

NORTH TEXAS PARENT AND CHILD
DEVELOPMENT, INC.

Early Head Start Parent Handbook

2018-2019



Administration Office
500 Flood St.
Wichita Falls, TX 76301
940-687-KIDS
Fax: 940-687-0800

C.B. Fuller Center
500 Flood St.
Wichita Falls, TX 76301
940-687-0885

Jeanne Wakeman Center
1201 E. Scott Ave.
Wichita Falls, TX 76301
940-766-2245
Fax: 940-766-5561

Welcome

EARLY HEAD START'S
MISSION: EMPOWERING
CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
THROUGH EDUCATION



Welcome to Your Early Head Start Family

Management Parents/Guardians

Executive Director
Joshua Taylor
jtaylor@ehswf.com
Administration

Providing a full range of Education and Child Development Services, Health Services, Family and Community Engagement Services, Additional Services for Children with Disabilities, and Transition Services to low-income families is our first priority.

Health Manager
Shameka Christian
schristian@ehswf.com
Administration

EHS provides high-quality early education, health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services for pregnant women and children 0-3 years old. We promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school.

Education Manager
Cheryl Wilson
cwilson@ehswf.com
Administration

Our program is proud to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. We recognize parents as their children's primary teachers and nurturers. EHS collaborates with families and provide parents with opportunities to participate in the program as employees or volunteers.

Social Services
Manager
Andrea Zoet
azoet@ehswf.com
Administration

EHS ensures the individualized needs of children with disabilities. All individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and provided all services under the Rehabilitation Act & Americans with Disabilities Act.

Center Director
Vanessa Brown
vbrown@ehswf.com
J. Wakeman Center

Our program supports successful transitions for children and their families transitioning out of EHS. We ensure the most appropriate placement and service following participation in our program.

Thank you for choosing North Texas Parent and Child Development, Inc. Early Head Start. We look forward to joining you on your child's amazing journey!

Notes

Become a Volunteer

Early Head Start is required to raise a twenty percent (20%) nonfederal share of the total cost to operate our program. The funds must be raised exclusively through volunteer services and donations from parents/caregivers, community members, and service providers in our community.

Volunteers play an important role in our agency. To become an EHS volunteer, simply submit a volunteer application to our main office. Please note, our program is required to complete criminal background checks for all potential volunteers and employees.

Tobacco/Drug Free Facilities

The use or possession of tobacco products by EHS parents and employees is prohibited at all Early Head Start facilities.

Our program prohibits the use of drugs and alcohol at all Early Head Start facilities. No one shall possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any of the following substances on EHS facility grounds, EHS related event or function;

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, without regard to amount, including, but not limited to marijuana, narcotic drugs, hallucinogens, stimulants, depressants, amphetamines, or barbiturates.
2. Alcoholic beverages
3. Any aerosol paint, or any other chemical substances used for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicants, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs prohibited under the Texas Controlled Substance Act or Federal Drug Abuse Prevention Act.

Gang-Free Zone

Gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of Early Head Start facilities is a violation of law and subject to penalty under Texas State Law. For more information regarding a gang-free zone, consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

