start administrative office of the situation. Parent/guardian will then be informed of the situation and where their children can be picked up.

Policy for Illness, Emergency Care, First Aid, Accidents and Exclusion of Sick Children

A qualified public health nurse reviews all health policies. Each parent or guardian must sign a Child Emergency Authorization to Release form with the following information:

- Names and phone numbers of at least two emergency contacts (emergency contacts must have transportation)
- Permission for Head Start to act in the case of an emergency.
- Information regarding your child’s doctor, dentist and any allergy concerns.

This information is kept on file at your child's center and is brought on all field trips. Complete physical and immunization records are kept in each child's file at the Head Start administrative office. Records of any accidents, illness, etc., are kept in Health Services and on an accident log. The Health Services staff members are available to all of the centers during their hours of operation. All staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR and are able to provide any necessary care before other assistance arrives. Emergency procedures are posted at all of the centers; these cover fire, medical emergencies, poisoning, choking, tornadoes and other building crises.



If a child becomes sick or injured

1. Staff contacts the parent/guardian, childcare provider, emergency contact or calls 911. If needed, staff will perform First Aid procedures.
2. For non-life-threatening situations (illness), the child is separated from the other children. The parent/guardian(s) will be contacted and alerted to the situation. The staff and parent/guardian(s) will discuss the situation and determine if the child should remain at school or go home. It is very important for Head Start to have the most current phone numbers for home, work, and emergency contacts; please remember to inform your child's teacher of any changes to this information.
3. When a child is sick, the teacher fills out an Illness Assessment Report describing the situation. Copies are kept in the file in the classroom and with Health Services. This form may require a doctor's signature for a child to return to class depending on the illness. Refer to the Head Start Guidelines for returning to school after an illness on page 10 of the Parent Calendar for more detailed information.
4. Disease notices will be sent to the center or classroom parent/guardian if the illness is contagious.
5. If a child has an accident at the center or classroom and the child is not severely injured, the staff will give First Aid and complete a Child Accident form and contact the parent/guardian.

6. In case of a severe injury, the staff will call 911 and then the parent/guardian. All accidents involving a trip to the doctor or dentist because of the injury at school are reported to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing, the Head Start Director, Education Coordinator, and Program Design. Program Design then will inform our OHS Program Specialist of the accident. Staff will also complete the Child Accident Form. A copy will be given to the parent/guardian and Health Services.

NOTE: Medication is only given to children by staff with a doctor's and parent/guardian's written permission. Medication must be in its original container with the attached prescription label. It also must include a child's first and last name, dosage and expiration date, when to administer, pharmacy phone number, doctor who prescribed medication. Medication must be hand delivered to Head Start by the child's parent/guardian. Medication may not be sent on the Head Start bus. If medication expires it will be returned to the parent/guardian for proper disposal. Staff will keep a log whenever medication is given at school.

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children, and parent engagement is an essential part of our program. Parents are partners in planning and implementing activities for their child, creating family goals and supporting program outcomes.

An integral component of our program is the development of a Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) process that is started during the orientation process and continues with ongoing support and resources from your teacher and assigned Family Service Worker.

Each family is assigned a Family Service Worker who will operate as a liaison between classroom and home settings in the areas of education, child development, mental health, and to monitor and encourage consistent daily attendance. The teacher and Family Service Worker will work with you to help you identify your family strengths and to help you set family goals. By focusing on strengths and connecting you with community resources, the teacher and Family Service Worker will assist you to reach the family goals you have chosen.



You will have opportunities to meet with your teacher and/or Family Service Worker several times during the year to update them on your progress in meeting your family's goals, set new goals and obtain support as needed. Your teacher or Family Service Worker can provide you with referrals to one of our community partners, emergency assistance, and other support services. Our goal is to empower parents/guardians to connect with resources to meet their goals and support families in achieving self-sufficiency.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260E, "Minnesota Maltreatment of Minors Act" mandates professional, preschool and childcare staff to report known or suspected child abuse to the appropriate Human Services Department in their respective county. This law requires that all people who work with children report known or suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of children to the local police and/or local human service department. **All Head Start Staff are mandated reporters; therefore, any staff suspecting child abuse or neglect is required by law to report it.**

Due to our commitment to the safety of children, it is Head Start's policy to not release children to parents or guardians who are intoxicated. If you are under the influence of any mind-altering substance, we will not release your child to you. Please make arrangements to have a safe ride for your child to and from school. If needed, the police will be called if a parent/guardian is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs when attempting to drive with a child.

