

Highland Rim Economic Corporation
Highland Rim Head Start
PO Box 208
Erin, Tn. 37061
931.289.4135

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you into the Highland Rim Economic Corporation and Head Start family. We are very pleased to have your child enrolled in our program.

The role of parents in Head Start is critical to the success of our program. You are recognized as the primary educator, nurturer, and advocate for your child. Listed below are four major ways that you can participate in Head Start.

Volunteer: You will be encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, on field trips, and for other center jobs. Working parents can volunteer for at-home projects and night and weekend events.

Observer: You will be welcomed at the center at any time to observe your child as he/she learns through work and play each and every day.

Decision Maker: You will become a member of the Parent Committee and help make decisions concerning your child's center. You may be elected as a Policy Council member or be asked to serve on other program committees.

Partner: You and program staff will work together as partners to ensure high quality services are provided to your child and family.

We challenge and encourage you to become involved in the Head Start Program. Please take time to get to know your child's staff, visit your child's classroom, attend Parent Committee meetings, and become a visible and active member of our program.

We have an open door policy. We cannot promise we will have all the answers but we do promise if you have a question we cannot answer immediately, we will do our best to find the answer for you or direct you to someone who can.

Sincerely,

Julia Presson, Executive Director
Donna Redman, Head Start Program Director
Cindy McClure, Education Manager
Sheena Lewis, Health Services Manager
Tawny Mullen, Family Service Manager
Jill Ortogo, Operations Manager
Carolyn Averitt, Facilities, Maintenance & Transportation Manager

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ABC's for Parents

A – Active: Be active!

Be active in your child's life. Read to, play with, enjoy, praise, set limits, learn with and occasionally act silly with your child. Be active in center events and at parent committee meetings. Continue to be active in your child's life after he or she leaves Head Start and enters the school system.

B – Be: Be there!

Be there for your child when he or she is hurt or sick, happy or sad, excited or disappointed. Be there to bring and pick up your child on time. Be there when he or she plays ball or other sports and for center and school events. Be there to give your child your undivided attention and listen to what he or she tells you. Be the "go to" person for your child.

C – Communication: Communicating is both talking and listening

Continually talk and listen to your child. Really hear what he or she has to say. Communicate with your child's teacher, family advocate, bus driver, center employees and other parents daily. We believe in family partnerships and sharing information. When your child enters the school system, communicate with and get to know his or her teacher, the principal and other school workers.

D - Direct: Direct and guide your child from birth to becoming a happy, well adjusted child and adult.

Show your child by example that reading and education are important. Direct your child to understand and respect sound values and honesty and to accept others who are different. The direction your child takes as an adult depends on you.

E - Enjoy: Enjoy your child.

At this age children ask many questions, talk a lot and are open to new ideas. This is the time to enjoy and rejoice with your child as he or she grows and learns. Ignore the little things and enjoy these fleeting moments with your child. You and your child will always remember the fun times but not the dusty floors.

F - Family: Head Start is a “family affair”.

Our large family includes parents, children and program employees. Just as in your own family everyone has a role to play and jobs to do. Working together we can be a happy, well functioning family where parents, children and staff can grow and learn. Build memories for your child through strong family connections. Welcome to the Head Start family!

G - Give: Give unconditional love to your child.

The most important need of a child is for someone to love him or her through the good times and bad times. Give you child structure, stability and directions and love him or her with all your heart.

H - Home Visits: You will receive home visits from your family advocate and your child’s teacher.

These home visits will be a time to talk about your family, your child and the program. The family advocate and teacher will make an appointment with you before each home visit. They will be friendly, polite and respect your privacy. Please welcome them into your home.

I - Involvement: In Head Start parent involvement is much more than words on a page.

You will be actively involved in your child’s health and dental care and education. You will be involved in planning activities for the center and making decisions about the program. You may be called upon to serve on committees as part of the Parent Committee or Policy Council. Parent involvement is one of the many things that make Head Start a special place for parents and children.

J - Just: Just do it.

Just take time to spend with your child. Read a book to your child; teach him or her how to have fun and the importance of laughter. Juggle your schedule and attend parent committee meetings and center events. Just remember how quickly this special time with your child will pass.

K - Keep: Keep your child healthy and happy.

Make and keep doctor and dental appointments for your child. Keep your child well fed with healthy, nutritious food. Keep your child well adjusted and happy by recognizing his or her feelings and concerns. Plan and keep a daily schedule and routines so your child will have structure and know what to expect. Keep your child involved in learning and fun activities.

L - Learning: Learning new things is an exciting adventure for your child.

Teach your child that learning is fun and necessary. Let him or her know that learning and education are important to a successful future. Show your child by example that adults can learn something new every day. Be involved in your child's learning now and after he or she leaves Head Start.

M - Male Involvement: One of the most positive and important parts of a small child's life is the daily, consistent presence of a caring father or man.

Head Start welcomes and encourages fathers, grandfathers and other male relatives to become involved in the center and at home with their children. Children who have a father or a responsible male in the home are happier and better adjusted. Fathers, male relatives and step-fathers, do not miss the opportunity to become strongly and actively involved in your child's life. It will be rewarding for you and have a lasting, positive effect on your child.

N - Nurturing: From birth, the main role of a mother and father is to nurture and love their child.

Holding, talking to, hugging, praising and setting limits are all part of nurturing your child. Nurturing and unconditional love will not "spoil" your child. It will give him or her security, self-confidence and the ability to learn and grow.