HOURS OF OPERATION

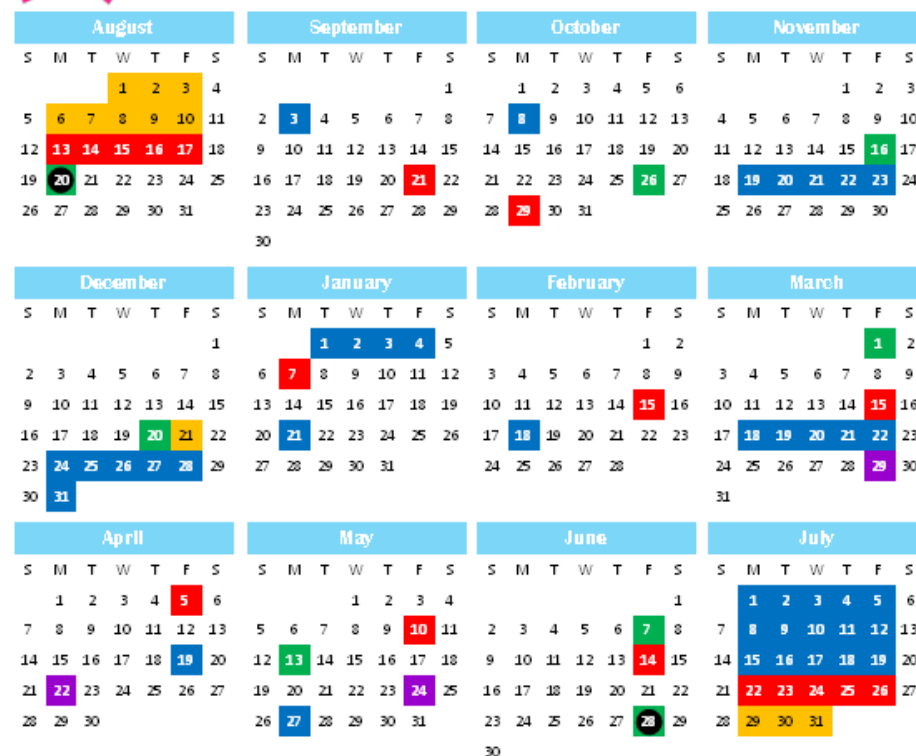
Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
8:00a.m.- 4:30p.m.

Center Hours:
Monday-Friday
7:30a.m.- 3:30p.m.

North Texas Parent and Child Development, Inc.



2018-2019 Calendar



Important Dates				Legend	
August 20	First Day of School	February 18	President's Day	■	Staff/Student Holiday
September 3	Labor Day	March 1	Spring Event	■	Staff Dev./Student Holiday
October 8	Columbus Day	March 18-22	Spring Break	■	Teacher Work Day/ Student Holiday
October 26	Fall Family Event	April 21	Easter	■	Early Release
November 16	Literacy Luncheon	May 13	Open House	■	Inclement Weather Day
November 19-23	Thanksgiving Break	May 27	Memorial Day	●	First/Last Day of School
December 20	Winter Parties	June 7	Transition Ceremony		1,468 Total Program Hours
December 24-January 7	Winter Break	July 3	Last Day of School		
January 21	MLK Day	July 4	Independence Day		

Early Head Start's Mission

Empowering children and families through education.

Early Head Start's Goals

Enhance the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of infants, toddlers and pregnant women.

Support parents as the most important and ongoing teachers and nurturers of their children.

Enhance the bond between parents and their children to promote positive interactions.

Promote and support good nutrition for infants, toddlers, pregnant women and families.

Offer activities and support for fathers and significant male role-models in the child's life.

Assist parents in developing strategies and support networks to achieve their goals.

Program Governance

Our Early Head Start program is governed by our governing body, Policy Council and Parent Committee.

EHS Governing Body, also known as the Board of Directors, is composed of citizens in our community who feel strongly that providing children with an early childhood education program is the only responsible action to take. They are responsible for the agency's oversight of quality services provided to children and families.

EHS Policy Council is composed of elected Early Head Start parents and is responsible for the direction of our agency at the agency level.

EHS Parent Committee is composed of parents of currently enrolled children and is responsible for advising Early Head Start staff, Policy Council and Board of Directors at a local level.

Parent/Caregiver Rights

Early Head Start parents/caregivers have the right to take part in major program policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of our program; to help develop adult programs that benefit our families; to be welcomed and respected by EHS staff and other members of the EHS community; to choose the best way to participate in your child's education; to be informed regularly about your child's progress in our program; to expect guidance regarding your child's total individual development; and to be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education, and the improvement of family life.

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

Early Head Start parents/caregivers are responsible for taking an interest in what is going on in the classroom/home-visit; to learn as much as possible about the program and participate in major program policy decisions; to accept EHS as an opportunity to improve your quality of life; to participate as a volunteer or employee of Early Head Start and to contribute services toward the enrichment of our program; to participate in leadership opportunities within our program; to encourage other parents/caregivers to fully participate in our program; to welcome and respect EHS staff and other members of the EHS community; to offer constructive criticism and evaluate our program and defend it against unfair criticism; and to become active in community programs that improve health, education, and quality of life.