In Minnesota, leaving a child alone in a vehicle is child endangerment. By leaving a child in a vehicle, you may receive a citation. All staff at Head Start are mandated reporters. If we see that a child is endangered (not safe), we are required to report the incident to the police and possibly child protection. It is also illegal to leave your car running when you are not in it (unless you have an electric start). If you have questions, please contact your Family Service Worker. You must also supervise your child at the Head Start center during any time their class is not in session, or the child is in childcare.



Emergency Assistance and Crisis Intervention

Family and Community Partnerships staff help families who experience emergencies and/or a crisis in their lives by referring them to appropriate resources. Family and Community Partnerships staff act as a liaison between Head Start families and the community by informing parents/guardian of available community services and resources, such as financial assistance programs, education and employment opportunities, information on public housing, and more. Staff encourage parents/guardians to use the services that are available to them.

Mental Health Services

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood through adulthood. Being mentally healthy requires lifelong learning, appropriate social behavior, good physical health, and the ability to cope with all of life's circumstances, the highs and lows, and the joys and the sorrows. Conscious Discipline is used to promote positive relationships and self-esteem in children and in staff. Conscious Discipline is a social emotional and self-regulating learning platform that helps empower adults and children to handle conflict.

The overall goal of Head Start is to help children and families effectively deal with both their present environment and later responsibilities in school, work and life. We help children and families access mental health services through our partnership with Fraser Mental Health Services (the program's mental health consultant agency) and referrals to other community resources. The program's licensed mental health consultant visits each classroom throughout the year to complete Classroom Observations. These observations help staff meet and better integrate the social and emotional needs of all children in the classroom by strengthening teacher skills in mental health supports and behavior management through recommendations and strategies. Mental Health observations for individual children are different than Classroom Observations and will only take place for individual children following a Fraser referral with specific written permission from parents. Please contact your Family Service Worker for more information. We welcome parents/guardians who may want to discuss concerns about their child or family matters.

Parent Education - ReadyRosie

To encourage parent/guardian education, our Head Start program uses a researched-based parenting curriculum that builds on parent/guardian' knowledge called ReadyRosie. ReadyRosie uses 'modeled moment' English and Spanish video playlists that are delivered to families via text and/or email throughout the school year. These videos provide ideas and activities to turn everyday moments with your child into teachable moments. The videos also provide resources for families. We encourage all Head Start parents/guardians to participate in ReadyRosie. More information on how to sign up will be shared at enrollment and throughout the year.



Order of Protection, Custody and Restraining Orders

The rights of both parent/guardians are recognized unless we have a copy of a court order or legally binding document that specifically revokes or limits those rights. A person is identified as a 'parent/guardian' if their name is on the Head Start application or if the applying parent/guardian placed them on the Child Emergency/Authorization to Release Form with the relationship listed as 'mother' or 'father'. If there is an Order of Protection (OFP), Custody Papers or Restraining Order involving a Head Start child, Family and Community Partnerships needs a complete current copy of the paperwork so that Head Start can honor the order. If changes occur with the order or they expire, we will need a new or updated copy so that we can continue honoring the order. Any court documents obtained by Head Start regarding a child cannot be re-released, even to the parties involved. Please contact the county's courthouse to obtain a copy. If someone is in violation of an order, we will notify the proper authorities as stated on the order. All of this information is maintained in a confidential file and is for the protection of the Head Start child. Please call Family and Community Partnerships at (763) 783-4371 if you have any questions or concerns.

Attendance/Withdrawal Policy

Attendance

Please remember to call your child's teacher to inform them if your child will be absent.

We believe that the benefit of regular attendance is important to families, staff, programs and the communities at large. For children and families, regular attendance establishes a pattern that assists the family in meeting their obligations.

Young children are at their best when following a routine and knowing what to expect. Many of the skills that children learn during school require repetition, which is enhanced by being in school regularly. As a parent/guardian, you can help your children get the most out of the time they spend in Head Start by getting them to the center each day on time and/or being at home for each home visit.

Performance Standards require Head Start to follow up with families if a child is absent and the teachers have not received a call within one hour of class start time. Please call your child's teacher if absent.

Consistent daily attendance in our program is very important. Federal guidelines require us to monitor and report daily attendance and that our program maintains an attendance rate of at least 85%. Our program must also identify children with a pattern of absenteeism that puts them at risk of missing 10% of program days. **Therefore, continued absenteeism may result in an attendance plan, an alternate program option or your child being dropped from the program or placed on the waiting list.** If you receive transportation, please turn the stop/go sign to the green side when your child is going to be absent. This tells the driver to continue on to the next stop (See Transportation section for more details).



Inform your child's Teacher or Family Service Worker if:

- You are planning to move or take your child out of the program. A copy of your child's file will be provided upon request.
- Your address, phone number or email address changes (a new form will need to be completed).
- The address or phone numbers for your emergency contacts change (a new form will need to be completed).

