

**Tri-County Opportunities Council
Head Start Program
PARENT HANDBOOK**

Educating Children



Empowering Families

TCOC Head Start
405 Emmons Avenue
Rock Falls, IL 61071
815/625-7830
1-800-323-5434
www.tcochelps.org

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*Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, these policies have been modified and provided in a separate COVID-19 Parent Handbook. Please refer to the COVID-19 Parent Handbook for more information regarding current services.

OFFICE INFORMATION

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rock Falls Central Office</u> 405 Emmons Avenue Rock Falls, IL 61071 PH: 815/625-7830 PH: 800/323-5434 Fax: 815/626-3762</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LaSalle Satellite Office</u> 308 N. 30th Road (Civic Road) LaSalle, IL 61301 PH: 815/224-2533 PH: 815/220-1602 or 815/220-1603 Fax: 815/224-2013</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sterling Wallace Office</u> 506 W. 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	

HEAD START CLASSROOMS

<p><u>Rock Falls Extended Day I</u> Wallace School 506 West 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	<p><u>Rock Falls Extended Day II</u> Wallace School 506 West 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	<p><u>Sterling AM/PM</u> Wallace School 506 West 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	<p><u>Sterling Extended Day</u> Wallace School 506 West 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>
<p><u>Sterling Wallace Ext. Day</u> Wallace School 506 W. 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	<p><u>Sterling Wallace FD/FY</u> Wallace School 506 West 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	<p><u>Dixon AM/PM</u> Lincoln School 501 South Lincoln Avenue Dixon, IL 61021 PH: 815/669-5760</p>	<p><u>Oregon</u> 1310 Pines Plaza Oregon, IL 61061 PH: 815-732-6893</p>
<p><u>Polo Extended Day</u> 22027 Polo Road Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815-625-8058</p>	<p><u>Rochelle Extended Day I</u> 14206 E. Flagg Road Rochelle, IL 61068 PH: 815/562-3088</p>	<p><u>Rochelle Extended Day II</u> 14206 E. Flagg Road Rochelle, IL 61068 PH: 815/562-3088</p>	<p><u>West Carroll Extended Day</u> 801 South Street Thomson, IL 61285 PH: 815/259-0151</p>
<p><u>Earlville</u> *Will be served in Mendota until further notice*</p>	<p><u>Lacon</u> 319 5th Street Lacon, IL 61540 PH: 309/246-6398</p>	<p><u>LaSalle Extended Day I</u> 3691 Cougar Drive Peru, IL 61354 PH: 815/322-7537</p>	<p><u>LaSalle Extended Day II</u> 3691 Cougar Drive Peru, IL 61354 PH: 815/322-9267</p>
<p><u>Mendota Extended Day</u> 104 4th Street Mendota, IL 61342 PH: 815/538-3026</p>	<p><u>Ottawa AM/PM</u> Epworth Methodist Church 627 Gentleman Road Ottawa, IL 61350 PH: 815/433-3025</p>	<p><u>Ottawa Extended Day</u> 103 W. McKinley Ottawa, IL 61350 PH: 815/434-1355</p>	<p><u>Ottawa FD/FY</u> Calvary Baptist Church 1931 Pratt Lane Ottawa, IL 61350 PH: 815/433-9750</p>

HEAD START CLASSROOMS (continued)

<p><u>Seneca Extended Day</u> 307 East Scott Street Seneca, IL 61360 PH: 815/357-6461</p>	<p><u>Streator Exp. AM/PM</u> 701 Sterling Street Streator, IL 61364 PH: 815/992-4489</p>	<p><u>Streator Extended Day</u> 701 Sterling Street Streator, IL 61364 PH: 815/992-4489</p>	<p><u>Streator FD/FY</u> 701 Sterling Street Streator, IL 61364 PH: 815/992-4489</p>
<p><u>Spring Valley Ext. Day</u> United Church of Christ 227 E. Erie Spring Valley, IL 61362 PH: 815/663-1420</p>	<p><u>Wyoming Extended Day</u> 110 N. 7th Street Wyoming, IL 61491 PH: 309/695-2064</p>		

EARLY HEAD START CLASSROOMS

<p><u>EHS Ottawa Center Base</u> 627 Gentleman Road Ottawa, IL 61350 PH: 815/433-4126</p>	<p><u>EHS Streator Center Base</u> 701 Sterling Street Streator, IL 61364 PH: 815/992-4489</p>	<p><u>EHS Sterling Center Base I</u> 506 W. 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>	<p><u>EHS Sterling Center Base II</u> 506 W. 4th Street Sterling, IL 61081 PH: 815/669-5904</p>
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IMPORTANT CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Classroom Address:

Classroom Phone Number:

Teacher/Parent-Child Educator's Name:

Teacher Assistant's Name(s):

Bus Driver's Name:

Bus Monitor's Name:

Food Service Worker's Name:

Site Supervisor's Name:

Family & Community Service Worker's Name:

Classroom Hours:

Radio Station to listen for bad weather:



This Parent Handbook is to help the family understand Early Head Start/Head Start's policies and procedures and to aid in questions a family may have throughout their Early Head Start/Head Start experience.

WELCOME TO THE T.C.O.C. EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START PROGRAM!

Dear Families:

We wish to welcome you and your family to the Tri-County Opportunities Council Early Head Start/Head Start Program. It is our desire to make your child's transition into school life a pleasant and rewarding experience. In order to have a successful Early Head Start/Head Start Program, parents and staff must share their talents, knowledge, time and energy. Your child receives the greatest benefit when we all work together. We urge you to participate in the program as much as possible.

The *Important Classroom Information* page of this handbook contains information specific to your child's assigned program and/or option. Please keep this handy and take the time to get to know the program staff that interact with your child on a regular basis. Our program welcomes your questions and input at any time. Below is contact information for program administrators.

T.C.O.C. Main Office

Rock Falls, IL 61071

815-625-7830

Rachael DeSpain, Head Start Director: extension 810

Amanda Schommer, Office Manager: extension 817

_____, Office Assistant: extension 821

Jenine Patty-Anderson, Education Manager: extension 820

Angelica Tintori, Health Specialist: extension 818

Kris Franks, Program Operations Manager: extension 812

Missy Mital, Family & Community Services Manager: extension 816

Lyris Bryan, Disabilities/Education Specialist: extension 819

Sarah Hoffert, Nutrition Specialist: extension 813

Brandy Johnson, Health Assistant: extension 815

Elisabeth Henson, Family Specialist: extension 814

T.C.O.C. Satellite Office

LaSalle, IL 61301

815/224-2533

Brandee Barroso, Health Specialist

Melanie Davis, Health Assistant

Anne Metcalf, Transportation/Facilities Specialist

_____, Family Specialist

Anna Berlinski, Disability/Educational Specialist

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Mission Statement

T.C.O.C. Head Start is committed to taking the leadership role in developing partnerships to build stronger communities.

We create and nurture supportive experiences that lead to successful outcomes for children, families, and staff.

PROGRAM LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

Tri-County Opportunities Council is a community action agency that has been providing services individuals and families experiencing low-income since 1965. The agency is a “non-profit” organization. They are the “grantee” for our local Early Head Start/Head Start Program meaning they assume legal and fiscal responsibility for insuring funds and services are in compliance with all regulations. In addition to the Head Start Program, Tri-County Opportunities Council operates several other programs that assist and support individuals and families. Your Family & Community Service Worker will provide you with additional information regarding these programs.

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start is a federally funded program. Our grant allows us to serve 517 preschool children and their families and 116 expectant mothers, infants and toddlers. Our service area covers the nine Illinois counties of Bureau, Carroll, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, Ogle, Putnam, Stark and Whiteside. The program is free to all eligible participants. The full-day/full-year options are funded by both the Head Start grant and DHS Subsidy, therefore those participating in these classrooms are required to apply for DHS Child Care Assistance.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

**During COVID-19, options have changed. Listed below are our traditional options*

The T.C.O.C. Head Start Program offers a variety of program options. Options include:

- Center-Based Option: Children attend class in a DCFS licensed center. There are several variations of the center-based option that operate for 9 months of the year, including:
 - 3½ hours/day; 4 days/week
 - 7 hours/day; 4 days/week
 - 6 ½ hours/day; 5 days/week
- Full Day/Full Year Center-Based Option: Children attend class in a full day/ full year DCFS licensed center. Depending on location, these classrooms operate 9-11 hours/day.
- Home-Based Option: One in-home visit per week and two socialization days per month.