O - Organize: An organized home or life style prevents chaos and clutter.

Establish simple routines for your child. Organize his or her daily activities. Have a certain time for your child to eat meals, take a bath, go to bed and get up each morning. Organize his or her closet, clothing drawers and toys. Then teach him or her to put clothes and toys where they belong. If you and your child learn and practice organizational skills, you will have time to relax and have fun with your family.

P - Protect: Your job as a parent is to protect your child.

Protect your child in your home and community. Know his or her friends and their parents. Know your babysitter and the visitors to your home. Watch how relatives, neighbors and strangers act toward your child. Are they too friendly and affectionate? Be sure your child uses a car seat or restraint. Look around your home and yard carefully for dangerous conditions that could harm your child. Be especially sure medicine is kept in a high place or locked cabinet. We will protect your child while he or she is in our care.

Q – Questions: Ask lots of questions.

Children learn by asking questions and you can too. Ask your child what he or she did, learned and ate each day. Ask the teacher, monitor, bus driver, or family advocate how your child did – was he or she happy and taking part in learning and playing or quiet and withdrawn? Listen when your child tells you his or her concerns or complaints about a teacher or another child. Believe your child but ask questions. Remember there may be more to the story. Do not always answer yes when your child wants something such as a toy or to visit a friend. It is alright to say no. Ask questions when your child enters the school system. Ask your questions and we will give you the answers.

R – Rest: We all need physical and mental rest.

Teach your child to be still and rest his or her body and mind. Resting is more than sleeping. Learn to turn off the television, video games, telephone, iPod and cell phone and just sit quietly with your child for awhile each day. You may be surprised how peaceful this time will be!

S - Self: Take care of yourself.

If you are sick, depressed or have a lot of stress in your life, you will not have the energy or ability to take care of your child. Take time for yourself. Set aside a time to read or do something you really like. Get medical or mental health care if necessary. There may come a time in your life when you cannot “just work it out” and get over being depressed or sad. Getting help does not show weakness. It does show strength and the willingness to take care of yourself so you can take care of your family.

T - Teach: You are your child's first and most important teacher.

You talked to and may have sung to your child before he or she was born. You taught him or her to babble, smile, talk and walk. As he or she got older you began to teach values, safety, good habits and routines. You are your child's model, mentor and hero. Take your role and responsibilities very seriously. Your child's actions, good or bad, in school and as an adult will depend on the directions and teachings you give him or her as a child.

U – Understand: Understand your child and your job as a parent.

Understand and treat your child as an individual with a personality of his or her own. Understand his or her needs which include unconditional love. Your job is to meet your child's daily needs, prepare him or her for the future and show by actions and words that you love him or her.

V - Values – Your values will become your child's values.

Place a high priority on education and learning. If you teach and show your child how important education is now and will be in the future he or she will follow your lead. Teach him or her the value of hard work, being responsible, honest, and dependable. Help your child learn the value of true friendships, positive relationships and family connections.

W – Wellness: We believe in and support family wellness.

Take steps to keep your family well. Practice wellness through regular physical and dental appointments for all family members. Buy and prepare nutritious meals and snacks. Encourage your child and other family members to exercise every day. Do not allow them to become "couch potatoes!" Set a daily routine for brushing teeth, taking baths and going to bed. Mental health wellness is important too. Work toward having an organized, stress free home and a happy family.

X – Xerox: Your child is not a Xerox copy of another child.

Each child is different and not a Xerox copy of his brother, sister or another child. One of your children may be well behaved and quiet while your other child is very active and loud. Do not compare your child to another child. Love and enjoy your child for his or her special qualities and unique personality.

Y – Young: A young child is eager to learn and explore.

Your child will be young for such a short time. This is your time to teach, mold and have amazing experiences with him or her. Look beyond your every day work and worries and take advantage of spending time with your child.

Z - Zero: We have zero tolerance for employees who do not strive to provide the highest quality of services possible to children and parents.

Our job and mission is to work with you to make a difference in you and your child's life. We have high expectations of you, your child and our employees.

Mission Statement

The mission of Highland Rim Economic Corporation is to empower eligible families toward self-sufficiency by providing a wide range of services through collaboration with local, state and federal resources.

Parent Guidelines & Suggestions

These easy to follow guidelines were written to make your time in Head Start a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

- Physical violence, horseplay, cursing or loud arguments or conversations are not allowed in the center by children, parents or staff.
- A Department of Children's Services Worker, with proper identification, can look at records and interview a child at the center without notifying the parent.
- You cannot spank your child at the center or on the premises.
- Siblings or other children who are not enrolled in Head Start cannot be brought to the center or on a field trip when you volunteer.
- Parents must sign their child in and out at the center or bus stop.
- Parents must not bring food or drinks into the center or classroom except for a special occasion with teacher permission.
- Remember Head Start buildings, buses, and grounds are smoke, drug and alcohol free.
- Take part in the Literacy program and read to your child.
- Volunteer in the center whenever you want to be involved in your child's class and Head Start.
- The formal complaint procedure will be posted on the parent bulletin board. Your Family Service Worker can explain the procedure to you.
- Your Family Service Worker will give you a school calendar for your child's center.
- Do not let your child bring food, toys or additional items to the center or on the bus unless it is for a center activity.
- Send a complete change of clothes for your child and label each item.
- Dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes suitable for running and climbing on the playground. Flip flops or "jellies" are not good shoe choices for outdoor play. Remember children use paint and get dirty during the day.
- Children wearing large dangling earrings or long necklaces could get hurt.
- The Chronic Absenteeism and late policies will be posted on the parent bulletin board. Your Family Service Worker will review these policies with you.
- The Release of Child Policy will be posted on the parent bulletin board. Your Family Service Worker will discuss the policy with you.