Center-Based Absence Procedure

- Prior to the scheduled class start time, call the Head Start center and inform the teacher or a Family Service Worker that your child will be absent, explaining the reason why and when your child will return to school.
- If your child is not in attendance and we have not heard from you within an hour after class starts, a staff member will call you.

- Head Start staff and parents/guardians will work together to overcome obstacles that are preventing the child from attending Head Start classes regularly.
- If you plan to keep your child out of the center for a period of time, let your Family Service Worker know. A child's slot must be considered vacant after 30 days of absence.
- Please schedule doctor and dental appointments during non-classroom hours, whenever possible.

Home-Based Absence Procedure

- If your child will not be home for the visit or if someone in the family is ill, call the Head Start office or contact your Home-Based teacher at least two hours prior to your home visit and inform the staff that you will not be home or that someone is ill, and that the Home-Based Teacher should not make the visit.
- If, for some reason, you are unable to be home for your scheduled visit (and are unable to notify the office), the Home-Based teacher will leave a note, and it is your responsibility to call the office and give the reason for the missed visit.
- If you miss three consecutive visits or have irregular attendance, your Family Service Worker or Home-Based teacher will contact you by phone or in writing and additional attendance strategies will be implemented.

Home-Based Teacher Cancellation Procedure

- If the Home-Based teacher is absent on a scheduled home visit day due to illness or emergency, the visits will be rescheduled. The Home-Based teacher or Head Start staff will notify the parents/guardian.
- If the Home-Based teacher is absent on a center socialization day, a substitute will be available.
- If the home visit is missed due to bad weather, whenever possible, the Home-Based teacher may drop off teaching materials sometime during the week of the missed visit.

Chronic Absenteeism Procedures

Your child may be dropped from, or transferred to, the waiting list of the Head Start program if they become chronically absent and efforts to reengage have been unsuccessful and alternate program options have been declined. The program defines chronic absenteeism in the three following ways: 1) a child is absent for two consecutive days with no contact and staff have been unable to reach the family by phone/mail. 2) Child has persistently been below 85% average daily attendance each month and strategies to improve attendance have been unsuccessful. 3) Child is absent for 30 consecutive calendar days regardless of reason or contact. In these situations, a child's slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Policies and Procedures

Dropping Off Your Child at the Center

It is required that parents/guardians make contact with the teacher when dropping off a child, never leave a child at the door of the center. By doing this, we will know that each child will arrive safely at his/her classroom. **Please Note: All visitors at the Family Development Center, including those dropping off or picking up their child(ren), are required to sign in and out of the building and wear a visitor badge at all times.**

Parking at the Coon Rapids Family Development Center (FDC)

Parents/guardians dropping off and picking up children should park on the west side of the building entrance in the visitor parking lot. The area directly in front of the building entrance is designated as a bus loading zone only; do not park or stop in that area.

Parking Lot Expectations

Safety is our Number One Priority! Please...Be patient – our parking lot can only hold so many cars at one time. We have staggered classroom times to avoid parking lot congestion, but there might be some overlapping and busy times. Your patience is greatly appreciated; if you have a parking lot issue, please see staff for assistance.

- Bring all children inside the school with you – never leave a child in a car unattended even for a minute during drop off or pick up.
- Have all children properly secured in appropriate child-age car seats. If you need help getting a car seat, please see your Family Service Worker for resources.
- Hold your children’s hand in the parking lot, while walking into and out of the building.

Release of Children

Upon the enrollment of your child, you are asked to complete a "Child Emergency/Authorization to Release Form" indicating the names of adults to whom you authorize program staff to release your child to from the center or off the bus. Only parents/guardians may complete or make changes to this authorization. A person is identified as a ‘parent/guardian’ if their name is on the application or if the applying parent/guardian placed them on the Child Emergency/Authorization to Release Form with the relationship listed as ‘mother’ or ‘father’. The rights of both parent/guardian (as previously described) are recognized until we have a copy of a court order or legally binding document that specifically revokes or limits those rights. **We will not release your child to any person whose name is not on the form.** If there is a change on the emergency/authorization form, please contact the center or teacher immediately to complete a new form. **All changes must be documented on an updated Child Emergency/Authorization to Release Form; we will not accept changes made over the phone. A new release form will need to be completed in person or via email by DocuSign.** For children’s safety, we must have this form completed and current before your child can attend the classroom and/or ride the bus. **Identification is required** before releasing a child. **There is no exception to this policy.**

Late Pick-Up Policy

Parent/Guardian will sign a Child Attending/Pick Up-Drop Off Contract prior to their child starting in a Head Start center. The parent/guardian or an authorized adult must arrive **at the time class begins and pick up the child when the class ends.** If a child is picked up late, a warning will be given reminding them of our late pick-up policy. If a child continues to be picked up late a meeting with the Family Service Worker must occur to discuss resources and possibly alternate program options. If consistent on-time pick up cannot be established, a child may be transferred to another program option that may better fit the needs of the family or withdrawn from the program.