Parent leadership

Policy Council is composed of elected parents of children who are currently enrolled, and members of the community served by EHS. Policy Council is responsible for the direction of our program in regards to design, operation, planning goals and objectives at the agency level.

Parent Committee is composed of parents of currently enrolled children. This committee is responsible for advising our agency in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families at the local level.

EHS strongly encourages parents/caregivers to become leaders and advocates for early childhood education and development.

Child Abuse

Each day more than five children die as a result of abuse or neglect. On average, a child abuse report is made every 10 seconds for a total of approximately 3.3 million child abuse reports annually. The following guidelines have been developed to help keep your child, or a child you care for, from becoming a statistic.

Child Abuse Prevention Guidelines

- Never discipline your child when your anger is out of control.
- Participate in your child's activities and get to know your child's friends.
- Never leave your child unattended, especially in the car.
- Teach your child to use their voice to allow them to prevent abuse in their own life.
- Ask questions; for example, when your child tells you he or she doesn't want to be with someone, this could be a red flag.
- Listen to them and believe what they say.
- Be aware of changes in your child's behavior or attitude and inquire into it.
- Teach your child what to do if you and your child become separated while away from home.
- Teach your child the correct names of his/her private body parts.
- Be alert for any talk that reveals premature sexual understanding.
- Pay attention when someone shows greater than normal interest in your child.

Make certain your child's school or day care center will release him/her only to you or someone you officially designate.

Child Abuse Prevention Training

Teachers will receive the following trainings annually:

- Child Brain Development
- Traumatic Head Injury, formerly referred to as Shaken Baby Syndrome
- SIDs
- Internal Procedures for Reporting Suspicion of Child Abuse or Neglect

Cost/Fee

Early Head Start services are free of charge for eligible families. Our agency encourages parent participation and engagement rather than payment.

Program Options

Early Head Start offers two program options:

Center-Based Program Option offers families the opportunity to receive the full range of services available with EHS, primarily in a classroom setting. Our centers offer a small, 1:4 teacher-student ratio. Center-Based slots are reserved for families that receive public assistance, are students, working, foster parents, or homeless families.

Home-Based Program Option offers families the opportunity to receive the full range of services available with EHS through visits with the child's parents/pregnant women, primarily in the family home and through group socialization opportunities. Home-Based slots are reserved for pregnant women, non-working, working and student families committed to completing 46 visits and 22 group socializations, with their home-visitor, per program year.

Program Curricula

Early Head Start offers scientific research-based curricula aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five.

Our center-based option uses the Creative Curriculum for day-to-day lessons in the classroom. Our home-based option uses the Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum for day-to-day lessons in the home.

We also offer opportunities for parents to participate in a parenting curriculum, to build on a parent's knowledge, and offer parents the opportunity to practice their parenting skills.

Child Custody

Early Head Start cannot legally restrict a non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking up the child, unless the program has received legally filed and executed , current documents. Copies of all documents must be submitted to EHS Center Coordinator/EHS Administration.

It is our program's intent to meet the needs of all children ,especially when the parent may be experiencing difficult situations, such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to our EHS staff and must remain confidential.

Emergency School Closure

Our program follows the Wichita Falls Independent School District's decision regarding facility closures due to inclement weather. Parents are advised to listen to local radio and television stations to keep up with facility closures.

Arrival and Departure

Children enrolled in our centers must be accompanied and signed in and out of the classroom by a parent/caregiver daily to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

Children enrolled in our home-based option must not be left alone and unattended with EHS staff at anytime during or after the home-visit.

No children are to be left unattended in vehicles during arrival and departure. Children must be secure in an appropriate car seat for their age upon arrival and departure. Early Head Start staff must call the police department and complete a child endangerment report when children are not placed in an appropriate car seat.