What to Send to Head Start

You will need to send a change of clothes in case your child has an accident or spill. Please be sure to replace the clothes seasonally, such as, sending warmer clothes to keep at the center as the weather turns cool, and sending cooler clothes as the weather gets warmer. For the children's safety, we ask that parents not send their children to school with sandals and/or flip flops.

Staff discourages children from bringing toys from home as these items may become lost or broken and problems may occur in sharing the toys. Teachers may occasionally invite children to bring "show and tell" items from home. Please do not send money, gum, candy, etc. to the center with your child. If items are needed for a specific purpose, the teachers will notify the parents.

Discipline in Head Start

1304.22(a)(5)

The use of spanking or other forms of physical punishment, or verbal abuse are not consistent with the program's goals of enhanced self-competence, self-confidence, and self-esteem and are therefore prohibited. Similarly, isolation of a child for misbehavior is not allowed.

Discipline involves teaching. We believe that the following approaches in disciplining preschool children are effective in the center and in the home:

1. Praising the child for appropriate behavior consistently and sincerely.
2. Redirecting the child from inappropriate behavior to another activity, guiding them from the area where their actions are not acceptable into another setting and getting them involved in another, acceptable activity.
3. Talking one on one with the child. Children participate in developing classroom rules with the teacher's guidance. Often a brief one-on-one discussion about the rule(s) and how the rule applies will serve to remind the child.
4. Time-out. Time-out is the removal of a child from an activity/setting only when his or her behavior is harmful to others or possibly harmful to self. Time-out is seldom used, and is a last resort, because the more time-out is used; the less likely it will be effective.

Children who frequently display behavior management problems may be having emotional or physical problems that the program must address. Close communication with parents is important. If you have concerns about behavior and/or discipline techniques you use, discuss these with your child's teacher. It is most helpful to establish consistent discipline rules in the home and in the center, as children need consistency.

In the event of a severe behavior problem with the potential to cause harm to their self, other children, or adults are put at risk, that child may be sent home for the day.

Child Abuse and Neglect

State laws require that anyone, including Head Start employees, who see or know about child abuse or neglect, must report it immediately by calling 1-877-237-0004. Training on "Keeping Kids Safe" will be provided to all parents. Lessons from this curriculum will be used in the classroom. For more information, attend the Keeping Kids Safe training or talk with your Family Service Worker or your child's teacher. Other training on preventing and reporting child abuse will be provided to parents. Remember, if you see or suspect someone at home, the center, or neighborhood is abusing your child, you should call 1-877-237-0004 immediately.

PREVENTION, IDENTIFICATION, AND REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Prevention

Head Start will provide annual orientation to parents concerning the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the need to provide protection for abused and neglected children. A personal safety curriculum is taught to the children throughout the program year. The curriculum currently used is "Keeping Kids Safe." Trainer resources include personnel from the licensing unit of the State Department of Human Services, private consultants, and personnel from the Department of

Corrections. Through contractual agreement with Head Start, the Mental Health Consultant will provide individual consultation for referred parents and staff. The Family Services Manager will be the primary staff member responsible for coordinating orientation and training efforts.

The enrollment selection criteria system approved by the Policy Council offers priority for children who have been abused or neglected, and every effort will be made to identify those families. Head Start will make attempts to retain children in its program who have allegedly been abused or neglected, recognizing the child's participation in Head Start may be essential in assisting families with abuse or neglect history.

Mandatory Reporting

Tennessee law requires any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused to report such knowledge or suspicion to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services. Any person required to report known or suspected child abuse that knowingly and willfully fails to do so or prevents another person from doing so is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Head Start staff will work with the local child protective service agency that deals with abuse and neglect. Staff is not to become a primary treatment program or undertake treatment on their own.

Reporting Procedures-Child Abuse/Neglect

If a staff member suspects a child is the victim of child abuse or neglect, the following reporting procedures will be followed as soon as possible:

1. The staff member will contact the Department of Children's Services immediately and request to speak to a caseworker about suspected child abuse or neglect or corporal punishment. The staff member will also contact the Family Services Manager by phone and advise him or her of the incident.
2. The center staff member who reported the incident will prepare a Department of Human Service Accident/Injury Report and forward the report in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential" to the Family Service Manager within a twenty-four (24) hour time frame of making referral.
3. The Family Service Manager will ensure that a Tennessee Department of Human Services Accident/Injury Report is received from the appropriate center staff member.
4. All Tennessee Department of Children's Services Accident/Injury Reports will be maintained in a locked file by the Family Service Manager. The sharing of information with the Department of Human Services or other official investigative departments will be permitted through hand delivery of records, via mail or electronic FAX. The name of the investigative officer to whom information is directed will be included on a cover letter which identifies the information as "CONFIDENTIAL."
5. If the parent/guardian of the child concerned contacts the center staff concerning this incident, the staff member will not discuss the incident with the parent, but will refer them to the Family Service Manager at the Central Office.