If parents/guardian cannot pick up their child on time, they must do the following:

- Arrange for an authorized adult listed on the Child Emergency/Authorization to Release form to pick up the child from the bus or at the center at the classroom end time.
- The person picking up the child **must** be on the Child Emergency/Authorization to Release Form and provide photo identification in order to pick up.

If the parent/guardian or authorized adult is late picking up their child from class, or if a child is returned to the center on the bus, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian and emergency contacts, if staff are unsuccessful in reaching an authorized adult, the local police will be notified.

Head Start Transportation



The goal of Head Start transportation is to provide safe transportation and ongoing safety education for the children and the families enrolled in the program is to give your child a safe and happy bus ride. Because your child's safety is very important to Head Start, the following policies have been put in place. Transportation is an enhancement of our Head Start program and transportation to and from Head Start is not required by federal or state guidelines. We will do our best to provide a LIMITED amount of transportation to as many children and families as possible within our 60-minute limit. Attendance on buses is taken daily and monitored weekly. Busing is a privilege for children and parents/guardians. If the rules for buses are not followed, buses will be taken away and a parent/guardian will have to drive the child to and from school.



- **State licensing for Head Start busing requires an authorized person (12 years or older) with appropriate identification (ID) to meet the bus and take the child off the bus.**
- Please be patient when the bus may be running later than usual. The bus schedules can vary 20 minutes either way. Reasons a bus could run late are because of bad weather, road construction, absent children from the route and to any route changes that may have been made in busing, new children starting and others who have dropped from the program.
- Parent/guardian must be aware that their child may arrive home any time after class is dismissed. If several children are out sick, your child could be the first child dropped off.
- If an authorized person does not meet the bus, the driver will continue on the route and return the child back to the Head Start Center. The parent/guardian(s) will then have to come and pick the child up **and must have an appropriate ID.** Head Start staff are not available to watch your children before or after classroom end times. (Please see the Late Pick-Up Policy, page 32).
- Busing privileges may be removed temporarily or permanently if your child(ren) repeatedly needs to be returned to the center due to no authorized person at the home at the time of drop off or due to persistent behavior issues. A transportation supervisor will reach out to you to work with you and notify you if transportation will be paused temporarily. Continued temporary transportation losses may result in the busing privilege to be removed for the remaining of the program year. Guidelines on transportation losses that may be enforced on a case-by-case basis are listed in the busing contract that parent/guardian sign prior to a child receiving services, an example of this contract is listed on the following page 34.
- If your child loses busing privileges, you will have to drive them to school.
- **Minnesota Law 169.68 will not allow Head Start to honk the horn. Parent/guardian must be ready and waiting for the bus.**
- **For the safety of the children and to ensure their safe arrival and return, NO LAST MINUTE OR DAY-TO-DAY CHANGES WILL BE ALLOWED.** Parent/guardian must contact the Head Start Transportation Department at least seven days prior to any bus schedule changes. Changes in the bus schedule must be permanent and within the bus area. Remember that changes in the child's bus schedule can change the child's classroom time and teacher. We may not be able to accommodate all schedule changes.
- **Please be aware that we may call the police or Child Protection to help locate the parent/guardian if a child has not been picked up from school within a reasonable time.**

Transportation Policy

- Head Start follows the Minnesota car seat law and guidelines. For more information see the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/safe-driving-information-and-laws/driver-and-passenger-safety/cps>.
- An authorized person (12 years or older) with an appropriate identification (ID) must meet the bus and take the child off the bus. (Picture ID may be requested at any time. Please note that you may have a substitute driver and a monitor so they will request to see an ID. The transportation staff are required to ensure the highest level of safety is taken for your child.)
- **Report all changes in address, phone number, work number, emergency contact numbers and/or childcare provider to your child's teacher or the Family Service Worker.** A new Child Emergency/Authorization to Release form will need to be completed by the parent/guardian. All of this information is kept confidential. Address changes must be given to the Transportation office at least seven (7) days in advance. Drivers and teachers cannot make changes to the bus routes or schedules. Busing changes must be within the busing area.
- Behavior Problems: In the Bus Rules section, we have listed rules for your child to follow. If they are not followed, the driver will write a report about the problem(s). If the problems are caused by your child and are a hazard to the driver and other children, your child may lose busing privileges, and you will have to drive them to and from Head Start.