EHS children must depart from our facilities with designated individuals only, as indicated in child's record/gold card. In case of an emergency, if a child is to be picked up by someone other than the authorized individuals, parents/ caregivers must inform child's teacher in advance. Children will not be released from EHS facilities to unauthorized individuals without parent consent and proper identification.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases

Evidence of injury to the genital area

Pregnancy in a young girl

Difficulty in sitting or walking

Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex

Sexual comments, behaviors or play

Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age

Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

Over compliance

Low self-esteem

Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression

Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children

Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development

Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems.

Child Abuse

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations

Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury

Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body

Lack of reaction to pain

Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior

Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior

Fear of going home or seeing parents

Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days

Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

Obvious malnourishment

Lack of personal cleanliness

Torn or dirty clothing

Stealing or begging for food

Child unattended for long periods of time

Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention

Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Participant Illness

Early Head Start participants that show symptoms of illness may not attend EHS centers, activities and events. Participants showing symptoms of illness may return when symptoms have cleared for a total of 24 hours, or our agency receives proper documentation from a medical provider stating the child is no longer contagious. Upon return, participants will have a general health inspection done by staff.

EHS participants diagnosed with communicable diseases must not return to our facilities until a medical provider provides proper documentation stating the participant can return.

Children and adults that present the following symptoms must be excluded from the EHS centers, activities and events: fever with temporal temperature above 99.9 degrees, or armpit temperature above 100 degrees; deep, hacking cough; difficulty or rapid breathing, or untreated wheezing; unexplained rash or blisters of undetermined origin; vomiting more than once; runny, diarrhea more than once; sore throat with swollen glands; conjunctivitis or pink-eye; infected skin patches and cuts or open sores; untreated thick, yellow pus or mucus draining from eyes; unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes; severe itching or scratching of body or scalp; lice, nits, fleas, or bedbugs; any illness that prevents participants from comfortably participating in daily activities; and any illness that results in greater need or care than staff can provide without compromising health and safety of others.

Children deemed to be showing symptoms of illness by our agency must be reported to parents/caregivers, and must be sent home and picked-up within an hour of notification to reduce risk of contagion.

Head-Lice, Fleas and Bedbugs

Children and adults with lice, nits, fleas or bedbugs may not attend EHS centers, activities and events, and may not return until they are infestation free. Children sent home from our centers, events or activities due to mites must be inspected upon return. If mites are present upon inspection, children may not return to our facilities.

Daily Health Checks

Daily health checks are done on each child as they arrive and throughout the day.

Listen: Greet the child and parent. Ask the child, “How are you doing today?” Ask the parent, “How are you doing? How’s your child?” “Was there anything different last night?” “How did he sleep?” “How was her appetite this morning?”

Listen to what the child and parent tell you about how the child is feeling.

If the child can talk, is he complaining about anything? Is he hoarse or wheezing?

Look: Get down to the child’s level to see her clearly. Observe signs of health or illness.

General appearance

Breathing

Skin

Eyes, Nose, Ears, Mouth

Feel: Gently run the back of your hand over the child’s cheek, forehead, or neck.

Does the child feel unusually warm or cold and clammy?

Does the skin feel bumpy?

Smell: Be aware of any unusual odors.

Does the child’s breath smell foul or fruity?

Is there an unusual or foul smell to the child’s stools?



Confidentiality

From the moment EHS learns about you and your family, all of your personal information is confidential and will not be disclosed to anybody not involved in that confidential relationship. With a few exceptions mentioned below, EHS cannot give this information to anyone including other agencies or professionals, without your written consent. Even after you have left EHS, your personal records remain confidential. Parent/caregiver’s rights to confidentiality is protected under IDEA in Part B and C (federal law.)

*Confidential Relationship exists between parent/caregiver, child’s health-care provider and staff, and EHS employees.

Parent/Caregiver Consent

One of the most important rights you have as a parent is to decide what is best for your child. EHS must obtain written permission from parents/ caregivers before we disclose any personally identifiable information (PII) in child records. Parent/Caregiver’s right to give written consent is protected under IDEA (federal law.)