SERVING PREGNANT WOMEN

A healthy pregnancy has a direct influence on the health and development of a newborn child. Early Head Start strives to have the greatest impact on participating children by offering supporting services as early in life as possible. The prenatal period of growth and development has a lasting impact on the child's potential for healthy growth and development after birth. Early Head Start programs provide services to pregnant women and their families and through the child's first three years of life. Early, continuous support and services provide the best opportunity for:

- Healthy pregnancies and positive childbirth outcomes
- Supportive postpartum care for the parents and child
- Fully involving fathers in the lives of their very young children
- Nurturing and responsive care during infancy

It is expected that pregnant women and their families who receive Early Head Start services will enroll their child in Early Head Start following birth. The goal of serving pregnant women and their families in Early Head Start is ultimately to provide services to their children in the appropriate child development program option (center based, home based.)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA/ENROLLMENT

The Tri-County Opportunities Council Early Head Start/Head Start Program is a comprehensive child and family development program for families reporting low-incomes for whom services are provided through the granting of federal dollars. Pregnant woman, infants, toddlers and preschool aged children inclusive of those with disabilities are eligible for program services. With children from families reporting low incomes having priority, those with whom higher incomes are reported may also still be eligible for services. While the program's goal is to serve the most vulnerable population and ensure that their needs are being met, a parent and board approved selection criteria has been developed to aid in the selection of participants. Such selection criteria allows for the unbiased and uniformed selection of families pre-determined to have met all required and necessary criteria. Important to note that children a part of the foster care system, those who are experiencing homelessness and/or children and families receiving public assistance are of utmost importance when considering placement in the program. Families throughout the nine county service area are supported and guided through the entire eligibility and enrollment process.

ATTENDANCE

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you as a parent/guardian can prepare your child for success...both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority, you help your child achieve greater...school success, develop healthy life habits and build strong relationships with their peers and teachers alike. For example, preschool aged children who miss an average of just two days per month often have difficulty maintaining academic equality with their peers. By making regular school attendance a priority, you as a parent can prepare your child for a lifetime of success!! By figuring out the reasons for your child's absences—whether they're physical or emotional---and taking advantage of the support services provided by the TCOC EHS/HS Program, you can help set your child on the path to achievement!! It is important

to our program and you as a parent to have your child come to school every day or be ready and excited to engage in your weekly home visits. As a team, we can ensure that your child makes the most gains from their experience in the program when they are in attendance and engaged in their safe learning environment!!

If your child will be absent from school and/or you are unable to meet for your weekly home visit it is necessary that the following occur

1. **Notify your child's Teacher and/or Parent Child Educator before the start of their scheduled day or home visit** (contact numbers will be provided to you during your Initial Home Visit)
2. When notifying your child's Teacher and/or Parent Child Educator the reason for the child's absence being noted (example: child is sick with the flu or family emergency)
3. Notifying your child's Teacher and/or Parent Child Educator the day that your child will be returning to school and/or resuming weekly home visits

In the event that your child does not arrive at school and/or you are not home for your weekly home visit **and you have not** made contact with your child's Teacher and/or Parent Child Educator the following procedure will occur

1. Within **ONE** hour of the scheduled start time a member of the site team and/or the Parent Child Educator will attempt to phone you to ensure your safety and obtain the reason for your child's absence (they will also ask at that time when your child plans to return)
2. If you are not available, a second phone call will be placed at some point that day to attempt to gather the required and necessary information and again ensure you and your family's safety
3. If on the second consecutive day, no phone calls are **made by you** to your child's respective Teacher/Parent Child Educator, a phone call will again be placed within the first hour of the child's scheduled day. If **NO** contact is able to be made the Lead Teacher and/or Parent Child Educator will make a Home Visit at the end of that day to ensure your family's safety and obtain necessary attendance related information. (with support of your family's assigned Family and Community Service Worker)

Open communication regarding attendance related information is imperative to ensuring the safety of our families, planning for your child's day and running efficient bus routes. If this should become an issue, we will work with you and your family to target successful strategies to help regular attendance become a staple in your home. **STRIVE FOR FIVE...EVERY MINUTE IN SCHOOL MATTERS!!**



Inclement Weather

There are times when the weather may prevent us from holding class. If the public school in the community where the Early Head Start/Head Start center is housed closes due to inclement weather, our Head Start Program (***with the exception of self-transport classrooms***) will also close. Please listen to the radio station listed in the front of your handbook for that information. In rare instances, the public school may stay open; however, the bus driver and teacher may determine that transporting children on that day is not safe. This usually happens in some of the smaller communities where children are transported from rural areas and/or between towns. In those cases, you will receive a call from the classroom staff informing you that transportation or school will be cancelled for the day. Every effort will be made to keep the full-day/full-year options and self-transported part-year options open at all times, as we understand that parents still need to go to work.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Parents should always feel free to call their teacher/parent-child educator. However, unless it is an emergency, we ask that your calls be limited to the time before or after class. Telephone calls during class take away valuable time that the teacher needs to spend with children.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

We believe that a child's experience during the early years is very important to his/her later achievement in life. It is important to the program that children are provided a daily environment that promotes positive self-concept, builds ethnic pride and increases the physical, intellectual and social/emotional skill levels that promote school readiness.

Early Head Start/Head Start staff respects and promotes the unique identity of each child and family and makes no judgments on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.

We believe that parents are the first and most important teachers for their child(ren). No one knows more about a child than their parent. Therefore, it is important for parents to volunteer and be a part of their child's "school life." Parents are involved in planning and implementation of the educational program, participating in home visits, assisting on field trips, volunteering in the classroom or during home-based socialization days, and in many other ways.

TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM OR SOCIALIZATION DAYS

DO

- Comfort a child
- Hold a child's hand
- Praise a child
- Interact with a single child or a small group of children
- Report behavior issues to teacher

DO NOT

- Discipline a child
- Take a child to the restroom alone or change diapers
- Raise your voice
- Break confidentiality
- Judge a child and/or his/her family

IDEAS FOR ASSISTING STAFF AS A CLASSROOM OR SOCIALIZATION DAY VOLUNTEER

Read to a child or small group of children
Teach a child a song or finger play
Assist children with coats, zippers, etc.
Interact with children during free choice
Sit with and facilitate discussions at mealtime
Assist with tooth brushing
Listen to a child “read” to you
Assist children at clean up time
Pat backs at naptime
Assist staff with daily preparation and clean up

The above ideas are just a few ways to assist in the educational program. Please share your talents with your child’s teaching staff. When in doubt, just ask and the classroom staff will ensure your volunteering experience is meaningful.

DAILY SCHEDULES

Each classroom will have a slightly different daily schedule or routine. While daily schedules are developed around the needs of each particular group of children, there are common components and routines in each schedule. Daily schedules are posted in the parent area of each classroom. Daily activities will consist of a variety of individual/small group activities, active and quiet times, and teacher-directed and child-directed periods. Each day your child will experience:



- **Circle or large group time:** A time when children are encouraged but not forced to come together for activities such as singing, dancing, charting, finger plays, introduction of daily activities, introduction of a new material or activity, etc. Adults sit in the circle with children and participate.
- **Small group activities:** Children are divided into small groups for a specific lesson targeted to meet or further develop each child’s individual needs. Small groups are teacher-directed activities.
- **Work Time/Free Choice Time:** A majority of the day, children can choose centers and activities in which they would like to participate. Children can move throughout the room and constantly explore and learn from their environment. This portion of the day is child-initiated. Children learn many skills through self-discovery and interaction with their peers. Adults get down and interact with the children at their level, letting the children lead the play.

- **Gross Motor Time:** A time of day for children to use and develop their large muscles. Weather permitting we encourage children to have some outdoor time each day. Children use the playground equipment, participate in active games, ride bikes, etc. Adults interact, supervise and ensure the safety of children at this time.
- **Meal Times:** Snack and mealtimes are structured and used as learning opportunities that support teacher-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development and socialization. Young infants and toddlers are fed on demand, according to their individual schedules; however, there are specific meal times for older children. Meals provided are dependent on the program option in which the child is enrolled. Adults sit and eat with children, model table manners and facilitate conversation.
- **Story Time:** Story time may be presented in several forms. Children may have a large group time for a daily story read by the teacher, parent volunteers or a guest reader. Story time may also be a small group activity or an individual activity where children act out a story and/or create their own stories. Volunteers can assist by asking children open-ended questions, etc.
- **Toileting, Hand washing and Tooth brushing Times:** Times for children to take care of their personal needs and practice health and safety routines. Adults model correct hand washing and tooth brushing techniques for children.
- **Transition Times:** Transitions are planned activities that are short and help children move efficiently from one activity to the next. Transitions are a structured part of the classrooms daily routine.
- **Nap Time - (Extended Day, Full-Day/Full-Year Options only):** This time is provides an opportunity for children attending a longer day to rest. The program provides cots, sheets and blankets for each child. Children do not need to sleep but are encouraged to rest and/or engage in quiet play.