- Toys, food, candy or animals are not allowed on the bus or in the classroom. This is for the safety of the children, staff and volunteers.
- There is NO SMOKING OR VAPING allowed on or near the bus at any time.
- Use **Stop** and **Go** signs. There is a red and green "stop and go" sign in your busing packet. Put it in a door or window where the driver can see it. If you cannot place the sign where the driver can see it, discuss this with them to decide what to do. Each day place the red "stop" sign facing out to tell the driver to stop and pick up your child. If your child will be absent, place the green "go" sign facing out to tell the driver to keep going and not to stop. If your sign wears out or gets too faded, please ask the driver for a new one.  
- Your child must have a name tag attached to his/her backpack or clothing when going to school during the first four weeks. The name tag will include your child's name, classroom number, route number (if applicable), and the estimated pick up and drop off times.
- Label all jackets, boots, mittens, backpacks, etc., with your child's name and center. If your child loses any of these items, it will help us get them back. Head Start is not responsible for any lost items.
- For the children's safety, bus monitors ride the bus to school each day to monitor the children. Bus monitors help maintain the rules on the bus and assist the driver as needed. This will allow the driver to concentrate on driving and traffic. Remember, the driver is responsible for the safety of every child and will be the "captain" of the bus. The bus is equipped with a two-way radio, a First Aid kit in case of emergency and is equipped with dashcams.
- Children are not allowed to bring medications to school via the bus; parents/guardians must bring medication to school, along with a physician's note.
- During the year, families move, change daycare, etc., so the route and the schedule may change. Remember that the bus can be as much as 20 minutes early or late. An example would be if several children were absent, your child could be the first one on or off the bus. If the bus is more than 25 minutes late, call the office to find out if there is a problem.
- If a child becomes ill while on the bus and the bus is close to the child's home, the child will be brought home, if the bus is close to the center, the parent/guardian or the authorized person listed on the emergency card will be contacted to pick up the child from the center. If a medical emergency arises on the bus, all staff are certified in First Aid and CPR on the bus and all buses are equipped with a first aid kit and several communication tools to contact other staff and families as necessary.
- If the bus driver is ill or the bus breaks down, the office will attempt to obtain a substitute driver. If one cannot be obtained, staff will use the SchoolMessenger phone call system to let you know that there will be no bus for your route that day. Your child can still come to school if you can drive them to class.
- Do not allow children to play unsupervised in driveways, unfenced yards, streets or parking lots.
- Set an example for children by following proper pedestrian safety rules.
- Transportation for Home-Base Socialization Days – when transportation is provided, parent/guardian are responsible for providing and securing car seats for their children birth up to three years old while being transported on any Head Start bus for Home-Base Socialization Center Days and any Home-Base field trips.

Bus Rules

Children are most likely to behave appropriately on the bus when rules & expectations are clearly and consistently communicated. When expectations are clear children will typically understand and act appropriately on the school bus. This minimizes distractions and disruptions. Furthermore, dealing with misbehavior can be draining to bus drivers and monitors; it can also drain other children on the bus. By reducing the frequency and intensity of behavior problems, everyone on the bus enjoys being there more. Please talk with your child before the first day of school and throughout the school year about the following bus rules so that they understand them and how important they are.

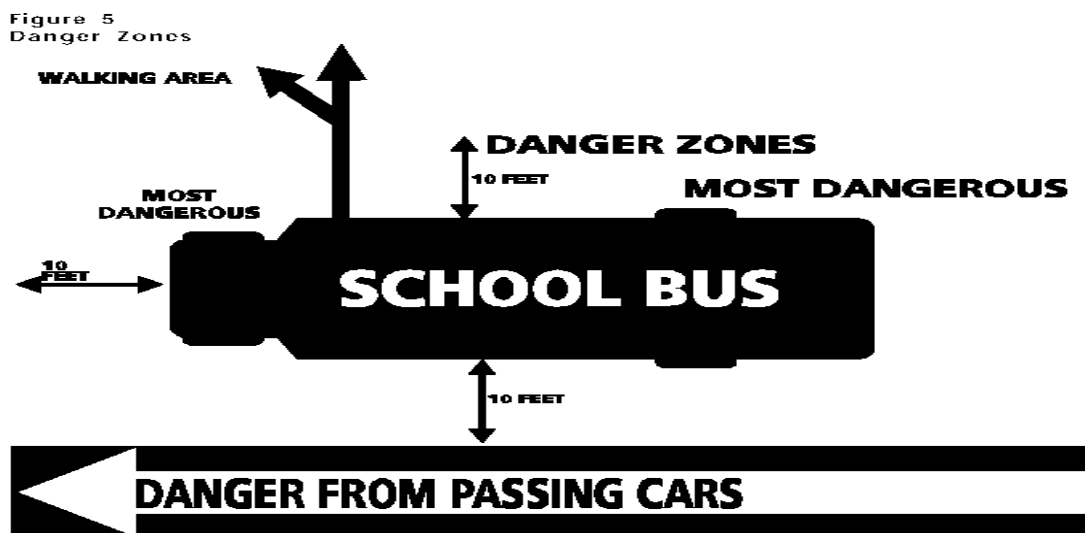
- Stand back from the edge of the street until the bus has come to a FULL STOP. Never move toward the bus while it is moving. After the bus has stopped, walk up to it, get on, sit down in the seat and buckle up. When the bus gets to school and has stopped, walk down the stairs to your teacher/bus monitor, who will be waiting on the sidewalk. NEVER walk in front of the bus or behind it because the driver may not be able to see you.
- **EACH CHILD MUST** wear his/her child restraint system on the bus. Children who continually remove their restraint system will not be allowed to ride the bus. They will need to learn how to put them on and keep them tight. The child restraint systems meet the code of Federal Regulation Title 49, sections 571.213 and Minnesota Statute 169.686.
- Children must keep their hands, arms, legs and feet to themselves. Children must never hit anyone, kick anyone or throw anything while on the bus. Continued unsafe behavior may result in a loss of busing privileges.
- Children can talk on the bus, but they need to talk quietly to the friend next to them. If all the children talk softly, the bus driver will not be distracted and can pay closer attention to the traffic.
- Children are not allowed to eat any food while on the bus, including gum, candy, breakfast, lunch or snacks.