Child Health and Safety Services

Your child may receive the following screenings, examinations and services:

- Physical
- Dental
- Immunization assessment
- Vision
- Speech and language
- Hearing
- Growth
- Developmental
- Lead screening
- Follow-up medical and dental treatment
- Nutrition assessment and follow-up services
- Behavioral Assessment

You will be responsible for:

- Taking your child for a physical examination and dental examination
- Taking your child for follow-up medical and dental treatment
- Asking your Family Service Worker for help to make an appointment or to provide transportation, if necessary

The safety and well-being of your child is important to us. We will work in partnership with you to protect and nurture your child.

Child Attendance Policy

Head Start recognizes the importance of teaching children and parents to establish good school attendance habits and believes this attitude can be successfully established in the program. Parents are asked to notify their child's teacher when the child must be absent.

Communicable Disease/Short Term Exclusion Policy for Children, Staff and Volunteers

A communicable disease is defined as a disease that can be transferred from one person to another person. Illnesses spread because children have close contact with each other and naturally explore their environment by touching and putting things in their mouth. Simple prevention measures, such as hand washing, can reduce the spread of diseases.

Head Start staff will call you to pick up your child if he or she:

- Upset stomach with diarrhea or vomiting;
- Runny nose, sniffles, unusual cough affecting their ability to function in the classroom;
- Fever of 101° or higher;
- Complaints of unusual pain affecting their ability to function in the classroom;
- Indications or signs of a communicable disease (ex: chicken pox, pink eye, etc);
- Lice or nits;
- Scabies;

- Short term injury/accident.

Your child cannot return to the center until he or she:

- Is free of fever or symptoms of communicable diseases for 24 hours
- Feels well enough to participate in classroom activities
- Is free of live head lice and live nits
- Is determined by a medical professional to not be contagious

Exclusion Due To Illness

Children **MUST** be kept home if he/she has had any of the following within the past 24 hours:

- Upset stomach (diarrhea or vomiting)
- Respiratory symptoms (difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing).
- Fever - oral temperature of 101 degrees or more.
- Eye drainage
- Appearance/behavior (child acts or looks different than usual – unusually tired, lack of appetite; confused; difficult to awaken; change in color of skin, eyes, stool, or urine).
- Obvious, severe pain.
- Runny nose, sniffles, unusual or excessive cough affecting their ability to function in the classroom
- Lice or nits
- Scabies
- Indications or signs of a communicable disease (i.e. measles, chicken pox, etc.)
- Has ringworm, scabies, impetigo, or pink eye

The parent/guardian should contact the center and discuss signs of illness with the teacher when calling to report an absence. The teacher will contact the Family Service Worker assigned to their classroom on the third (3rd) consecutive day of absence. The Family Service Worker will follow up with the parent/guardian by phone or with a home visit, along with another Head Start Staff member.

Excused Absences include but are not limited to:

- Head Lice
- Hospitalization
- Incapacitated due to serious illness/injury
- Death in the family
- Receiving medical treatment or therapy at a time when class is in session
- Temporary family situations (Ex: Transportation, Parent/Guardian Illness, Temporary Relocation, and Inclement Weather)
- Court ordered visitations and arrangements between custodial and non-custodial parent/guardian
- Transportation

Program staff will work with families on problems of irregular attendance. A Family Service Worker will contact the parent to discuss the child's irregular attendance.

Emergency Medical and Dental Procedures

1304.22(a)(2)

If a medical or dental emergency occurs, the center staff has instructions for dealing with particular types of emergencies, such as first aid treatment, until medical help can be secured. The lead teacher will deal with the child's immediate need, and the assistant teacher will make parent contact. The Health Services Manager is also notified. In most cases, the parent will be asked to come to the center for the child. If a parent, guardian, or other adult family member cannot be reached, the center may transport the child to secure treatment at the local hospital or dentist's office, while continuing to attempt to locate the child's parents or legal guardian.

Your cooperation in keeping emergency phone numbers current is appreciated. If you have a change in your child's contact numbers, please notify the center teacher as soon as possible. Include the child's name, name of contact person, telephone number and relationship to the child.

Administration of Medication

1304.22 C (Rule 1240-04-03-.10 of Day Care Licensure)

Medication administration will occur only when reasonable attempts have been made to schedule the medication outside of classroom hours.

The following procedures are to be followed for children receiving medication while participating in the Head Start Program:

1. The Health Services Manager will be notified whenever a parent requests that a medication be given in the classroom;
2. *Before* medications can be given, the *Consent for Administration of Medication* form must be completed by the parent/guardian and the medical provider;
3. Medication must be in the original container and properly labeled by the pharmacist. The labeled information must include the child's name, frequency and amount of dosage, name of drug, duration of administration, method of administration, expiration date, storage instructions, date filled, and name of prescribing physician;
4. Staff should never administer medications if they have concerns or do not feel adequately trained. Only appointed staff should administer medication. If staff is confused or concerned about the appropriateness of the medication, they must contact the Health Services Manager who will seek support from the prescribing medical provider;
5. The *Medication Control Sheet* will be used to document the date, time, name of medication, dosage given and signature of person administering the medication and any observed behavior changes, refusal of medication, spills, etc., following the administration of the medication. The *Medication Control Sheet* will also be used to record the amount and date of medication received from the parent/guardian and when returning any unused medication back to the parent/guardian;
6. Medication will be kept in a locked container and stored in a locked drawer or cupboard out of the reach of children. Medication that requires refrigeration will be kept in a locked box in the site refrigerator;

7. The *Medication Control Sheet* will be reviewed with and signed by the parent/guardian monthly or weekly. A copy will be maintained in the classroom files and the original sent to the Health Services Manager.