“YES” ENVIRONMENT

Center based classrooms are set up in learning “areas” that promote children’s overall development. These areas help children organize their thoughts and choices, promote social interactions among children and assist with “traffic flow” within the classroom. Areas that you can expect to see in each classroom include, but are not limited to:

- **Dramatic Play:** Children enjoy acting out different experiences they have in the community or at home pretending they are different people. Through dramatic play, the child develops a better understanding of their relationships with others and what it means to work and play together. Activities in the dramatic play area stimulate language development, problem solving skills and social skills.

- **Manipulative/Small Motor/Cognitive:** In exploring learning activities with manipulatives, children utilize many skill sets. They practice decision-making as they think about which tools to use and distinguish between weight, height, length, shape, and size of objects as they sort. They explore patterns through sequencing, ordering, comparison, colors, and textures. A child can develop concentration and perseverance skills while learning about cause and effect and how to creatively analyze and solve problems.
- **Discovery/Science Center:** Children experience pouring, mixing, measuring, comparing, predicting and problem solving. The children will use and develop sensory awareness. The children will explore concepts such as smooth, rough, wet, dry, sticky, hot, cold and many more. This center also builds language and vocabulary skills. This center is a relaxing and soothing area for the children.
- **Block Center:** This area gives children the tools to learn concepts such as height, weight, size, shape, color balance, planning, counting, measuring, matching and sorting. Children will also learn to cooperate, share, problem solve and develop language skills. Children are in different stages of building, therefore you will see different kinds of creations from the simple stacking of blocks to complex structures and project activities.
- **Library Area:** Children will learn the value of books and how to care and appreciate them. The library area is a quiet area with soft cushions and furniture for the children to relax and enjoy reading.
- **Writing/Literacy Area:** This center has plenty of materials for the children to explore and practice their writing and literacy skills. Materials include such things as stampers, pens, paper, cards, picture books, letter models, crayons, markers, etc. Children develop written forms of communication and use the center to practice writing their names, practice writing letters, journaling or creating their own story books.
- **Large Group Area:** An area where children can gather together on a daily basis for circle time, large motor activities, etc.

CURRICULUM

The T.C.O.C. Early Head Start and Head Start center based classrooms use the *Creative Curriculum*. This curriculum is designed around an application of developmentally appropriate practices and highlights the important balance between applying a general knowledge of child development with the particular knowledge a teacher gains by forming a relationship with each child and family. The curriculum also incorporates new information about the concept in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology that preschool children can and should learn.

In addition to the *Creative Curriculum*, the T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Program has developed and integrated a supplemental health curriculum into daily activities for children.

The T.C.O.C. Early Head Start home-based option uses the *Parents as Teachers Foundational Curriculum*. This evidence-informed and research-based curriculum equips parent child educators with information to identify and build on family strengths, capabilities, and skills. It features family-friendly activities and resources that engage parents in their children's learning and development and provides information and educational material to support healthy decision-making. The curriculum promotes and strengthens child development, parent-child interactions and family well-being.

HOLIDAYS AND THE CURRICULUM

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start celebrates the uniqueness of each child and their family. It is inclusive of all traditions and beliefs. Classroom activities during the traditional “holiday” times will center on seasonal changes, families, and other topics meaningful to children. We encourage families to celebrate holidays in their own special way, to establish family traditions and share those traditions and special times with their Early Head Start/Head Start class. This policy was developed and approved by the T.C.O.C. Head Start Policy Council in April, 1999.

ASSESSMENT/INDIVIDUALIZING

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start program uses the *Creative Curriculum GOLD Online Assessment Tool* for collecting data on each child’s growth and development. This assessment tool is used on an on-going basis by classroom staff. Data is submitted three to four times annually. The data helps staff and parents see the growth of their child during the year. Individual goals are developed for each child based on their particular area of need. Goals recognize what the child already knows and builds on that knowledge by selecting skills that challenge the child to move to the next step. Teaching staff use the data to plan daily lessons that address individual and group needs. Program managers and specialists use the data to continually assess the curriculum effectiveness and to target areas of training for teaching staff. The assessment information and child goals will be formally shared with you at each parent/teacher conference. As a parent, you can also review the GOLD Assessment and your child’s documentation/observations at any time.

FIELD TRIPS

Approximately one time per month, center-based classes will have the opportunity to go on a field trip within their community. Field trips are designed to give your child an opportunity to learn more about their community and the people in it. The things that children learn are included in classroom activities and discussions before and after the trip itself.

Field trips are a crucial time for parent volunteers. Safety on field trips is our prime objective. Please try and volunteer on at least one field trip if your work/home schedule permits.

All children must ride the bus to and from field trips. Parents may not take their child from the field trip site. They must return to the center and sign out the child in accordance with program procedures.

EARLY HEAD START / HEAD START CENTERS

All centers are licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services. Centers are visited by the local DCFS representative, the assigned State of Illinois Fire Marshall and a representative of the local health department annually to insure compliance with all required rules and regulations.

PEST CONTROL

The program is committed to maintaining clean and safe facilities for children enrolled in the program. If pest control services are deemed necessary, chemicals for insect and pest control shall be applied in minimum amounts. Chemicals will never be applied when children are in attendance at the center. No child shall be allowed to enter a center being treated for at least two (2) hours after treatment or as specified on the label, whichever is greater. Commercial chemicals shall be applied by a licensed pest control operation and shall meet all standards of the Department of Public Health. A record of pesticides used shall be maintained at the center. All parents will be notified of scheduled pesticide treatment at least two (2) days prior to any treatments. The site supervisor, center director and teacher are responsible for insuring compliance with this policy.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

The health of your child is very important. We at the T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Program, and you as the parent or guardian, want your child to be healthy, strong and happy. If your child's health and dental needs have been met, they will have more success engaging in daily activities and will be able to focus on learning.

The program is comprehensive in nature and includes requirements and services in the areas of medical health, dental health and general wellness.



DCFS Licensing Standards require your child to have completed the following procedures **prior to attending class**:

- Physicals must be completed for your child's initial year within 12 months of attending.
- A lead screening after 12 months of age
- A tuberculin skin test (Mantoux) if determined by health professional
- Up to date immunizations including DPT, Polio, Hib, Hepatitis B, MMR and Varicella

Head Start Performance Standards (National Level) requires a well-child or physical at a minimum of:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| ▪ 1 month | ▪ 9 months | ▪ 24 months |
| ▪ 2 months | ▪ 12 months | ▪ 30 months |
| ▪ 4 months | ▪ 15 months | ▪ 3 years |
| ▪ 6 months | ▪ 18 months | ▪ 4 years |
| | | ▪ 5 years |

TCOC Early Head Start/Head Start recommends that exams be completed for 3-5 year olds after June 1st of the year the child is attending. All follow-up must be completed within 90 days of enrollment, and, a complete list of your child's immunizations must be submitted to the program.

Blood test and Hemoglobin tests must be completed at:

- 12 months
- 24 months
- Yearly after June 1st of the previous year

TB Mantoux questionnaire is completed yearly.

DENTAL EXAMINATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP TREATMENT

Early Head Start encourages regular dental visits starting at age 2.

Head Start (3-5 year olds) regulations requires that every child has a dental exam. TCOC Head Start recommends exams be completed after June 1st of the year the child is attending. All follow-up must be completed within 90 days of enrollment. Dental exams are recommended every 6 months. **It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure that dental exams and follow-up work is completed within the required time frames.**

It is extremely important the parent or guardian keep scheduled medical and dental appointments. **Health and dental care providers require at least a 24-hour advance notice of cancellation of an appointment.** If you need assistance with transportation to an appointment, please contact the Health Assistant at the extension listed in the front of this book.

TOOTH BRUSHING

The care of your child's first teeth is very important. The Early Head Start teachers will brush infants and toddlers teeth and gums. Head Start children will brush their teeth with the assistance of teachers at a minimum of once a day and will rinse their mouth at other times after consuming food. Toothbrushes will be provided for all enrolled children. We encourage parents to work with their children on correct tooth brushing procedures and ensure that children continue brushing at home. If you would like information on how to help your child brush, please call the Health Specialist listed in the front of this handbook.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

The health screening process for your child includes a hearing and vision screening. As with other screenings, they **must be completed within 45 days of the child's enrollment.** If a child fails (or was uncooperative) at the time of the initial screening, our program will schedule a re-screen. If the child fails the re-screening process, the parent will be contacted and a referral initiated for follow-up services by an audiologist (hearing) or an eye doctor (vision).