Danger Zones

- Emergency Exits: Let's hope we never have to use them, but just in case, all passengers should always know where the exits are. All children and families are provided with Bus Safety Training, which includes emergency bus evacuation procedures and practice.
- Children should always stay 10 feet back from the bus!
- Danger Zone (front): It's never safe to walk in front of the bus. The bus driver may not see you. Never walk in front of the bus.
- Danger Zone (sides): Remember, never walk close to the side of a bus.
- Danger Zone (behind bus): Never Walk behind a school bus. The driver will not be able to see you.
- **Walking Area:** When getting off the bus, make sure you walk (not run) five or more steps away from the door and go immediately into your school or house. Never go back to the bus for anything. If you have something left, tell your teacher or parent/guardian.

BIG RULE: Stay 10 feet back from the school bus



Busing Contract

The busing contract is signed by all parent/guardians prior to busing being provided.

State Licensing requires that an **authorized person (12 years or older) with an appropriate ID** must meet my child at the bus to take the child off.

- An authorized person on the emergency form must be present to take the child off the bus. **Head Start will enforce this rule without any excuses or exceptions.**
- MN Law 169.68 does not allow the driver to honk their horn; therefore, parents/guardian must be waiting for the bus.

The following procedure is in place if I receive a notice from Head Start; my child received a behavioral report on the bus and/or has been returned back to school, or the parent/guardian was called more than once during a drop off per school day.

- **First Notice:** Child will lose their busing the next school day.
- **Second Notice:** Child will lose their busing for the following two (2) school days.
- **Third Notice:** Child will lose their busing for the following three (3) school days.
- **Fourth Notice:** Child will lose their busing for the following four (4) school days and will need to meet with the Transportation Coordinator.
- Head Start bus service is a privilege and must not be abused by my child or myself.

I understand that if this happens, my child will lose transportation according to the notice(s) received **and I will have to drive my child to and from the center, no exceptions/no excuses. This is for your child's safety.**

For my child's safety, an authorized person or I will take my child out to the bus and ensure he/she is correctly put in the restraint system.

Home-Base Center Socialization Days – parent/guardian are required to provide and secure car seats on the Head Start bus while being transported for Home-Base Center Socialization Days and on field trips for children birth to three years old.

My child must:

- learn to use and wear his/her restraint system at all times while on the bus.
- If my child does not wear the restraint system, Head Start can refuse to transport him/her to/from school/home/daycare.
- behave in a way that does not pose a threat to themselves, other children or staff, the parent/guardian or designee may be required to ride the bus with the child.
- follow the bus rules as stated in the Parent/guardian Handbook and on the bus

The bus **pick-up time can vary 20 minutes early or late.** The **DROP OFF TIME can be any time after class is dismissed.** I agree to have my child ready at the bus stop. I understand that if I do not have my child at the bus stop on time **the bus will not wait for him/her.**

Head Start will not allow temporary changes to my child's bus schedule. The change would need to be permanent or long term and within the existing routes. Changes cannot start until the following week of submission.

If a bus route is cancelled, I will need to transport my child to and from Head Start.