Tardiness and Late Pick-up

It is recommended that children being brought to school should arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. If for some reason you know you will be late, call the center and let the teachers know. Be aware of your classroom opening and closing times.

Failure to pick up your child repeatedly may result in the suspension of his or her center or bus privileges.

Release of Children Policy

In order to protect your child, please follow these guidelines:

- Provide the name, telephone number, and address of at least three adults who can be contacted in an emergency and/or who can bring and pick-up your child.
- Provide the name, address, and telephone number of your employer or school.
- Any changes or updates to the emergency card must be initialed by the Parent/Guardian.
- Sign your child in upon arrival at the center or bus stop and sign him or her out each afternoon with arrival and departure times. Must be a signature, not initials.
- Release your child directly to center staff, bus driver or bus monitor.
- Drop off and pick up your child on time.
- Provide a certified copy of court orders showing who has legal custody or visitation rights of your child if necessary.
- A copy of the Release of Child Policy is posted on the Parent bulletin board.
- Until the teacher becomes familiar with each parent/guardian/authorized person, an ID may be requested.
- Your child will not be released to anyone not on your emergency contact list.

Nutrition Services

Nutrition guidelines and best practices are listed below:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) approved meal patterns are used for all meals.
- A Registered Dietician reviews and approves menus for all Head Start kitchens.
- Children, teachers and volunteers eat together family style while sharing the same menu, to the extent possible.
- Cultural, ethnic and new foods are included on menus.
- A copy of the daily menu is given to parents monthly.
- Each child receives a nutrition evaluation and a height and weight assessment. A Registered Dietician consultant will work closely with you and your child if he or she is overweight, underweight or has other nutritional needs.

It is recommended that you obtain and submit a doctor's statement before your child enters the center or when diagnosed if he or she has a medical or other special dietary need. The doctor's statement must include alternate food and drink substitutes. Food for individual child's meals cannot be brought from home.

If you have any questions about Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), please contact the following:

Sponsoring organization/center or State Agency: 615-313-4749
Child and Adult Care Services
TN Department of Human Services
400 Deadrick Street
Nashville, Tn. 37243-1403

Mental Health Services:

Training on mental health related issues, including personal safety, are also provided to children and families. Other mental health services include:

- Behavioral screenings and observations
- Referral for family or individual counseling if needed
- Mental health classroom observations and individual child observations if needed.

Disabilities Services

Children with disabilities will:

- Attend a regular classroom in a handicap accessible center
- Be provided special equipment and supplies as indicated in the IEP
- Receive special education services through the local school system as indicated in the IEP.

Parents of a child with a disability will:

- Receive a copy of the Rights of Pre-School Children with Disabilities from the LEA
- Be provided training and support to meet their individual needs

The program will:

- Actively recruit and serve children with disabilities
- Ensure, at a minimum, ten percent of Head Start enrollment is children with diagnosed disabilities

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The law signifies a commitment to fairness and equal opportunity for persons with special needs. Working together, people with disabilities, their families and advocates must use the ADA to make integration a reality for all individuals with disabilities in the United States.

The local Head Start program works with the ADA to provide services and facilities as required. If you are an individual with a disability, a family member or an advocate, do not hesitate to contact the Parent and Training Information Center in your geographic area or the Head Start Health Services Manager. Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP) workshops will be offered during the program year. These workshops are offered at no charge to the parents.

Tennessee Parent and Training Information Center

STEP

712 Professional Plaza

Greensville, TN 37745

Toll Free: 800-280-STEP

www.tnstep.org

Transportation Services

1310.10(g); 1310.17(b)

In the areas where Head Start operates buses, parents and staff share responsibility for the safe transportation of children. **Children in Regular Head Start classrooms are not to be brought in earlier than 7:45 a.m., but no later than 8:30 a.m. Regular pick up is no earlier than 1:45 p.m. but no later than 2:00 p.m. Exceptions may be approved by the classroom teacher in advance.**

Once centers are open, if weather dictates early closure, transportation will be at the bus driver's discretion with permission from the Central Office.

Transportation Safety: Personal Vehicle

The safety of your child is of utmost importance. Please follow the State of Tennessee laws for the safe transportation of Head Start age children.

Children ages 4 through 8, and less than 4' 9" tall, must ride in a belt-positioning booster seat in the back seat of the vehicle. They must use both lap and shoulder belts.

Three year olds are to be secured in a three point hitch child safety seat.

Siblings shall not be left unattended in a vehicle parked outside the Head Start facilities. Negligent behavior will be reported to the Department of Children Services.

Full-Day Option

A full-day option is only for the children of parents who are working, in job training or school. A child whose parent does not meet the above criteria should not be enrolled in a full-day model.

School Closings

Head Start centers, extended care included, will follow the county public school system schedule for closing centers during inclement weather. Parents are instructed to listen to local radio or area television station announcements of system closures in order to know whether to expect center operation during inclement weather.

Field Trips and Parties

1304.21(a)(1)(iii)

Monthly field trips are planned to local events and places representing the cultures of children served. Teaching staff, with parent input, plan field trips to provide an exciting and educational out-of-classroom experience for the children. Parents are needed on field trips to provide the necessary additional adult supervision. In addition to monthly field trips, special field trips will be planned to events and places in surrounding areas.