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND EXCLUSION FROM CLASS

In accordance with DCFS Standards, children may not attend class if they have an illness which prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities and/or calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in the group. Those include:

- **Rash combined with a fever of 101 degrees (oral)** or with behavior change, unless a physician has determined the illness is non-communicable, or until the rash disappears completely.

- **Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing,** or any other signs of a possible severe illness.
- **Severe diarrhea or frequent loose stools** which may be accompanied by stomach discomfort.
- **Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours** unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition in which the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- **Mouth sores** associated with the child's inability to control his/her saliva until such time as the child's physician or local health department states that the child is not infectious.
- **Conjunctivitis**, commonly known as **pink eye**, until 24 hours after treatment has begun and **all draining has stopped.**
- **Impetigo.** Exclusion remains in effect until 24 hours after treatment has begun and no drainage is occurring or until the drainage can be covered.
- **Strep Throat** until 24 hours after treatment has begun and the child is without a fever for 24 hours.
- **Scabies** until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- **Chicken Pox** until at least six days after the onset of the rash or pox are scabbed.

Symptoms which may be indicative of one of the serious communicable disease can be identified in the Illinois Department of Public Health Control and Communicable Diseases Code (77 IL Adm. Code 690).

If a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea has occurred, the T.C.O.C. Head Start Program's policy is that children not return to school until they have been symptom free (vomiting, diarrhea, or fever) without the help of medications for the past 24 hours.

HEALTH CHECKS

All children receive a brief health check upon daily arrival at the center. The purpose of this health check is to ensure that each child is well enough to stay for class and at each home visit. The teaching staff will decide whether they are able to care for the child safely based on the child's degree of illness and the available space and equipment needed to care for the child. Home Visitors will make the decision on whether or not to continue the home visit.

HEAD LICE POLICY

Our Early Head Start/Head Start program adheres to a strict and aggressive anti-nit policy designed to stop the spread of head lice. All children receive a head check at the beginning of each week. Our policy is:

- If a child has three or more nits, the child CANNOT remain in class. The parent will be notified to take the child home and begin treatment. (Only as a last resort will the child be taken home by bus).
- Teaching staff will inform the family of procedures for getting rid of lice.
- It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to bring the child back to the classroom for a re-check before or after class and within **two days** of lice being discovered. The child must be re-checked and clear of nits before they can return to the class.
- If a case of head lice is discovered in the classroom, T.C.O.C. teaching staff will send home an informational letter informing the rest of the parents in the class. This letter does not identify children by name and such information will not be shared.

MEDICATIONS

The purpose of administering medications at school is to help each child maintain an optimal state of health. **Whenever possible, please make every effort to administer needed medications either before or after school hours.** Head Start staff can only administer medications at school under the following conditions:



- All prescription or over the counter medications must have a medication permission form completed by a health care provider which also includes a parent signature.
- Medications prescribed by a physician must be in the original container and labeled by a pharmacist. The child's first and last names, date filed, expiration date along with the physician's instructions for administering the medicine must be printed on the pharmacy label.
- Over the counter medication must be purchased by the family and labeled with the child's name.
- Medications must be delivered to the school via a responsible adult and left for the duration of time that the medication needs to be administered. All medication will be stored in a lock box.
- Staff record dates, times and dosage whenever a medication is given to a child either at school or on the bus. If medication is to be given "as needed," the parent/guardian is responsible to inform the program staff **in writing** if the child received a dose after midnight. This is done to ensure that the medication will not be given too soon on the bus or at school.

- Staff are trained yearly on proper procedures for administering medications. If you are interested in the full T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start policy and procedures on medication, please contact the Health Specialist at the extension listed in the front of this book.

PREVENTION AND STAFF TRAINING

- A minimum of one classroom staff member and one transportation staff member are certified in First Aid and CPR.
- All staff receive annual training on OSHA regulations.
- Employees wear gloves when treating a wound or cleaning up vomit, blood or other body fluid spills. OSHA and DCFS procedures are followed. Classroom volunteers must also follow precautionary procedures if assisting staff with the above.
- Each classroom and bus contains a fully stocked first aid kit.

INFANT/TODDLER SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Safe sleep and napping practices reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy infant under one year of age for whom no cause of death can be determined. It is the leading cause of death in children from one to twelve months of age.

To minimize the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, T.C.O.C. staff will follow the following guidelines:

1. Infants will be placed to sleep on a firm mattress that fits tightly in a crib meeting the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission safety standards. The sheet will fit the mattress snugly.
2. Infants will be placed on their backs when put down to sleep;
3. Infants that can easily turn over from the back to a stomach position shall be placed down to sleep on their backs but are allowed to adopt their preferred position while sleeping;
4. If a parent/guardian requests that their child be put to sleep in a position other than on their back, the parent must provide written instructions, signed by a physician, detailing an alternative safe sleep position or special sleeping arrangements for the infant.
5. No toys, soft products including bedding, sheepskins and stuffed animals, pillows, crib bumpers, quilts, comforters, positioning devices (unless ordered by a health care provider) will be allowed in cribs.
6. Awake infants will have supervised "Tummy Time" to allow for the development of strong back and neck muscles and prevent the development of flat areas on the head.
7. Infants may be offered a pacifier when they are in the crib if parents offer a pacifier at home. Pacifiers will not be attached by a string or to the infant's clothing. Pacifiers will not be reinserted if they fall out after the infant is asleep.

HAND WASHING

Children and adults wash their hands with soap and water routinely and frequently during the day to prevent the spread of disease. Hand washing times include:

- Daily arrival at the center
- Before and after any meal service
- After toileting or diaper changing
- After handling pets or other animals
- After playing outdoors
- Before and after cooking activities
- After touching items soiled with body fluids

Please encourage your child to follow the same health routines at home. (DCFS Section 407.320 Health Requirements).

SUNSCREEN POLICY

Sunscreen may be applied to your child when going outside for more than 10 minutes and if temperatures are 70 degrees or over. Permission forms for sunscreen are offered if the parent requests it to be used. Parents must sign the sunscreen permission form and identify the body parts to which the classroom staff will apply sunscreen.

Parent must provide sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more. (Without Paba is recommended as Paba gives some children blotchy rashes). It is also recommended that the sunscreen not be over one year old.

The sunscreen must be in the original bottle/tube, labeled with the child's name and given to the bus driver or directly to the teacher.

The sunscreen will be left at school until the last day of class.

**Sunscreen is purchased for full-year classrooms but parent permission is still required in order to apply.

HAND LOTION POLICY

Hand lotion is offered occasionally to children after handwashing or may be used as a soothing, comforting measure with children. If you would like to know the brand of lotion used in your child's classroom or the ingredients contained in it, please ask your child's teacher(s).

ACCIDENT AND INJURY PROCEDURES

Safety is of primary importance to our program; however, occasionally accidents do occur while your child is in our care. Parents and guardians sign emergency permission forms permitting teaching staff to obtain or provide emergency medical care if the parent or guardian is unavailable after many attempts to contact. The program has developed the following procedures to assist you and your child at those times.

Minor Accidents (those that do not warrant a visit to the emergency room or physician):

- The staff will tend to the injury following all safety, first aid and sanitation procedures.
- The staff witnessing the accident will complete an injury report that day. The report must be shared with and signed by the parent or guardian. The original report will be kept in the Rock Falls main office and a copy will be kept in the classroom file.

Major Accidents (those requiring treatment at the emergency room or by a physician):

- Every attempt will be made to notify the parent or guardian immediately.
- A site staff member will notify the Rock Falls central office and also report the incidence to DCFS as per licensing requirements.
- If the parent or other authorized emergency backup person cannot be contacted, staff will make arrangements to get the child to the emergency room as indicated on the parent authorization form. An employee will accompany the child until a parent arrives.
- An accident report is completed by the teaching staff with copies going to the parent and to the emergency room. The treating health care provider will complete the necessary parts of the paperwork, sign, date and return to the program. The parent will be provided with a copy of the report.
- T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start does carry supplemental accident insurance. This policy is secondary coverage only. If the child is covered by private insurance, a medical card or Kid's Care, that insurance coverage is the primary company for covering injury costs.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

The TCOC Early Head Start/Head Start Program carries a general liability policy of \$5,000,000 and for vehicles used to transport children a \$6,000,000 limit.

SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT

Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is detrimental to the health of children and non-smoking adults. **Smoking or use of tobacco products is PROHIBITED in all Early Head Start/Head Start facilities, in all Early Head Start/Head Start vehicles and at all Early Head Start/Head Start sponsored activities.**



NUTRITION SERVICES

At Early Head Start/Head Start, our goal is to provide healthy food for your child in an atmosphere that is relaxed and enjoyable. We hope to promote eating habits that nourish your child's body, preserve their teeth while at the same time develop an enjoyment of family mealtime.

GOALS OF THE T.C.O.C. EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START NUTRITION PROGRAM

- Provide food to help meet the child's daily nutritional needs.
- Promote the opportunity to learn about and practice good food habits by:
 - Providing a variety of foods and encouraging children to taste these foods.
 - Providing a variety of eating experiences.
 - Providing opportunities for children to set the table and help with food preparation and food service.
 - Engaging in pleasant mealtime conversation.
 - Modeling and encouraging proper table manners.
- Support staff, families and children to understand the relationship between good nutrition and good health.
- Provide information, resources and activities that demonstrate the inter-relationship of nutrition to other activities in the Early Head Start/Head Start program and its importance to overall child development.
- To involve staff, parents and other community agencies in the child's nutritional needs.

MEAL SERVICE AND MENUS

The program provides the children with a family style, hot lunch and a nutritional breakfast and/or snack every class day. We encourage you and your children to eat together as a family at home. Children are also encouraged to clean up their own spills. These skills encourage the child to be independent and to further advance self-help skills. Children learn to serve themselves, pour their own drink and use the correct eating utensils.

All menu planning follows Early Head Start/Head Start Performance Standards and the CACFP program. Our program adheres to the rules of serving foods that:

- Contain no or low sugar and low or no fat.
- Include a Vitamin C source daily and a Vitamin A source every other day.
- Incorporate cultural foods and/or preferences on a regular basis.
- Ensure that children with special food requirements, as documented by a doctor, are provided daily for that child.
- Meet the requirements for the food components of the CACFP program.

TIPS FOR SUPERVISING AT MEAL TIMES

In most cases, children will be eating at small tables and to the extent possible, with an adult at each table to supervise during meal times. Food is placed on each table in serving bowls with enough food for each person at that table. Adult meals are paid by program funds, so do not be afraid to sit, eat and converse with children while you are volunteering. Meal times are not only nutritional times, but also times when children learn a variety of skills. You can assist children by:

- Washing hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating.
- Encouraging children to serve themselves. Children should be encouraged, **but never forced**, to put a small portion of each food on their plate and to try everything on their plate.
- Supporting spill cleanup. Spills are normal and expected. The spill is cleaned calmly and meal continued with little attention placed on the spill. Some children, especially at the beginning of the year may require adult assistance to get the spill cleaned up.
- Having children take small servings at first. Second helpings are available for children who are still hungry.
- **Not talking about your own personal food dislikes.**
- Encouraging children to drink the milk, juice or water provided to them on a daily basis. Other drinks **are not permitted** at the table during mealtimes. Adults model healthy choices by drinking what is available to children.
- Engaging children in social conversations during meal times.
- Modeling good table manners.

NUTRITION SPECIALIST & REGISTERED DIETICIAN

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start employs a Nutrition Specialist to oversee the nutrition component of our program. (Refer to beginning of book for name and extension #). In addition, our program contracts with a registered dietician consultant to support program operations. You will also be receiving a nutritional analysis and growth chart on your child two-three times per year. Both of these persons are available for support and resource materials at the request of the parent. Please feel free to contact them with questions or concerns.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM

Classrooms have routines for celebrating birthdays. Please check with your child's teacher to see what the procedure is for your child's individual classroom. **High sugared foods are never allowed to be served at school or during Early Head Start/Head Start activities.** Contact your teacher or the nutrition specialist for ideas if you would like to supply a birthday treat or snack for the classroom.

DCFS Licensing Rule: Food served to children while participating in Early Head Start/Head Start activities may only be commercially packaged or must be prepared in a licensed kitchen. The only exception to this rule is for snacks prepared in the home for the Home Based home visit activities.

FOOD PROGRAM

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start participates in and follows the regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) established for child care centers operating Child and Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP). CACFP reimburse participating sites that serve nutritious meals by following meal patterns established by the USDA. CACFP is administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Services, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. The State Board of Education (ISBE) administers the CACFP in Illinois. ISBE approves sponsoring organizations, monitors the program and provides guidance and assistance to assure that sponsors are meeting the requirements.

In accordance with the Federal Law and USDA policy, this program is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

DISABILITY SERVICES

As per regulations, the T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Program reserves at least 10% of enrollment slots for children with diagnosed disabilities and/or special needs. Our program is committed to inclusion. What this means is that children with diagnosed disabilities and/or special needs are in the same classrooms as their friends. Inclusion is the philosophy or belief that ALL children have the same needs for acceptance, friendship and connectedness. T.C.O.C. Head Start is committed to this vision. This program component is designed to identify and serve children with disabling conditions along with normally developing children in the least restrictive environment.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Developmental screenings are done with each child **within 45 days of enrollment into the program** using the *DIAL 4* for children enrolled in the Head Start program and the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* for children enrolled in Early Head Start program. Children are screened in areas of cognitive development, language development and fine and gross motor development. Parents will receive the results of their child's developmental screening.

Children who are enrolled later in the year receive their screening during class time by the site supervisor and/or the Parent/Child Educator.

Children who fail their initial developmental screening will be re-screened at a later date. If concerns still exist, the teacher will contact the parent/guardian and start a referral to the local school district or local education agency (LEA) for a complete diagnostic assessment.

Children qualifying for special education services will have an IFSP/IEP developed for them by the local district. Early Head Start/Head Start staff are encouraged to attend IFSP/IEP meetings with parents as a support and resource.

Many children already have IEP's or IFSP plans when enrolled in the program. The Early Head Start/Head Start teacher or parent/child educator will work with your child to support the IEP/IFSP goals.

For questions or resources regarding disability services, contact the Education/Disability Specialist at the extension listed in the front of this book.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The social emotional health of an individual has an effect on the person's total well-being. The joys and stresses of growing and changing can cause children to feel insecure. All children benefit from an environment that accepts them as individuals, appreciates their capabilities and fosters their growth.

The words *Mental Health* can often be scary for parents. As part of the comprehensive programming offered at T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start, *Mental Health* takes “prevention” rather than a “treatment” approach. The program is designed to help children build self-confidence and self-esteem, to learn to get along with others and to solve conflicts by problem-solving. Mental health services are available not only to children, but to their families as well.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANT

The Mental Health Consultant will be visiting each classroom or home-based option a minimum of two times during the year to observe children during their daily activities. The Mental Health Consultant will meet with teacher after the observation to discuss findings and plan follow-up and supportive activities where warranted.

In some cases, particular children may require a follow-up or individual observation. In those cases, the classroom teacher or parent child educator will meet with you to request permission for the follow-up services prior to initiating those services.

The Mental Health Consultant is also available to present at Classroom Connection/Parent Meetings if the particular parent group request those services.

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

T.C.O.C. uses the *Conscious Discipline* curriculum. This curriculum is based on cutting-edge research in the area of brain development. Daily routines and rituals are practiced in the classroom which help children feel safe and secure in their social environment, help children learn conflict resolution and self-monitoring skills and promote positive interactions with adults and their peers.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The following policy and procedures have been developed as guidelines for program staff to use in supporting the families we serve. One of the goals of these guidelines is to provide an environment for children that is safe, secure and nurtures the development of social and emotional competence. This means that the words and strategies used will be respectful of children and will not involve judging or shaming.

LEVEL ONE GUIDANCE AND INTERVENTION PROCEDURES

Attachment: Forming a relationship with a child is one of the most important first steps to facilitate learning. This relationship is formed by becoming attuned to the child's temperament, feelings, motivations, interests and strengths.

Team: Develop classroom routines, procedures and rules as a team. Children will sense the compatibility of their teachers and feel secure enough to begin to form attachments and develop social competence. Remember to include the parents as significant members of your team.

Developmental Appropriateness: Staff will use techniques that are appropriate for all children with whom they work to help develop social skills and self-control. These techniques will include; anticipating and eliminating potential problems, establishing routine and rituals, ensuring that children know what to do, using praise to influence behavior, providing adequate supervision, minimizing transitions, planning for gross motor play, and planning the daily schedule to allow the children a mixture of choices.

Use of Natural or Logical Consequences: When rules are broken or inappropriate behavior occurs, natural or logical consequences will be used as a teaching tool. Consequences may include the reactions of others or resulting events in the child's environment. An example of a natural or logical consequence might be to give the child a choice of another activity, playmate or area in which to play and to support them in following through with their choice in successfully.

Verbal Techniques of Intervention: A number of verbal techniques can be used to guide children's behavior including: setting clear expectations, arranging a compromise, redirecting, offering choices, giving descriptive feedback, recognizing the individual verbally, giving children words to use, using words to describe non-verbal communications, such as, "You are telling me that you are not hungry by playing with your food."

Encourage problem solving and promote turn taking by acknowledging feelings and using a tone of voice and body language consistent with the situation and the child's message.

****Head Start and DCFS prohibits interactions that are viewed as punishments, which are humiliating or frightening to a child. These include emotional abuses such as name calling, threatening, shaming, shunning or making derogatory remarks about the child's family.**

Physical Techniques of Intervention: Physical techniques can be used to guide children who require additional reinforcement to verbal cues. These techniques might include moving next to the child, offering replacement behavior by asking the child to play with the teacher, modeling appropriate behavior (picking up blocks), redirecting to an appropriate behavior, offering a time for quiet separation, or using physical calming techniques such as rubbing the child's back.

Head Start and DCFS prohibits any corporal punishment (ex: hitting, spanking, pinching, kicking, biting, or other rough handling).

LEVEL TWO GUIDANCE AND INTERVENTION PROCEDURES

The preceding techniques of behavior guidance described will be effective for assisting most children in successfully developing healthy expression of their emotions, social skills, impulse control and responsibility toward property. However, some children do not respond to the Level One methods of guidance. Assisting these children becomes a greater challenge for the teaching team. When a child's behavior requires additional planning and more direct intervention, the intervention procedure tracking is initiated and a social-emotional support plan is developed. All who are responsible for the care of the child are considered members of the intervention team.

In developing a plan of intervention, four important points should be kept in mind at all times.

1. There are many factors that may affect a child's social/emotional development; these include both biological and environmental causes.
2. Program staff must avoid focusing on any one specific factor as the sole cause of challenging behavior.
3. We must build on children's and families' strengths and capabilities of resiliency to cope with stressful factors in their lives.
4. All children, families and staff have a right to their privacy. The T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Program policies of confidentiality are located in the Personnel Handbook and must be adhered to at all time.

INTERVENTION PROCEDURE TRACKING

1. Parent will be contacted with concerns.
2. Observation will be completed by the Site Supervisor. This must be completed prior to the development of a plan. This observation will include a classroom observation and review of child's file and portfolio. The Mental Health Consultant may be asked to complete an individual observation with consent of the parent of guardian.
3. Development of the Social/Emotional Support Plan for the child in consultation with the family members, teaching team, Site Supervisor, Family & Community Service Worker, Mental Health Consultant and any other professionals considered appropriate members on the intervention team.

Intervention Options: The following list of intervention option techniques is not all-inclusive. The Social-Emotional Support Plan is based on the findings of the intervention team and is individualized according to the needs of the child and family.

Environment Adjustments and Adaptations (classroom routine, classroom, teacher)

Referral to Mental Health Provider (with parent consent)

Separation (brief separation from the group)

Change of placement option

Referral to community resource

Guidance Summary: It is critical that all efforts to work with the child and family are documented. Each step taken in the behavior guidance process must be implemented over a reasonable period of time. The process cannot be accelerated to attain a desired expectation. Changes in behavior often take time and every effort should be made to have the patience required to effect the desired change.

Guiding children's behavior can be one of the most challenging tasks of a Head Start Program but it can also be the most important work an adult can do for a child. It is important to remember that our job is to guide and teach children the ways that are most appropriate to act. We can only do this if we earn a child's trust and respect.

BITING POLICY

The TCOC Early Head Start/Head Start program recognizes that biting is one of the most common and most difficult behavior to manage, as there is no clear identifiable cause. Young children bite for many reasons and most of these reasons are not related to behavior problems.

Young children:

- May not yet have the words to express their feelings
- Often bite as part of exploring
- Sometimes bite to gain attention
- May bite because they are teething

Our program does not focus on punishment for biting but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the biting. When biting occurs, there are three main responses:

1. Care for and provide empathy to the child who was bitten
2. Teach a new skill to the child who bit so that they learn other behavior
3. Examination of our program and preventatives to stop the biting

We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to the children who are bitten. We offer to put ice or a cold cloth on the bite if the child is willing. If the skin is broken, we clean the wound with soap and water and

we may recommend that they be seen by a health care provider. When children are bitten, their parents are notified personally and in writing the same day through an injury report. We keep the name of the child who bit confidential.

Our teachers work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior. When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day. When there are episodes of ongoing biting we develop a social-emotional plan with specific prevention and intervention strategies, techniques and timelines to address it.

TRANSPORTATION

Head Start regulations do not require Head Start programs to provide transportation, however, the T.C.O.C. Head Start Program does provide bus service to all center-based options. We will make every attempt to transport your child, however, in some cases, your child may live too far out of town or from the center which would prevent our program from providing bus service. **Bus service may be revoked for a child at any time for abuse or non-compliance with our bus policies and regulations.**

BUS SERVICE PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

- Children must be dressed and ready to board the bus at their assigned pick-up time. If the bus pulls up at pick-up and no one responds or if there is no one coming out to the bus. After **one minute**, the bus will proceed with the rest of the route. **The bus will not return and it will be your responsibility to get your child to the classroom.**
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian or other authorized adult (**at least 14 years of age**) to walk your child to the bus at the beginning of the day. Please hold your child's hand and remain outside until your child is seated and secured in his/her seat. Our bus monitor will assist children with securing their safety harness.
- It is also the responsibility of the parent/guardian or other authorized adult (**at least 14 years of age**) to and walk out and get your child off the bus at the end of the day. Please hold your child's hand until the bus has departed.
- All adults (parent/guardians or other authorized adult) will sign a daily log indicating the date and time that the child was released into their custody.
- Safety of children is our highest priority. Therefore, any non-custodial parent or guardian or any other authorized adult as per the Parent Agreement Form, must present a picture I.D. prior to the child being released into their custody. If your child is being dropped off regularly to another adult (child care provider, etc.) please take the time to introduce that person to your bus driver at the beginning of the year.
- **It is extremely important that you think carefully about the persons you would like listed on your release form prior to the beginning of the year. No child will ever be released to anyone who does not have their name on the Parent Agreement Form as an authorized release person for that child.**
- In rare cases, an emergency may occur which requires someone other than those persons listed on your agreement form to pick up or get the child off of the bus. In those cases, it is your responsibility to inform our program via a written, signed note provided to the teacher and/or bus driver. Picture I.D. will also be required of that person.



- In the event that the parent/guardian or other authorized adult as listed on the Parent Agreement form is not at the drop-off location, the child will ride the remainder of the bus route. The bus driver will then make

one more attempt to deliver the child to the drop-off point. If the bus makes a second trip and there is still no authorized adult present, the child will be returned to the classroom. Parents/guardians must then pick up their child at the site.

- If the child is returned to the classroom, the teaching staff will make all attempts to contact the child's parent/guardian or other emergency numbers in the child's file. If no one can be reached, the local police and DCFS will be contacted. All discussions with parents regarding transportation issues will be held confidentially with the parent/guardian and never with the child.
- After the bus has returned to the home for a second trip three times, they will no longer make a second trip and the child will automatically be brought back to the classroom at the end of the route. The parent/guardian will then be responsible for picking the child up.
- Please allow 10-15 minutes either side of your pick-up and drop-off time. In other words, allow 10-15 minutes before or after scheduled time. During the winter months, times may vary slightly depending on weather. Occasionally during the year, routes may change based on children dropping and adding new children. Your bus driver will keep you informed of changes that affect your pick-up/drop-off times.
- All children must ride the bus to and from field trips and end-of-year picnics.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FOR PICK-UPS AND DROP-OFFS

- Your child must be picked up and dropped off at the same locations as listed on your Parent Agreement Form. Changes in pick-up or drop-off points will only be considered in **extreme emergencies**.
- If necessary to change your pick-up and drop-off points (for example, if you move or change child care providers), you must notify the program **in writing** at least 3-5 days prior to the change in order for the program to record changes and for the driver to make changes to their bus route.

SAFE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

If the parent/guardian or other authorized adult appears to be intoxicated or under the influence, staff will encourage that person to find temporary care for the child. If the child appears to be in danger (for example, an intoxicated parent plans on driving), staff are required to notify police and place a phone call to DCFS.

ILLNESS AND ABSENTEEISM

When a child is ill and/or will not be attending class, please contact the center prior to the beginning of the bus route. The classroom staff will contact the bus driver and the bus will not stop at your house on that day. If you

do not have a telephone or if you miss calling prior to the beginning of the route, please watch for the bus and let the driver know that the child will not be attending that day.

The Head Start bus **will stop** at all route locations daily unless informed not to do so. We would greatly appreciate notification if a child does NOT need transportation on any given day or period of time.

BEHAVIOR AND SAFETY ON THE BUS

- Children are expected to remain in their seats with their safety vests fastened during the bus ride.
- Children are taught simple bus rules and transportation staff use basic routines to help children remain safe during the bus ride. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Ensuring children keep their hands and feet to themselves and in their own space.
 - Using low or inside voices
 - Songs, stories or finger plays to help children enjoy their bus ride.
- Neither children nor adults may eat or drink on the bus due to the risk of choking.
- If a child removes their safety vest, stand up walks around or in any other way is potentially harmful to themselves or others or threatens the safe operation of the bus, the bus driver will pull the bus to the side of the road until the child is properly seated, their safety vest is fastened and there is no more potential danger to that child or others.
- If the bus cannot continue the route because a child will not accept or comply with positive re-direction:
 - If the bus has not departed from the pick-up location, the child will be returned to the custody of the parent/guardian or other authorized adult.
 - If on the route, the driver will attempt to contact other staff to get assistance in removing the child from the bus and returning that child to his home or pick-up location.
- Occasionally, some children have great difficulty in complying with bus rules and safety procedures. In those cases, the teacher, bus driver and bus monitor will meet with the parent/guardian to co-develop a plan to address that child's particular needs in order for them to continue to receive bus transportation. If intervention attempts are unsuccessful, it may be necessary for the parent/guardian to self-transport their child to and from the center.

SEAT BELT/SAFETY VESTS

All adults are required by law to wear seatbelts when traveling in any Head Start vehicle. In busses, children are required by Head Start regulations to be fastened in an approved safety restraint or safety vest system.

AUTHORIZED RIDERS AND BUS VOLUNTEERS

- **Authorized Riders:** Parents/Guardians and other adult volunteers may ride the bus to and from the center. Unfortunately, our insurance does not allow us to transport other children on our bus.
- When you volunteer to ride the bus, you and your child will be picked up at your regular time. As a bus volunteer, please do not distract the driver by trying to hold a conversation with him/her. Refrain from gossip or inappropriate conversations in front of the children.
- Every attempt will be made to have the adult volunteer sit with their own child.

BOOK BAG POLICY

All book bags will be collected by the bus driver/bus monitor and stored in a container in the front or rear of the bus. The container will be secure and away from all exits on the bus. **No book bags with wheels will be allowed on the bus.** If you are sending a book bag with your child, please make sure it is of the appropriate size for him/her. In most cases, book bags sent to school on Monday will remain in the classroom until the end of the week and then come home with your child. (Please see your bus driver or classroom teacher for particular procedures for your child's assigned classroom). Any important papers addressed to parents will be distributed by the driver during the days in the middle of the week.

SELF TRANSPORTS

All parents/guardians are responsible for self-transporting their child to and from any sites that do not offer bus service or occasionally when the bus route does not run. In some cases, other parents choose to self-transport rather than having their child ride the bus. **You must make a decision at the beginning of the school year as to whether your child will be riding the bus or if you will be self-transporting. We will not allow children to ride the bus one day and then be self-transported the next day.** To do so would create confusion and affect bus route schedules for those parents who are having their children consistently ride the bus.

If you are self-transporting:

- The parent/guardian or authorized adult (at least 14 years of age) must hold the child's hand and walk them into the classroom daily. Only the parent/guardian or other authorized adults (as per the Parent Agreement Form) may pick the child up. If the staff does not know the person picking up the child, they will check the release list to make sure that person is on the list and will also ask that person for a picture ID.

- Parents/guardians or other authorized adult will be required to sign the child in when bringing them into the classroom and sign the child out when picking the child up at the end of the day.
- Children are not allowed in the center until the beginning of class. If you bring your child earlier, you will be required to wait in the car with them until that time. Teaching staff are preparing for the day and do not have time to care for your child before the beginning of class.
- Your child must be picked up at the time that the class day is over. A five-minute leeway for pick-up is acceptable. Staff has responsibilities at the end of the day that does not allow them time to care for your child.
- If you fail to pick up your child within indicated time frames, the same procedure as per bus transports will be followed. The teaching staff will make every attempt to contact the parent/guardian or other emergency contact. If no one can be located within 30 minutes, the program will contact the local police and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). All discussions with the parent/guardian regarding transportation issues will be held confidentially with the parent/guardian and never with or in front of the child.

PARENT & FAMILY SERVICES INFORMATION

Parents and providers of the Tri-County Opportunities Council Early Head Start/Head Start Program want what best for children, both in and outside of the early

childhood setting. Through ongoing, intentional and meaningful engagement with families, relationships are formed that support the healthy development of children and their families. It is through this partnership that we see the greatest gains and observe the greatest Family Outcomes. The expertise of parents/guardians is of great value and plays a critical role in the success of this program. Please see below some of the ways you can engage in your child's education and the program as a whole.

- Decision-Making (at the site and program level)
- Parent/Guardian Volunteers (examples include but are not limited to: reading a story, cutting out things at home for the teacher or Parent Child Educator or showcasing your special talent to the children and our staff)
- Facilitating an activity at one of the scheduled Family Engagement Events (running one of the activities, helping man a table etc. etc.)
- Working with your child(ren) at home on advancing their school readiness skills (example: completing the weekly School Readiness Homework Activity Sheets or enjoying activities on the Physical Activity Calendar)



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CLASSROOM CONNECTION PARENT/GUARDIAN CAFES

A portion of each Family Engagement Event is dedicated to the Classroom Connection Parent/Guardian Café. Such times are committed to empowering parents/guardians, inspiring action and supporting peer to peer connections. Led by your Family and Community Service Worker and supported by a member of the teaching staff, parents/guardians of the program will learn about:

1. How to further support their child's learning at home
2. Aid in curriculum and menu planning
3. Hear about decisions made by the Policy Council and Board of Directors
4. Take part in Parenting Curriculum discussion and hands on learning opportunities
5. Be provided with Non-Federal and Attendance Reports (site and program specific)

It is from this information that continued advancement can occur. Important to note, with the support of the Family and Community Service Worker, Parent Officers will be elected to plan and run such portions of each event. We view the parents/guardians of our program as advocates and leaders. It is from situations such as this that we inspire change, motivate action and empower parents.

POLICY COUNCIL

T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start operates under a system of shared governance. The program is governed by the T.C.O.C. Board of Directors and the T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Policy Council. Each cluster of centers elects a person to represent them on Policy Council. Policy Council works with the Program Administration on program plans, policies and procedures. Policy Council does not get involved with the day-to-day operations of the program. Some activities you will be involved in as a Policy Council member include, but is not limited to budget and grant input and approval, hiring and termination of employees, review and update of written service delivery plans, and review update of other policies. Policy Council will meet one time per month for a twelve-month period, with the exemption of July. Meetings are generally held in the evening for approximately two hours. Childcare and mileage expenses are reimbursed for each meeting and travel time. The Policy Council representative is responsible for reporting to the parent group at their class's next meeting.

SCHOOL READINESS SHEETS

As a parent/guardian, you are your child's first and most important teacher. The School Readiness Activity sheets that are sent home weekly, are aligned with the classroom curriculum and provide you with an opportunity to enjoy developmentally appropriate activities with your child. Activities are aimed at further nurturing the skills necessary for later school success and provide an opportunity for you and your child to enjoy some time together. In addition to the activities provided it is encouraged that you and your child enjoy one of the additional At-Home Activities provided by your child's teacher and/or Parent Child Educator and place the name of that activity on the line provided (Newsletter

Activity _____). As a federally funded program, we are required to have members of our community “match” the operational dollars provided to us in the form of donating time, offering service/support, etc. By doing something as simple as having fun with your child and checking off **8 activities** that you did together throughout the course of any given week on the School Readiness Activity Sheets, you can support the program in obtaining this match!!



HOME VISITS AND PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Center-Based Options: You will receive a minimum of two home visits from your child’s teacher. An initial home visit will be done at the beginning of the program year and a final home visit will be done at the end of the program year. In addition, two parent/teacher conferences will be held during the year to discuss your child’s progress. These conferences are scheduled in November and March and will be held in your child’s classroom. It is extremely important that all parents participate in these home visits and conferences.

The program also utilizes a strength-based framework to work collaboratively with families on determining direction and developing pathways to success. Successful partnerships are formed when families and staff value the unique perspectives and offerings of one another and care about common goals and positive/lasting outcomes. Through continuous and individualized support provided through home visits and phone conversations, the Family and Community Service staff will utilize the Family Partnership Agreement booklet to capture the well-being and growth of each family.

Home-Based: Your Parent Child Educator will make 90-minute weekly visits to your home to facilitate activities with you and your child. The Parent Child Educator will complete the Family Partnership Agreement Booklet (with support if needed from their assigned FCSW). Parent-Teacher conferences take place during the same months as center-based classrooms but are completed during the scheduled home visits.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT/MANDATED REPORTER RESPONSIBILITIES

As per the requirements set forth by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), all employees of the Tri-County Opportunities Council Early Head Start/Head Start program are Mandated Reporters. Within 30

days of hire, each employee is required to take the Mandated Reporter Training provided online by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). At this time, and enforced by law, all staff are required to report any suspected child abuse or supposed neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. In addition to the above training, program staff are trained on how to recognize possible suspicious circumstances, their obligation to report such and the process that follows any phone call being placed on behalf of a child/family of the program. The program is NOT required to notify the parent if an abuse/neglect report is made. The TCOC EHS/HS program is dedicated to supporting parents/guardians in any way that it can. The family service component of the program and those that oversee the services provided to our families can and will connect you with community resources that are designed to prevent potentially abusive situations before they occur.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your privacy is very important to us. All information about your child and family is considered confidential and cannot be discussed or shared with persons outside of the T.C.O.C. Head Start Program without written permission from the parent and/or guardian. All volunteers in Head Start are expected to keep information they may observe while working in the classroom or on the bus regarding a child's behaviors, home or family situation, etc. confidential. We request that parents refrain from asking staff or discussing other children with other volunteers at all times.

Children's records will be sent to the school district or program where the child seeks to enroll after leaving Early Head Start/Head Start, or is already enrolled, as long as the disclosure of information is related to the child's enrollment or transfer. If parents would like to obtain a copy, challenge or refuse disclosure of information, they must notify TCOC Early Head Start/Head Start in writing.

One of the primary objectives of Early Head Start/Head Start is to provide a network of support, resource and referral for each child/family enrolled in the program. Sometimes it may be necessary for the program to obtain additional information from another entity that your child/family has involvement with, such as a doctor, dentist, specialist, another early childhood program, etc. In these cases, you will be asked to sign a *Consent to Release Information* form permitting the other entity to release the information to the Early Head Start/Head Start program.

As a parent/guardian of a child in the program, you have the right to the following:

- Inspect and review your child's records;
- Request an amendment of your child's records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the child's privacy or other rights;
- Participate in a hearing that affords the parent full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues;
- Receive a copy of child's records disclosed to third parties unless the disclosure was for a court that ordered neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information furnished be disclosed; and
- Inspect written agreements with third parties

CUSTODY ISSUES

Custody of any Early Head Start/Head Start child is a very serious legal matter that requires good understanding, communication and cooperation between staff and parents/guardians. Any child attending the center-based classes has been placed in our temporary care by the agreement of the parent(s)/guardian(s). We follow the law regarding the rights of both custodial and biological parents. We cannot supersede those rights without a copy of a legal order of custody and/or a copy of a legal order of protection. We strongly encourage families to work out their differences and refrain from putting the program staff in the middle of disagreements.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY COMPLAINT POLICY (APPROVED BY POLICY COUNCIL 5/14/19)

Purpose: It is the policy of the Tri-County Opportunities Council Head Start Program to:

1. Ensure that Early Head Start/Head Start maintains a positive image in the community.
2. Ensure that the Performance Standards are being complied with by establishing a method of hearing and resolving community complaints.
3. Provide a mechanism by which current Early Head Start/Head Start parents may voice concerns, complaints, and/or grievances about any aspect of T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start and furthermore, may be assured of a fair hearing and resolution of the grievance.
4. Assure that all Early Head Start/Head Start parents have knowledge of and understand this grievance procedure and that they feel free to use the procedure without fear of criticism or action being taken to adversely affect the family and/or child's status.
 - **It is further understood that any parent/guardian who has a grievance and does not follow the procedures as outlined in this policy will not, under any circumstances, have their grievance taken seriously. Therefore, no official action will be taken to resolve this issue.**
 - All parties involved in the steps outlined below are to keep confidential all information surrounding the grievance.
 - At no time, may either party use aggressive or threatening behavior.
 - It is understood the appropriate Early Head Start/Head Start staff reserves the right to ask a person with skills in facilitating groups to lead a group meeting if it becomes necessary.

Procedures:

Informal Complaints:

1. An informal complaint/concern by a parent (or community member) should be addressed to the immediate staff-person that has direct control of the issue at hand. In many cases, this is the teaching staff at the center level.
2. If the above staff are unable to handle the situation to the satisfaction of the parent, then the proper supervisor should be contacted.
3. If the supervisor is unable to satisfy the parent, then the component Manager or Head Start Director will become involved (and may be involved at any level if needed/contacted by staff.)
4. All contacts made will be documented on Family Service Tracking Forms and logged into the Child Plus Data System.

Formal Complaints:

1. A formal complaint/concern by a parent (or community member) must be submitted in writing to the Early Head Start/Head Start Director.
 - The complaint in writing should include:
 - Concerned staff involved
 - The facts forming the basis for the complaint
 - Possible witnesses
 - The remedy being sought
 - Contact information and an address to receive a written response to complaint
2. The Head Start Director will investigate the issue fully, provide a written summary of the complaint and the resolution to the T.C.O.C. President/CEO for review and feedback and provide (or qualified designee) a written reply within **15** days.
3. If dissatisfied with the response of the Early Head Start/Head Start Director, the parent (or community member) may make a written request to the Policy Council Chairperson asking permission to address the Council at its next meeting.
 - The request must outline the complaint/concerns in detail.
 - The Council shall determine if they will allow the request and the amount of time allotted.
 - The Council may elect to answer the complaint/concern itself.
4. If the claimant is not satisfied with the decision of the Council, then the matter will be conveyed to the *Board of Directors* for review and decision. The decision of the Board of Directors is final and binding.

Video Surveillance

Performance Standard: 1302.47 Safety practices

Rationale: Video surveillance is an intentional practice aimed at keeping children, families, staff and community volunteer's safe.

Policy: The T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start program will use video footage for individual and team growth. Video that is grounded in empirical evidence is found at the center of self-reflection and guided learning. The use of video is central in the program's pursuit of continuous quality improvement. Surveillance cameras will be used to ensure the safety, security and well-being of children, families, staff, volunteers and members of the community.

Procedure: The T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start program has video surveillance cameras installed in all operating classrooms. At each location, cameras will record continuously during hours when children and staff are in attendance. Recordings will be continuously archived for 14 days, after which time data may be written over absent a request for preservation of the same. The T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start program is responsible for the management of the video system and has exclusive control of the release of any video recordings produced by this system. Requests to provide video recordings directly to staff, parents, leaseholders, or the general public will not be granted until guidance is provided by legal counsel. Cameras will feed to monitors in the T.C.O.C. Early Head Start/Head Start Director's office. **All areas subject to surveillance will be identified by signs that are clearly posted at the entrance of each classroom.**

Footage will be used and retained according to the following guidelines:

1. Professional development opportunities geared towards the continued advancement of individual skill, elevation of practice and ongoing program quality improvement.
2. Individual professional development requests made by staff.
3. In the event of a reported or observed incident, the recorded footage may be used to assist in investigating the incident and if necessary turned over to law enforcement or the Department of Children and Family Services personnel. All requests of video recordings by law enforcement agencies shall be coordinated through Tri County Opportunities Council attorney.
4. Observed incidents that violate established policies and procedures including but not exclusive to, state licensing standards, Child and Adult Food Program requirements or Head Start Performance Standards may result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination.
5. At no time, will persons other than those designated by Policy Council and the Governing Body have access to the footage. Personal information included in the footage shall not be used or disclosed for purposes other than those for which it was collected, except with the consent of the individual or as required by law.
6. Any video viewed will have a log that includes the following: date, time, name and signature of all in attendance.
7. If footage has been used to investigate an incident, that footage will be retained on a flash drive, stored in the Director's office, for one year after a final decision is reached concerning the incident. Video that becomes evidence in civil or criminal proceedings will be kept indefinitely unless different directives are provided by the agency attorney.