Emergency Weather Closings

Head Start will also close when hazardous road conditions exist due to severe weather, when the public schools close or the state governor closes schools. If any of the Head Start centers close due to severe weather, the notice will be displayed on local television stations: Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 9 and Channel 11. The announcements start around 6:00 am. In the event that your child's center closes early, the bus will drop him/her off at the regular bus stop. Please be waiting to meet the bus early. Sometimes buses can run a little late in poor weather conditions as well, please be waiting for your child so the route can continue as seamlessly as possible.

Whenever possible, Head Start will also send a phone notice to parents/guardian to let you know that your child's classes are canceled or will be closing early by using the SchoolMessenger System. Please keep your primary phone number up to date with the program. The call will show up on caller ID as coming from Anoka County Head Start 763-783-4300 and will be an automated recorded message. Detailed information will be provided in the message. In addition to the announcement on the radio or television and the SchoolMessenger message, below

is a list of situations where your child's center will be closed. This information is generally updated by the individual school districts and will appear on their websites and/or on the television stations.

Closing Guidelines

- The Anoka County Family Development Center (FDC), Crayon Box and Anoka County Home-Based Program will be closed when the Anoka-Hennepin School District is closed due to weather, or it is announced that Anoka County Head Start is closed.
- The Forest Lake Center will be closed when Forest Lake School District is closed due to weather or when it is announced that Washington County Head Start is closed.
- The Newport Center will be closed when the South Washington school district is closed due to weather or if it is announced that Washington County Head Start is closed.
- The Oakdale Center will be closed when Independent School District #622 is closed due to weather or if it is announced that Washington County Head Start is closed.



Days When There are No Classes Scheduled

There will be days when there are no classes or home-visits in session that are not due to weather related reasons. Please refer to the Parent Calendar (in this booklet) for those dates. There are times when centers are closed so that staff can attend a training/meeting or if a center is needing to be closed due any other various factors such as no proper heat or water or if any safety building structures are in need of repairs or replacements. If the center is closed for any reason, you will receive a notice. If Head Start has a scheduled closure (e.g. for a holiday), they will be listed in the parent calendar, a reminder notice will be sent at home at least one day in advance and every attempt will be made to notify families by phone call via school messenger.

Pedestrian & Parking Lot Safety

Throughout the school year you will receive information regarding pedestrian safety for children. Children riding a Head Start bus receive training on safe riding practices, safe boarding and exiting procedures, danger zones and how to evacuate a bus. Parent/guardian are reminded about the need to escort your child from the car to the classroom, to not allow your child to get out of the car until you are at their door waiting, turn your car off, remove all children from the car, lock it and take the keys with you. Please always park in the designated parking lots, do not double park, (block other parked vehicles) or park in any labeled no-parking zones, avoid parking on the street, please only utilize street parking if the designated parking lots are full. Always be safe and diligent when walking in parking lots and crossing any street, looking both ways for vehicles and by holding your child(s) hand.

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of the school program and classroom learning and are scheduled when possible. All parent/guardians who want their child to attend the field trips MUST sign a release form for each trip taken. If the form is not completed and returned to the teacher, your child cannot attend school that day. Field trips are for Head Start children only. Siblings will not be included in these activities (please reference the Sibling Policy).

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA)

The ERSEA service area informs families in our communities about the A/W program. Year-round staff work closely with the Transportation, Health and Education service areas in order to enroll children and to ensure we receive all documentation to enroll your child(ren). Parent/guardian, staff and volunteers are encouraged to help increase the Head Start program's visibility in the community. If you would like more information on what you can do in your neighborhood to promote Head Start, call the Head Start office or talk to your child's teacher. Your ideas and suggestions are welcomed to keep the Head Start program visible in your community.

You must always contact your teacher if you have an address change or phone number change, because this may affect the availability of the bus (transportation is limited and is not available in all areas). Any changes will also require that a new Child Emergency/Authorization to Release Form is filled out as well.

Transition to Head Start from Early Head Start

When a child transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start, the family's income will be re-verified. Families will be requested to complete a current application and provide a current document reflecting their income source. If the family income now exceeds the eligibility guidelines, the child may be reassigned as part of the 10% over income enrollment allowed. Every effort will be made to continue services to these children.

Family Learning Center

The Family Learning Center (FLC) is located at the Coon Rapids Family Development Center (FDC). All children enrolled in the preschool program receive hands-on early computer readiness training throughout the program year. Classes at the FDC are arranged on a shared-time schedule. At outlying centers teachers schedule computer time, and children may be able to utilize the computer during free choice. Classes for children in Home-Based programs are scheduled during center socialization times.



Disability Services

According to Federal mandates, at least 10% of the total Head Start enrollment must be made available to children with a diagnosed disability from one or more of the following areas: health impairment, autism, cognitive delays, orthopedic impairment, learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorder, speech/language impairments, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment (including blindness) or other impairments. The Head Start program uses a team approach in serving children with disabilities. This approach is believed to be most effective in determining and meeting the individual needs of a child with a disability and their family. Members of this team may include parent/guardian, Head Start staff, School District Special Education staff and others as needed.



If you believe your child has a learning disability or if you have a concern about your child's development, please speak with your child's teacher or call the Head Start office and ask to speak with the Disability Coordinator; your conversation is confidential.

Early Childhood Screenings

Minnesota State Law requires that all children participate in Early Childhood Screening prior to public school entrance to kindergarten. Head Start screens all enrolled children within 45 calendar days of the child's entry into the program. The screening tool used for Birth to 3 years is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Third Edition (ASQ-3), which is a parent/guardian-completed monitoring tool. The tool used for Social-Emotional screening is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ: SE-2), which is a parent/guardian-completed questionnaire. For children three to five years old, the Minneapolis Preschool Screening Instrument-Revised (MPSI-R) is used. If screening determines a need for further evaluation, this will be done with consent from the parent/guardian.

Kindergarten Readiness & Transitioning to Kindergarten

Helpful ways to engage in your child's education

- Listen to and talk with your child
- Play with your child
- Read with your child
- Volunteer in your child's classroom
- Have open communication with your child's Teacher, sharing any information that might be helpful for your child's development
- Attend your child's Parent/guardian/Teacher Conferences
- Be involved in education planning
- Encourage independence

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

Children are more likely to enjoy and cope successfully with their first school experience if they have already had positive experiences being in a group of children. Children can approach new relationships with confidence if they have already enjoyed receiving guidance from adults outside of the family and have a chance to learn and practice social skills such as joining a group, taking turns or getting help from others. In Head Start, your child will have the opportunity to participate in these experiences. The characteristics that most affect how well a child learns in school are:

- **Capacity to Communicate:** having the ability and desire to exchange ideas and feelings with others either with words, gestures, or movements
- **Self-Control:** the ability to make decisions about how and when to express feelings and control our actions; developing inner control
- **Confidence:** believing in oneself and feeling successful
- **Curiosity:** a sense that finding out about things is good and enjoyable
- **Intentionality:** pursuing a goal with a sense of purpose and sticking with it
- **Relatedness:** a sense of belonging; connecting to others
- **Cooperativeness:** the ability to balance one's own needs with someone else's needs



Empowering you as your child's best teacher is one of many goals at Head Start. Throughout the year, support and suggestions to families will be shared by staff on how to:

- Help children feel good about their play
- Provide information and guidance on recording observations of your child(ren) and how these observations are included in the completion of the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool
- Provide appropriate discipline and behavior management
- Provide preventative health and dental care
- Use the home as a learning environment
- Achieve a successful transition into kindergarten

Transition to Kindergarten

Your child needs to complete early childhood screening to enter public school kindergarten. Head Start screens each enrolled child. Upon authorization from the parent/guardian, the results of the screening are shared with the school district your child will attend. A list of school districts and the cities they serve is on the next page. We will prepare your child for his/her educational journey in kindergarten and beyond and we wish your child success in their education.



School District Contact Numbers

School District/Service Area	Early Childhood Screening	District Office
Anoka/Hennepin School District #11 – Andover, Blaine, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Ham Lake, Ramsey	(763) 506-1350	(763) 506-1000
Centennial School District #12 - Circle Pines, Lexington, Centerville, part of Hugo	(763) 792-6120	(763)792-6000
Columbia Heights School District #13 - Columbia Heights	(763) 528-4517	(763) 528-4500
Forest Lake District #831 - Forest Lake, Lino Lakes, Scandia, Wyoming, Linwood, Stacy, Columbus Township and part of Hugo	(651) 982-8375	(651) 982-8100
Fridley School District #14 - Fridley, St. Anthony	(763) 502-5157	(763) 502-5000
N. St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale School District #622 - North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, Lake Elmo, Landfall, part of Woodbury	(651) 748-7630	(651) 748-7622
Northwest Suburban Integration School District #6078	See District Office	(763) 450-1300
South Washington County School District #833 - Cottage Grove, Newport, Woodbury, St. Paul Park	(651) 425-6175	(651) 425-6600
Spring Lake Park School District #16 - Spring Lake Park, part of Fridley, Blaine	(763) 600-5050	(763) 600-5000
St. Francis School District #15 - Bethel, St. Francis, East Bethel, Andover, Oak Grove	(763) 753-7170	(763) 753-7040
Stillwater School District #834 - Afton/Lakeland, Bayport, Lake Elmo, Lilly Lake Marine, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater	(651) 351-4022	(651) 351-8340

Thank you, we look forward to working with you and your family!