Each child must have a permission slip before he/she is allowed to go on the field trip.

Parties are encouraged for children to experience the joy of celebration. Parties are not to be used to have an abbreviated daily schedule. They must be integrated into the regular daily curriculum as a learning experience, and will be noted on the lesson plans.

Food for parties/celebrations must be store bought with ingredients clearly labeled on the container or be prepared by Head Start staff, in the Head Start kitchen. This is to ensure that the food has been prepared in the safest environment, licensed through the Health Department and to provide information for children and staff with food allergies.

Parents who attend parties may wish to carry their children home with them at the conclusion of a party. Parents who are unable to attend will not be asked to make arrangements for their child to be picked up early. The daily schedule, including the bus route, will be followed.

Parent Activity Fund

Each year \$10.00 per child is included in the budget for the "Parent Activity Fund". This money is utilized for an activity for parents to enhance the program. The guidelines for receiving the money are listed below:

- The money cannot be used solely for entertainment.
- Program equipment and supplies cannot be purchased with the money.
- The money cannot be spent directly on children i.e., Christmas presents, end of the year trophies.
- Center staff cannot be paid with the money.
- The money can be spent for educational activities such as a dinner for parents with a speaker, class photographs, etc.
- Parents decide and vote as a group at a Parent Committee meeting on how the money will be spent.
- A Parent Activity Fund Request form must be completed and submitted with attached Parent Committee meeting minutes.
- Parent Activity Fund Request must be approved by Policy Council prior to activity.
- More information will come at your First Parent Committee Meeting.

Home Visits

1304.21(a)(2)(iii)

There will be two educational home visits and two Parent-Teacher Conferences per year with each family enrolled. The initial home visit occurs before the child enters the program. Information about the program is shared, and this opportunity allows the child to meet his or her teacher and/or Family Service Worker in a familiar environment. Before the program year concludes, center staff will conduct the final home visit. At this visit the staff will share progress reports, ideas for summer learning, deliver summer home activity packets, deliver folders containing important personal information, and discuss the very important aspect of transitioning the child from Head Start to public school. Parent-Teacher Conferences will be scheduled in the fall and spring to discuss the child's progress and review information.

Parents are encouraged to allow staff to make home visits. Head Start believes the extra effort involved in making two home visits per year is worthwhile in bridging the communication between the center and home.

Confidentiality

1304.51 (g)

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requires a Head Start grantee establish and maintain an information and records system with adequate safeguards and security measures to preserve the confidentiality of personal and private information collected from or about Head Start families and children as a result of their participation in Head Start.

Photographs

Any and all photographic material (portraits, pictures, videos, etc.) of Head Start children cannot be published in any manner without the written permission of the child's parent/guardian.

In the event a child's picture, portrait, etc. is taken and may be published in the newspaper or other publications, the permission to publish form must be completed.

Community/Parent Complaints

1304.50(d)(2)(iv)

Employees of Head Start are expected to treat parents, community volunteers, suppliers, and the general public in a respectful and professional manner at all times. Employees shall refrain from making judgmental or condescending statements concerning families.

If services are initiated with a parent/guardian prior to the end of the workday, he/she shall receive full and complete services until their needs have been met.

When an individual parent or community member approaches an employee with a concern/complaint, the employee should attempt to resolve the concern/complaint at the lowest level. All concerns should be documented on a family contact note form and be sent to the Family Service Manager for follow-up. This will be monitored by the Family Service Manager and reported on at the monthly staff meetings. The Family Service Manager will forward this report to the Head Start Director as well as the Executive

Director before filing in a confidential locked file. If the discussion becomes argumentative or accusatory, the employee should refer the individual to the Family Service Manager.

Grievance Definition

A grievance is a circumstance thought to be unjust and ground for complaint.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. All formal complaints will be forwarded to the Family Service Manager. The Family Service Manager will document on the Formal Complaint Tracking Form who made the Formal Complaint, the issue and what steps were taken to resolve the situation. The Family Service Manager will confer with the appropriate Manager for resolution if necessary. The Formal Complaint will be fully investigated by the appropriate Manager who will complete the Complaint Tracking Form. The Family Service Manager will provide a written response within five (5) working days to the complainant. The Family Service Manager will forward a copy of the Formal Complaint Tracking Form, via email, to the appropriate Manager, Head Start Director and Executive Director.
2. If unresolved, the complainant may file a written Formal Complaint with the Head Start Director. The Head Start Director shall review the Formal Complaint and written response of the Family Service Manager and investigate further. The Head Start Director will provide a written response to the complainant within five (5) working days. If more time is needed to completely resolve the matter, the Director will call the complainant to request more time to investigate the situation thoroughly. The Director will note the progress of the investigation on the Formal Complaint Tracking Form and forward the form to the appropriate Manager, Family Service Manager, and Executive Director.
3. If the decision rendered by the Head Start Director is not satisfactory to the complainant or if the response was not provided within five (5) working days, the complainant may file the Formal Complaint with the Executive Director. The Executive Director will notify the Head Start Director of receipt of the Formal Complaint and obtain copies of written responses. The Executive Director will note the progress of the investigation on the Formal Complaint Tracking Form and forward the form to the appropriate Managers.
4. If the decision rendered by the Executive Director is not satisfactory to the complainant or if the response was not provided within five (5) working days, the complainant may file the Formal Complaint with the Policy Council. The Policy Council will notify the Executive Director of receipt of the Formal Complaint and obtain copies of written responses. The Chairperson will mail Grievance Committee members copies of the Formal Complaint and responses with notification of a meeting, to be scheduled within ten (10) working days from receipt of the Formal Complaint. Involved parties will be notified of the date, time and location of the meeting. Each party of the Formal Complaint may be represented by their attorneys and witnesses may attend the Grievance Committee meeting. Recesses or continuances may be granted by a majority vote of the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee shall make a written recommendation within three (3) working days following completion of the hearing. The recommendation of the Grievance Committee shall be presented to the Policy Council for vote at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Family Service Manager shall update the Formal Complaint Tracking Form with the decision of the Policy Council and forward to all involved Managers, the Head Start Director, and the Executive Director.