Before signing any written consent that may affect your child or family, make sure you have been informed, in your native language, of all relevant information, and understand and agree to the activity. Granting consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time.

Early Head Start may disclose PII from child records without parental consent if the program notifies the parent about the disclosure, and provides an opportunity for the parent to challenge and refuse disclosure of information. Disclosure without parental consent but with parental notice and opportunity to refuse, must only be done when the program forwards the records to officials at a program, schools, or school district in which the child intends to enroll/is already enrolled, as long as the disclosure is related to the child’s enrollment or transfer.

Our program also has the right to disclose PII without parental consent to officials within the program or acting for the program in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency during the period of the emergency, to comply with judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoena, to the Secretary of Agriculture or an authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service, and to a caseworker or other representative from a state, local, or tribal child welfare agency.

Secured Room

WHEN APPROPRIATE: A designated secured room may protect children, family and staff from a threat inside the building during situations that make it dangerous to leave. A secured room is a location inside the building that can be locked and/or barricaded to prevent unauthorized entry. In the event of an emergency inside the building, the home base teacher will contact their supervisor and/or the administrative office.

Directed Evacuation

If during home-visits or socialization events, an emergency evacuation is needed, the responsible parties should seek shelter and call their supervisor and/or the administrative office. Shelters include the hospital, police stations, other secure locations and/or following designated instructions from the emergency broadcasting system.

Dangerous Person

A dangerous person could be someone affiliated with the socialization or home-base location, with an unofficial and harmful on-site intent. These procedures should be followed to reduce the altercation of dangerous persons on-site, or at socializations locations and during home visits.

1. Report suspected or actual altercations to law enforcement by calling 911.
2. Staff should notify their immediate EHS Manager and/or if not able to contact, call the Administration Office immediately to report incident or occurrence.
3. Staff will escort non-involved children and family to (if possible) a safe area w/ gold cards (emergency contact) and first aid kits until notification by authority.

Missing or Runaway Child

When a child is not in plain sight (but may still be present (hiding), the signal “code yellow” (for missing child) is given and the following steps are followed:

1. An on-site teacher is designated to cover the socialization while the search begins.
2. Notify immediate EHS Manager and/or if not able to contact, call the Administration Office immediately to report occurrence. (management, building security)
3. Conduct initial canvas of the area; if child is not found, dial 911.
4. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF AND PARENTS -Main office will be the designated center emergency communication hub between parents and staff in the event of a major disaster

Medications

EHS parents/caregivers must submit a completed medication administration form when bringing medications into our facilities. Prescribed and over-the-counter medications brought into our facilities must be accompanied by a physician’s note, and kept in the original container.

Prescribed medications provided by a pharmacist must come with the correct label stating the child’s name, date prescription was filled, prescriber’s name, medication expiration date, and legible instructions for administration and storage.

Over-the-counter medications provided by a physician must come with a documented recommendation from a physician, and should come with child’s name, legible instructions for administration; including minimum time between doses and maximum number of doses.

Insect repellent and Sunscreen

Early Head Start does not apply insect repellent or sunscreen without a physician’s order.

Immunizations and Well Child Exams

Children enrolled in our program must have current immunizations and well-child exam records, including hearing and vision screenings, per state requirements. Early Head Start parents/caregivers must provide our agency with updated copies of child’s immunizations and well-child exams throughout the year.

Well-child exams are completed by the child’s physician at the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, and 36 months.

Medical Emergencies

In the case of a medical emergency, designated staff will administer emergency First Aid and/or C.P.R. until the Emergency Response Team arrives. Designated staff will call 9-1-1 and notify the child’s Parent / Legal Guardian regarding the situation.

Under no circumstances will Early Head Start staff transport the ill child. Emergency Response Team or parent will transport the child.

Safety Practices

Early Head Start trains staff on, and enforces health and safety practices to ensure children are kept safe at all times. Our administration provides ongoing training, oversight, correction and continuous improvements to safety practices regarding EHS facilities, equipment and materials, background checks, staff with regular child contact, staff without regular child contact, hygiene practices, administrative safety procedures, and disaster preparedness plans.

Video surveillance cameras are used in all Early Head Start facilities for the safety of children, families and EHS staff. We take pride in providing the best childcare and learning environment for your child.

Discipline and Guidance

Our program focuses on positive reinforcement and guidance. EHS staff will utilize appropriate discipline for children while in our care in a manner that is individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Caregivers only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Methods include using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior, reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements, redirecting behavior using positive statements, and using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

Early Head Start staff is PROHIBITED from using harsh, cruel, or unreasonable methods of discipline, such as corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment; punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child, subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language, placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed, and requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Office of Head Start

Our Early Head Start program is administered by the Office of Head Start, within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Office of Head Start provides federal policy direction and a training and technical assistance system to assist our program in providing comprehensive services to eligible young children and their families. For questions or concerns regarding OHS call 1-866-763-6481 or email HeadStart@eclkc.info

Child Care Licensing

Early Head Start is monitored and inspected regularly by Child Care Licensing (CCL). CCL protects the health, safety, and well-being of children who attend regulated child-care operations based on their ability to comply with licensing standards, rules and law. If you would like to contact Child Care Licensing concerning our centers, please contact our licensing representatives. Wichita Falls Centers: Gena Barrington 940-235-1707. Burkburnett Center: Kimi Moon 940-249-0180.

Minimum Standards

Minimum Standards can be found in the Center Director/Coordinator's office or online at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp

Child Abuse Reporting

Early Head Start employees are mandated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Our agency is required to allow children and employees to be interviewed by Child Protective Services employees and Law Enforcement Officers in situations pertaining to suspected abuse and neglect. To report child abuse or neglect that occurred in Texas call 1-800-252-5400 or visit www.txabusehotline.org.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Early Head Start receives federal cash assistance to serve healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to your children. Good nutrition today means a stronger tomorrow! For questions or concerns regarding CACFP call USDA toll free: 1-866-USDA-CND (1-866-873-2263) or please visit USDA's website: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd.

Transition Services

Early Head Start supports and ensures successful transitions and the most appropriate placement and services for children and their families transitioning out of our program.

We collaborate with parents and take into account the child's developmental level and health and disability status, progress made by the child and family while in Early Head Start, and current changing family circumstances.

Our Early Head Start program works closely with Head Start programs in our service areas to maximize enrollment transitions from EHS to HS, and promote successful transitions through collaboration and communication.

HEALTH SCREENINGS AND EXAMINATIONS

New employees are required to have, as a condition of employment, a physical examination, a drug screening test, a TB Screen Questionnaire or a TB Tine test, and a Food Handler's Permit. The NTPCDI will prepay the costs for the physical, drug screen, and TB Tine; new employee will reimburse the program by two equal payments to be taken out of the new employee's first two payroll checks. The new employee is responsible to pay for the first Food Handlers permit; thereafter, renewal of the Food Handlers Permit will be paid by North Texas Parent and Child Development, Inc.

A periodic re-examination will be required for any employee based upon the recommendation of their health care provider as a condition of continued employment.

Any high-risk employees will be recommended to take TDAP, HepA, Flu, and Varicella vaccines.

Attendance

Early Head Start encourages families to promote regular attendance, as consistency and routine are necessary when creating a positive learning environment.

Parents/caregivers and participants in our program will need to contact their assigned center staff or home-visitor each day a child/participant will be absent from our centers, or unable to attend their scheduled home-visit. EHS staff is required to call parents/caregivers or pregnant women to ensure children and families are safe when they do not arrive to school or their visit within one hour.

Absences and tardiness due to doctor or dentist appointments, WIC appointments, bereavement/death in family, family emergency, no transportation, sick child, and family vacation are excusable with proper documentation provided. Excused absences do not affect EHS participant's attendance record. Any absence recorded without prior notice and proper documentation is considered unexcused. If a child or family misses three or more consecutive days without contacting our agency, EHS staff are required to attempt to make contact.

EHS participants with identified patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing ten percent (10%) of program days per year must be contacted directly, may require intensive case management, and may be at risk of losing their slot in our program. If a child ceases to attend our program after appropriate efforts to re-engage the family to resume attendance have been made, EHS must consider that slot vacant. Vacant slots must be filled within 30 calendar days.

Suspension

Early Head Start severely limits the use of suspensions due to a child's behavior; however temporary suspension due to serious behavior issues that threaten the safety of others is allowable. Temporary suspensions must be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances.

Children with outdated immunization records may also be temporarily suspended until updated child immunization records are provided to our program.

Education and Child Development Services

Early Head Start provides high-quality early education and child development services, including for children with disabilities, that promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school.

Center-Based option promotes and encourages responsive and effective teacher-child interactions. EHS Home-Based options promotes and encourages secure parent-child relationships and helps parents provide high-quality early learning experiences.

Our program screens children's development using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire within the first 45 days of enrollment. Weekly observations are used to assess children's ongoing development. Early Head Start's routine screening and assessments allows EHS teachers and home-visitors to individualize our curriculum for each child.

Health Services

Our Early Head Start program facilitates the provision of high-quality health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition services to enrolled families, by working closely with our community partners. We strive to collaborate with parents as partners in health and well-being of their children.

EHS periodically observes, screens and completes assessments regarding child's overall health needs and development concerns in a timely and effective manner. We assist families in accessing a source of care and health insurance, ensure child is up-to-date with health appointments, and encourage parents to continue to follow recommended schedules of well-child and oral health care.

Nutrition services are designed to be culturally and developmentally appropriate, meet the nutritional needs and accommodate the feeding requirements of each child, including children with special dietary needs and children with disabilities. EHS proudly promotes and practices family style meals which support development and learning.

Our ultimate goal is to promote children's health and well-being by providing medical, dental, nutritional, and mental health education support services.

Family and Community Engagement

Early Head Start promotes and encourages parent and family engagement in all program services to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. We proudly provide parents with opportunities to participate in our program as employees or volunteers.

EHS collaborates with families in a Family Partnership Agreement that identifies needs, interests, strengths, goals, and identifies services and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability. We conduct family engagement services in the family's preferred language, to the extent possible, and ensure families have the opportunity to share personal information in a safe and comfortable environment.

We collaborate with community organizations for onsite delivery of services, facilitated access to community services that are responsive to children's and families' needs and goals, and community needs and resources, as determined by our Community Assessment updated annually.

Our program strives to provide a welcoming family environment. We structure our services to encourage trust and respectful, ongoing two-way communication between staff and parents.

Home Visits and Parent Conferences

Early Head Start management, teachers, and families meet four times throughout the school year to monitor child and family well-being, and complete family assessments.

Home-Visits take place in EHS participant's current residence, if possible, and are completed in the fall and spring.

Parent Conferences take place in EHS participant's center, or current residence if enrolled in our home-based option, and are completed in the winter and summer.

Family Visits During Hours of Operation

Our program strongly encourages parents/caregivers to be involved in their child's early-education experience. Parents/caregivers may enter our facilities without having to secure proper approval during our hours of operation. EHS is not responsible for lost or stolen items while in our facilities or at EHS functions off-site.

EHS parents/caregivers may join their children in a meal while in our care. We ask for a day notice so that enough food can be prepared. Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack menus for the month are posted around EHS facilities. Breakfast is served at 8:30am, lunch begins at 11:30am and snacks are given at 2:00pm.

Consideration will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their infants while in our facilities. EHS is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers by providing a comfortable place for mothers to breastfeed or express milk, and a refrigerator to store expressed breastmilk.

Dress-Code

Early Head Start requires children and adults that participate in our program to wear completely enclosed shoes (ex: sneakers or boots) and appropriate clothing. Our program encourages outdoor and messy play, therefore we ask that children have an extra change of clothes on hand, and dress in layers appropriate for weather.

Children that participate in our facilities are prohibited from wearing the following due to safety purposes: open-toed footwear, sandals, flip-flops, crocs, house shoes, dangling earrings, jewelry, night gowns, baggy clothes, and short shorts.

Early Head Start is not responsible for any lost or broken jewelry.

Enrollment

All Early Head Start potential participants go through an enrollment process. Parents must schedule an application appointment with the social services department. Parents must provide all documentation that is required. This can be found on our website at www.wfearlyheadstart.org under the Apply for Services tab. Eligibility is then determined and program option is selected by staff. Potential participants will then be placed on a priority waitlist as explained on the next page.

If this procedure changes, parents will be notified via flyer and handbook will be updated accordingly.

Events/Group Socializations

Early Head Start offers events and group socials throughout the year to encourage child and parent social interactions in a healthy, safe, educational, and fun environment. Our agency will keep families updated regarding scheduled events, and encourage families to participate at no cost to them. Parents/ caregivers are responsible for transporting their child during outings.

Transportation

Early Head Start does not transport children.

Pets

Early Head Start does not allow pets of any kind in the classroom.



Eligibility

In order to participate in our program, applicants are assigned points based on family situation. The applicant is then placed on a waitlist until a spot is available.

20 points: Child's age 0-11 months

15 points: Child's age 12-20 months

10 points: Child's age 20-29 months

5 points: Child's age 30-36 months

50 points: Family Income below Poverty Guidelines

50 points: Family is currently receiving TANF or SSI (supplemental security income)

10 points: Within 130% of Poverty Guidelines

200 points: Child in Foster Care-Shelter (CPS has conservatorship)

must have documentation

180 points: Child in Foster Care Home or Kinship Placement (CPS conservatorship) ***must have documentation***

500 points: Family is Homeless-lives in public places ***must complete Homeless Verification Form***

300 points: Family is Homeless-lives with others ***must complete Homeless Verification Form***

40 points: Diagnosed Disability- Current IFSP or IEP

10 points: Previously diagnosed disability

5 points: Suspected Disability-

10 points: Child has obvious medical need

15 points: Child on waitlist previous year

15 points: Child previously enrolled in an Early Head Start

15 points: Child's primary language is not English

100 points: Non-parent Caregiver

30 points: Family Preservation – open CPS case

10 points: Two Parent Home

20 points: Two parents working and/or in school/training

20 points: Single Parent Home

10 points: One parent working and/or in school/training

10 points: Currently a Teen Parent

10 points: Family has 3 or more children

10 points: Pregnancy/Expectant Family

Complaints

Our Goal at Early Head Start is continual improvement. Input from parents, caregivers, and community members can provide the necessary information to correct problems or solve issues concerning program policy or staff members. Any staff member, parent, caregiver, or community member may communicate a complaint to any EHS staff member. Complaint for center base program can be directed toward the Center Director/Coordinator.

Our agency records all complaints received on the Comment and Complaint form and submits all complaints to EHS management for resolution. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, it will be taken to our Policy Council and Board of Directors. It should be noted that the Board of Director's decision is final.

Individuals interested in obtaining a copy of the Complaint Policy may request one. Comment and Complaint forms are available at all EHS facilities or online at www.wfearlyheadstart.org for parents, caregivers, and community members.

Civil Rights

Our agency will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. If an individual feels that their rights in relation to non discrimination were violated, they will be given a civil rights complaint form. This form includes addresses and phone numbers to which they may directly submit their complaint in writing, in person, or by telephone. An individual may also submit a written or verbal complaint to North Texas Parent and Child Development, Inc. Early Head Start. If an individual wants to file a formal verbal complaint, EHS staff will complete the civil rights complaint form in cooperation with the individual. Staff will send all complaints to the Executive Director, who will forward the complaint to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission Office of Civil Rights within 3 working days. Complaints will be addressed no later than 90 days of the date the complaint was filed.

Any person alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or religion has the right to file a complaint of the alleged discriminatory action with the management staff of this agency and/or the Civil Rights Department of the Texas Department of Human Services. P.O. Box 1490310, Austin, Texas 78714-9030. All complaints must be filed no later than 180 days from the date of the alleged discriminatory action. Under special circumstances this time limit may be extended by the Civil Rights Department.