5. If the decision rendered by the Policy Council is not satisfactory to the complainant or if the response was not provided within five (5) working days, the complainant may file the Formal Complaint with the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will notify the Policy Council of receipt of the Formal Complaint and obtain copies of written responses. The Chairperson will mail Grievance Committee members copies of the Formal Complaint and responses with notification of a meeting, to be scheduled within ten (10) working days from receipt of the Formal Complaint. Involved parties will be notified of the date, time and location of the meeting. Each party of the Formal Complaint may be represented by their attorneys and witnesses may attend the Grievance Committee meeting. Recesses or continuances may be granted by a majority vote of the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee shall make a written recommendation within three (3) working days following completion of the hearing. The recommendation of the grievance committee shall be presented to the Board of Directors for vote at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final regarding the Formal Complaint. The Family Service Manager shall update the Formal Complaint Tracking Form with the decision of the Board of Directors and forward to all involved Managers, the Head Start Director, and the Executive Director.

Be a Volunteer

Day Care License 1240-4-3-07

Volunteers should be 18 years of age, unless they are mainstreaming from the county school system or to receive credit for a course that he/she may be taking. Volunteers may be used to provide services and supplement the required caregivers or substitutes without payment, but are not counted to meet the adult/child ratios. If counted in the adult/child ratio, or provide services for more than twenty (20) hours per week, volunteers shall meet the qualifications for substitutes.

Siblings or other children who are not enrolled in Head Start cannot be brought to the center or on a field trip when you volunteer. This also applies to the time a parent spends at a Head Start party. Parent Committee Meetings are the only exception to siblings being present in the center.

Being involved with the Head Start program is not only rewarding to you and your child but is greatly appreciated. Time spent in the classroom providing various services, riding the bus, being a field trip assistant, attending parent meetings or workshops, being on the Policy Council or Parent Advisory Committees are ALL important activities in which you can participate.

Donating your time is important, but there are other ways to be involved with your child and his or her classroom, such as making or donating items for the classroom. You will be asked to fill out in-kind forms for the various services and goods you donate to the program; this is because twenty (20) percent of the Head Start program is funded locally through volunteer services and donations, called In-Kind.

Each classroom recognizes a "Volunteer of the Month." The volunteer who has accumulated the most HOURS volunteering is recognized as the "Volunteer of the Month" and will receive a Volunteer Certificate. Each parent may not be available to volunteer in the classroom, with that in mind; school work completed at home counts as volunteer time. Complete an At-Home In-Kind Sheet for parents who complete tasks at home and return this form to the teacher. At Home In-Kind activities should be related to the current lesson plan, see your child's teacher for direction. Every hour spent with your child is a special reward as you and your child build memories together.

Classroom Volunteer

Some General Guidelines:

1. Become familiar with the teacher's classroom rules and daily schedule.
2. Learn children's names and use them. Tell them your name and encourage them to use it.
3. Talk with the children! Ask them questions that require more than just a yes or no answer. Answer their questions.
4. Set a good example for children by speaking clearly to them. Show them your good manners at the table and in the way you talk respectfully to them and others, using such words as "please" and "thank you."
5. When talking with children, stoop to their eye level.
6. Expect the children to treat you as another teacher. Act like one. Should you feel insecure about your role:
 - Watch the other teachers and model your behavior after them.
 - Ask the teacher for guidance if you need it.
7. We do not expect or want you to correct the children except by reminding children who need it of the behavior required (i.e. walking inside, using inside voices, treating each other nicely, speaking nicely to each other, using materials safely, and using good table manners). Refer to the classroom rules for further guidelines. Should you feel a child's behavior needs correcting beyond these reminders, please talk immediately with the teacher regarding what appropriate action needs to be taken.
8. Be as positive with children as possible. Praise them often for good manners and behavior. When you have to remind a child of inappropriate behavior, try to do so positively. Example: "Please walk, Mary." Or "Johnny, blocks are for building things. What are you going to build?" If Mary slows down to a walk, say, "Thank you for walking, Mary." And later in the day when Mary is walking say, "I like the way you are walking to the table, Mary." If Johnny quits throwing blocks, you might say, "Johnny, you are building a very nice _____." or "I like the way you are using the blocks to build." Often if you praise the behavior of some children, others will change their behavior. You need to watch for a change and then praise them for it.
9. If you have agreed to do a task or be responsible for an activity and/or group of children, but for some reason must leave the task or the children, please let the teacher know before you leave so that someone else can be assigned to be in charge of the children or task. Children should never be left unsupervised.
10. Please:
 - Do not ever frighten children by threatening them with spanking, the boogey man, devil, God, no Christmas presents, isolation, or anything else that they may fear. We teach children to feel safe and secure with us.
 - Do not ever say anything to children to make them feel bad about themselves such as they are bad, a sissy, a baby, a scaredy cat, to shut up, etc. Help us to teach the children not to do this to each other. We teach children that they are wonderful, lovable people and that we sometimes do not like what they do but we always like them.
 - Do not ever physically hit a child or allow children to hit or hurt each other. We teach children that we will never hurt them and will not allow them to hurt other children, or other children to hurt them.
 - Do not ever eat or drink anything in front of the children that they are not allowed to have or there isn't enough of for everyone.
 - Do not ever curse, chew gum, or smoke in the presence of the children.

- Do not ever talk negatively to anyone about a child in the presence of that child or other children.
 - Do not ever talk negatively about someone else's child to anyone other than that child's teacher. What you see or hear as a classroom volunteer you must keep to yourself. Should you feel that you have obtained knowledge about which the child's teacher should be aware, please go to the teacher for appropriate action to be taken.
11. If you have agreed in advance to be a classroom volunteer on a specific day and then find you cannot make it, please get in touch with the teacher or center as soon as possible. Teachers make plans for volunteers and need to make other plans if you cannot be there. We would very much appreciate letting us know you can't come if we're expecting you.
 12. No matter what activity you're doing with children, talk with them all the time. Encourage them to talk with you by asking them questions about themselves or what they are doing. Be friendly! Smile a lot, laugh with them. Listen carefully to what they say.
 13. Touch and hug children often. Pre-school children need and want this attention. Sometimes it is a real temptation to pick up and carry the smaller children. Please do not do this unless there is a specific reason for it. We encourage children to be independent.
 14. Please encourage children to do things for themselves at every opportunity (buttoning, zipping, tying shoe laces, opening milk cartons, etc.) then praise them for their effort even if they are not very successful. Practice and lots of it often brings success.
 15. When in the center as a volunteer, you must carry gloves on your person. Ask the teacher for these supplies.

TB Screening/Fingerprinting For Volunteers

1304.52(j)(2) Day Care License 1240-4-3-07(7)(8)(9)

Volunteers (parents/guardians, grandparents, community volunteers) who are in contact with the children twenty (20) hour or more per week must provide Head Start evidence of a negative TB skin test or chest x-ray.

Volunteers may be used to provide services and supplement the required caregiver substitutes without payment, but are not counted to meet the adult child ratios. If counted in the adult child ratio, or provide services for more than twenty (20) hours per calendar week, volunteers shall meet the qualifications for substitutes as set forth in paragraph 1240-4-3-.07(7) which includes physical, fingerprinting and orientation to the Head Start Program.

Smoke Free Environment

To help enrolled children achieve their full potential, Head Start programs provide comprehensive health, nutritional, educational, social and other services. Current national policy requires that Head Start grantees create a smoke-free environment and to eliminate exposure to tobacco smoke by children, staff and parents in the Head Start Program.

Smoking is prohibited at all times in all spaces utilized by the program. This includes classrooms, staff offices, kitchens, restrooms, parent and staff meeting rooms (used in the evening as well as the days), hallways, outdoor play areas, and vehicles used for transporting children. Any designated smoking area should be outdoors. However, under no circumstances should smoking occur in the presence of children.

PARENT BUS RULES

1. Head Start children will be returned to the place from where they were picked up. If there is to be a change in pick-up or drop-off location, notice must be given in **WRITING** at least five days in advance.
2. Parents of children being transported by bus service should notify the Head Start center when their child will be absent by 6:30 a.m.
3. Parents should notify Head Start a week in advance of moving.
4. Children should be dressed and ready when the bus arrives. The driver will not go to the door. If your child misses the bus, it will be the parents' responsibility to take the child to the Head Start center.
5. **When a child is picked up or delivered home, the parent or designated person MUST sign the child on and off the bus.**
6. If no one is at home, the child will be returned to the center, and the parent will be responsible for coming to the center and getting the child. The child will not be transported again until the parent confers with the Head Start Facilities, Maintenance and Transportation Manager.
7. If a child has to cross the street to get on or off the bus, they must be accompanied by an adult. The child must cross in front of the bus. Efforts will be made to prevent children from crossing the street.
8. Only Head Start children and bus monitors will ride the bus to and from the Head Start Center.
9. There is **NO EATING, DRINKING, OR SMOKING** on the bus.
10. Toys should not be sent with the child.
11. We will ensure two adults to be on the bus at all times to meet Daycare Licensing Mandate.
12. All bus passengers will wear seatbelts, and appropriate height & weight restraints.
13. The bus driver may determine if a child is ill at the time they board the bus. A sick child will not be transported.
14. Bus transportation is a privilege. If a child is disruptive or putting others at risk, a child can lose their bus privilege.
15. Parents should be prepared to give the bus driver 15 minutes lead way either at pick-up or drop-off each day.
16. These are the offenses if your child is not at the bus meeting point and/or bus rules are not followed throughout the year:
 - **The First Offense:** If the child is not at the pick-up point after three attempts the bus will not return to that destination until the parent has contacted the Facilities, Maintenance and Transportation Manager.
 - **The Second Offense:** Bus services will be suspended for three days and parents must contact the Facilities, Maintenance and Transportation Manager to have the services retained.
 - **The Third Offense:** Bus services will be terminated for the remainder of the program year. No Exceptions!

IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE RIDING THE BUS, PLEASE CALL BY 6:30 A.M.

NOTES: