

Mississippi County, Arkansas, Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc.
"Serving the Children and Families of Mississippi County Since 1965"

Parent Handbook

Welcome to Head Start



Arkansas Better Chance, Head Start, and Early Head Start

Priscilla Johnson, Executive Director

Shirley Pulliam, Program Director

MCAEOC is committed to empowering children, families, and communities through supportive services and strong strategic partnerships.

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**MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION, INC.**

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Telephone: (870) 776-1054 Fax: (870) 776-1567 or 776-1875

PRISCILLA JOHNSON
Executive Director

Dear Parents:

I would like to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Mississippi County, Arkansas, Economic Opportunity Commission, (MCAEOC) Inc.

MCAEOC is strongly committed to the Head Start Program and the families and children we serve. Since its inception in 1965, the MCAEOC Head Start Program has proven successful in providing comprehensive health, nutrition, education, parent engagement, and social services to the residents of Mississippi County. This community-based child and family program continues to ensure that these children are able to enter school ready to learn and be competitive with children around the world.

I believe that Head Start is one of the most beneficial programs the nation has enacted. However, it cannot succeed without your continued support from you and the community. We need parents, teachers, administrators, and extended family members to join us and lend their talents to help make our Head Start program a success.

Thank you on behalf of MCAEOC, and may you find continued prosperity throughout the school year.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Johnson

*Priscilla Johnson,
MCAEOC, Inc. Executive Director*

MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, ARKANSAS, E.O.C. Inc.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Early Head Start • Head Start • Arkansas Better Chance •
Operation Parenting Edge • School of 21st Century of Yale University • HIPPY Arkansas • MIECHV HIPPY
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Priscilla Johnson
Executive Director

Shirley Pulliam
Program Director

Dear Parents:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the MCAEOC Head Start & Child Development Programs. It is quite an honor and a privilege to have you as part of our Head Start family.

During my years in the Head Start family, I have witnessed many changes. It has been a great privilege to see our many children and families pass through the program and progress on with improved lives. I have watched enrollment grow from 277 children to more than 1432 children. Currently, with an effort to increase the cost to operate and to pay the workforce, the funded enrollment is 573. However, despite the many changes that have occurred throughout our program, one thing will never change: our love and commitment to providing our Head Start children and families with quality, comprehensive services.

As we begin a new school year and move further in the twenty-first century, we must prepare for the challenges ahead. Our ultimate mission is to help bring about improved social conditions by meeting the developmental needs of children in our service area. However, none of this can be possible without you. You make a valuable contribution to our Head Start Program.

I cannot express how much we appreciate you and the value we place in having you, the parent, as part of our Head Start family. As always, thank you for your continued commitment to making this program an even better place for our nation's most valuable assets, our children.

Sincerely,

Shirley Pulliam

Shirley Pulliam
MCAEOC Program Director

Building Partnerships with Your Child's Teacher

Derry Koralek, Karen Nemeth, and Kelly Ramsey



Children's first and most important teachers are the family members who keep them safe and nurture their development. When a child enters an early learning program, the partnership between families and educators ensures that the experience is comforting and successful for all. In high-quality programs, leaders and teachers strive for respectful, reciprocal communication with families. They communicate clearly and regularly with families; they also seek information from families in various ways.

Here are some ways you can communicate with your child's teacher or program leader to create and maintain a great relationship.

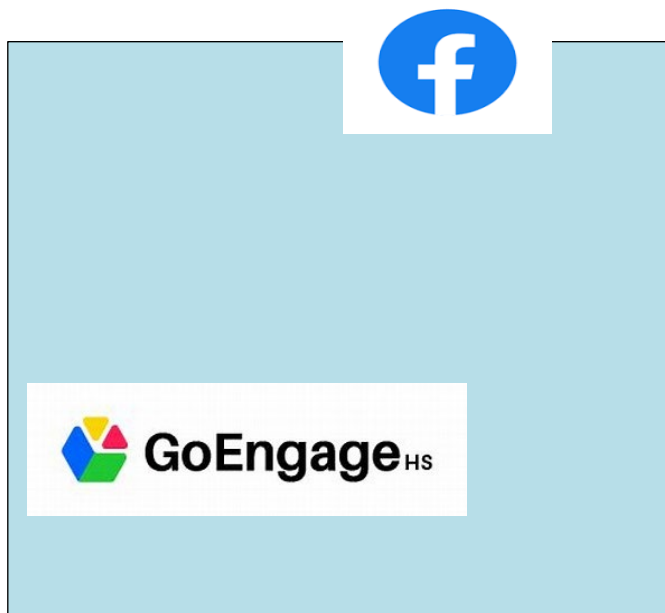
- 1. Look for opportunities to communicate early on.** Your child's first weeks at an early learning program are filled with activities. This is true whether they have attended a program for a long time or are brand-new. While there's a lot of information to take in, this is also a good time to ask questions about the program and your child's teachers. Carefully review any information the program shares—whether it's via email, on a secure website, or through papers sent home. If you have questions or need any clarification, ask.
- 2. Share information about your child.** This includes their skills, preferences, interests, experiences, and needs. Update this information regularly. The more teachers understand what makes your child unique, the more they can meet their needs, encourage progress, and celebrate accomplishments every day.
- 3. Look beyond the questionnaire.** Programs often ask families to fill out a questionnaire about their children. While this is valuable, consider sharing information in additional ways. These could include videos or audio recordings of your child playing, singing a song, or having a conversation. You also might teach program staff useful and comforting words in your home language to make communication with your child easier.

- 4. Communicate information about home.** Let educators know if something unusual or stressful is happening in your child's life. This might include a move, a change in the family's typical schedule, an upsetting event, or a challenging behavior on the way to school. Likewise, share changes in your child's development or behavior, such as a new sleep pattern or a new fine or large motor ability.
- 5. Voice your questions and concerns.** You know your child best. When you have a question or concern about them or their experience in the program, reach out to program staff to talk about it.
- 6. Let teachers know how you want to communicate.** Tell them which language you prefer and how you like to get information—whether it's via phone, text, email, paper, or a combination.
- 7. Be responsive.** Call the program to let them know if your child will be late or absent, and respond to communication as needed.

Remember that you and your child's teachers are partners in supporting your child's early education and well-being. The more teachers know about your child, the better they can support play, learning, and development. Likewise, the more that you know about how your child is spending their day, the better you can support learning at home.

This piece is adapted from "Building a Partnership with Your Child's Teacher," by the authors, on NAEYC's For Families site, [NAEYC.org/teacher-partnerships](https://naeyc.org/teacher-partnerships). The authors also have written *Families & Educators Together: Building Great Relationships that Support Young Children*, which was published by NAEYC in 2019.

Social Media



mcaeoc.org: website you will find: **Parent Corner, Parent Newsletters, Children's Daily Menu, Meet the Managers and Staff Message**

Parent Engagement has a Facebook page called: **Parent Engagement Feedback Revised. Please sign up.**

The agency Facebook page is called: **Mississippi County, AR EOC Head Start.**

The agency website is: www.mcaeoc.org

Goengage.com

Parent Surveys

Parent Satisfaction Survey

Community Assessment

A **QR Code** will be available for each survey

Our **Blackboard** is used to relay messages or announcements to our parents of upcoming events, information, and inclement weather changes.

PARENT CENTER LOCATIONS

Parent Centers' facilities provide enhancements for the parent content area.

They are located at:

Blytheville, AR: Richard B Harrison Multi-Purpose Center

801 S. Elm Street

and

Osceola, AR: Family Resource Center

404 School Street.

GENERAL PARENT INFORMATION

1. Mississippi County E.O.C. Head Start and Early Childhood Program serves children eight (8) weeks to five (5) years of age whose parents meet income guidelines by ACYF.
2. **THE MISSISSIPPI COUNTY, E.O.C. HEAD START CENTERS OPERATING HOURS ARE 8:00 A.M TIL 3:00 P.M.**
3. If your child cries at first, we suggest that you leave the building as soon as the child is under the supervision of the teacher.
4. Children must attend regularly or be dropped from the center since there is a waiting list of children who need the service.

5. A doctor's note should accompany a child who re-enters after being absent due to a contagious disease or after a lengthy illness requiring the care of a doctor.
6. If your child is ill, please keep your child at home. If your child comes down with measles, chicken pox, or any other contagious disease, please notify his teachers so that other parents may be informed. A written release from the child's doctor will be required for re-admittance to the Center.
7. When a child is not going outside for play because of illness or a cold, parents will send a note to that effect.
8. If parents are called because of illness, high temperature, or injuries to the child, they must pick up the child immediately.
9. Parents should inform the Center Coordinator or teacher of a change in home or work telephone number, so emergency information can be kept up to date.
10. If your child occasionally soils him/herself, they should have extra clothing at the Center. Bring extra clothing on the first day of school.
11. Label all your child's coats, hats, sweaters, and other articles.
12. It is requested that toys, food, or other articles not be brought to the Center.
13. Please notify the school when your child is absent on a regular day of attendance, giving the reason for the absence. Only parents and authorized persons may pick your child up from the Center.
14. To comply with Arkansas Licensing Standards, children may be interviewed by licensing personnel or special investigators.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Parent Engagement is an essential component of Head Start's comprehensive child development program for economically disadvantaged young children and their families. Stressing the concept of partnership with Head Start's commitment to working with parents has been validated by longitudinal research on Early Childhood Education programs, which proves that active parent engagement is a key factor in maintaining long-term development and education.



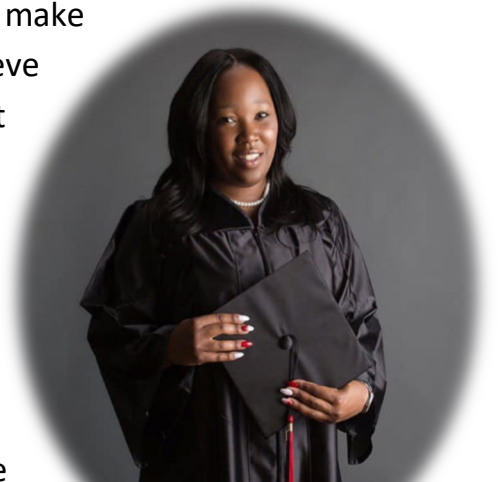
Head Start's approach to working with parents has evolved and been refined over the past 50 years. In light of current efforts to replicate Head Start's success through the proliferation of pre-kindergarten programs and Early Childhood Education programs, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of parent participation. We believe it is our responsibility to advocate on behalf of eligible families for meaningful parent engagement in the expansion of programs for young children.

HEAD START IS NOT JUST FOR CHILDREN

"Head Start is not just for children; it's for parents, too." These words are repeated annually at orientation meetings in Head Start programs across the country. Often, the person saying this is a former Head Start parent, perhaps a Parent Policy Council Member returning to encourage newly enrolled parents to discover that Head Start provides opportunities for parents to grow, achieve, and gain skills that benefit them and their families.

We do this in Head Start because we know that parents make the difference in their children's lives, and because we believe in the ability and competence of parents. Parents are the first teachers and primary care givers of their children. By strengthening and supporting parents in these roles, the Head Start Experience continues long after Head Start ends.

Each year a new group of Head Start parents makes the commitment to learn and grow along with their children. In Head Start, we invest staff and resources to support and encourage Parent Engagement; we are committed to the growth, development, and meaningful participation of parents in our program.



Ms. Rosie Thomas Head Start parent recently graduated from Arkansas State University

PARENT PRIVILEGES IN HEAD START

- To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program
- To help develop adult programs that will improve daily living for my family and me

- To be welcomed in the classroom
- To choose whether I participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the Program
- To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start
- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To expect guidance for my child from Head Start teachers and staff, which will help my child's total Individual development
- To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experiences required to fill the various staff positions
- To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skills in areas of possible employment
- To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education, and the improvement of family life.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions
- To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives
- To take part in the classroom as an observer or a volunteer and contributor of my services in whatever way I can toward the enrichment of the total program
- To provide parental leadership by taking part in elections, explaining the program to other parents, and encouraging their full participation

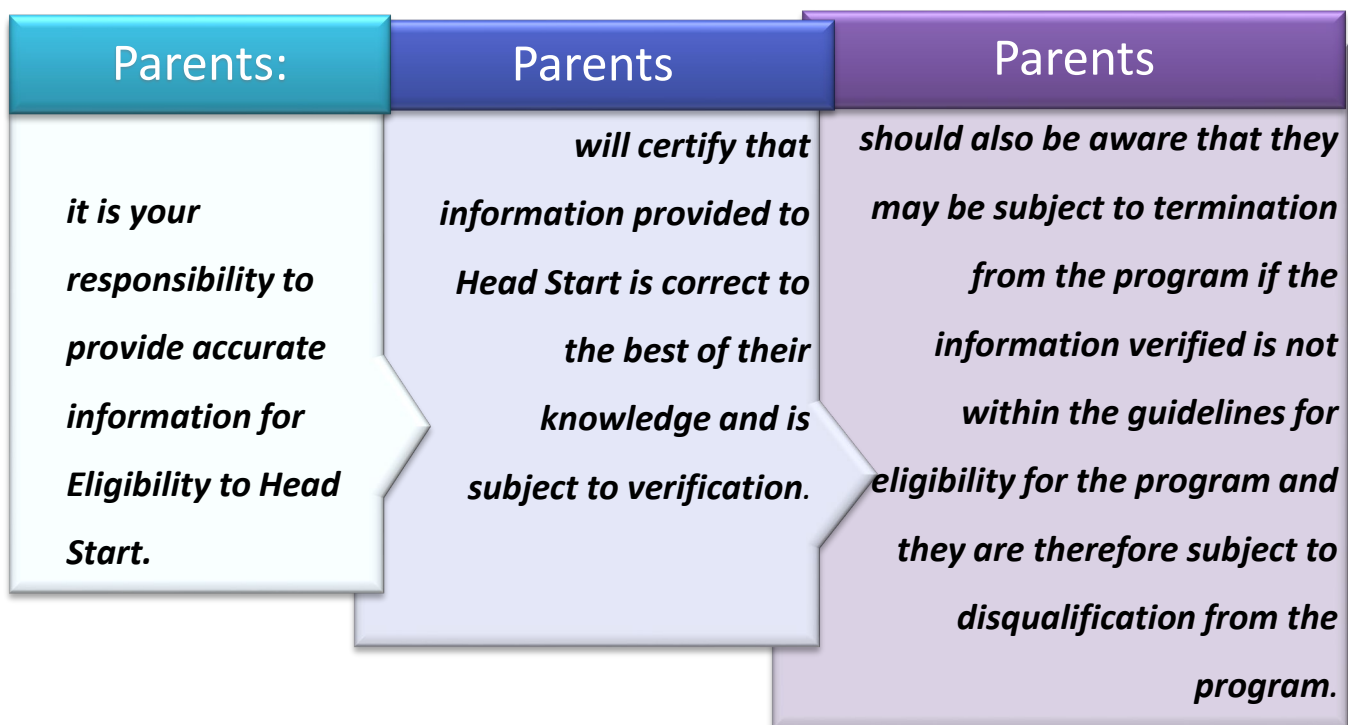
- To welcome teachers and staff into my home to discuss ways in which I can help my children's development at home in relation to school experiences



- To work with the teacher, staff, and other parents in a cooperative way
- To guide my children with firmness, in a loving and protective manner

- To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and share in evaluating it
- To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development, and my skills in areas of possible employment
- To become involved in community programs, which help to improve health, education, and recreation for all.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS



NOTICE OF PARENTS RIGHTS

All children who enter the Head Start and Child Development Programs will receive physical and other health screenings to make sure they are healthy and are developing

normally. Speech and developmental screenings are also conducted. With parental consent, some children will require further evaluations to assess areas that appear to be delayed on the screening. To ensure that these children receive appropriate services, a diagnostic team will conduct formal evaluations to identify strengths and needs

to assist in providing appropriate programming and services for them. Before the evaluation process begins, you will be notified by letter to attend a referral conference to discuss why your child has been referred, to complete a social history on your child and to obtain written consent to evaluate your child.

You Have the Right

As a parent, you have a right to:

Be notified in writing within a reasonable time before the public agency:

- a. Proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to your child; or
- b. Refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to your child.

Consent

Your written consent is necessary before the public agency may:

1. Refer your child for further evaluation
2. Conduct a comprehensive evaluation
3. Place your child in special education or related services for the first time
4. Before your consent is given, the public agency must explain in your native language, or other mode of communication, what you are agreeing to.

Evaluations and Placement Procedures

Before your child is placed in special education services, a comprehensive evaluation of your child's educational needs must be conducted:

1. When looking at evaluation results and deciding on the placement for your child, the public agency must ensure that the placement decision is made by a multi-disciplinary team, which includes people who know about your child, can interpret the evaluation results, and make suggestions about placement options.

2. This group will most likely include the classroom teacher, parents, Family Service and Partnership Staff, Early Childhood Development Staff, Disability Manager, and other specialists. You may also bring someone to help you during this meeting.



Independent Educational Evaluation

If you do not agree with the evaluation provided by the public agency or the diagnostic conclusions that were reached, you may obtain an independent educational evaluation.

Records

You have the right to inspect and review any of your child's educational records.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The public agency is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of each child's education records by:

- Permitting parents to see only the information that relates to their own child/children
- Requiring parent consent before their child's education records are given to anyone not involved in his/her child's education
- Not releasing information from education records to participating agencies without parental consent unless authorized to do so under federal law and regulations

MULTIPLE VERIFICATION AND CONSENT FORM

Parents will be given a “**Multiple Verification and Consent Form**” that consists of “Interviewing Children, Kindergarten Readiness Skills, Shaken Baby Syndrome Handout, Consent for Photo/Video Recording and Consent for Suntan/Sunscreen” to sign and date at registration.

Parents & staff pose during
Parent Meeting



FOUR KINDS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

Every Program must have effective parent participation.

There are at least four major kinds of parent participation



1. Participation in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program
2. Participation in the classroom as paid employees, volunteers, or observers
3. Activities for the parents which they have helped to develop
4. Working with their children in cooperation with the staff of the center

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS

Opportunity Responsibilities

Participant

Participate (attend) Head Start Planned Activities, Orientation
Open House/Social Events/Parties
Center/Classroom Committee Meetings

Learner

Observe in classrooms, Join Parent Education Groups, E.P., etc.
Read about Head Start and Child Development
Sign up for GED classes (High School Equivalency)
Sign up for college credit courses; attend workshops, seminars, conferences, talks

Contributor

Volunteer in various aspects of the program
Contribute ideas for improving the program
Give as much time as your life schedule will allow

Supporter

Get other parents to participate
Interpret the Head Start Program in the broader community
Support all staff in their efforts
Help in the Center whenever needed



Evaluator Evaluate the Head Start Program each year
(operating responsibility)
Identify goals for the Head Start Program

Decision Maker Participate in and attend Policy Group Meetings
Participate in County-wide, Citywide, Statewide
Policy Groups
Participate in State, Regional, and National
Head Start Associate Meetings,
Learn Decision-making, Problem Solving, and
Negotiating

Paid Employee Apply for opening on Head Start staff (if qualified),
Become qualified if not already qualified, use all that you have learned
as a parent to be an effective, sensitive, responsive staff person

Prime Work with your child to reinforce what he or she learns in Head Start

Educator Remember you are your child's first teacher
Remember you are your child's first role model
Teach your child to value education and learning

Child Advocate Understand your child's needs and meet them
Protect your child from injury and bodily harm
Know and protect your child's rights
Be an advocate for your child and other children in your community

Leader Become involved in community (school, government, health & human
services) activities; Learn the political system and how it works, use
leadership skills you have learned in or outside Head Start; Assume a
Community Leadership Role.

THE HEAD START PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK ENGAGING FAMILIES—PRENATAL TO AGE 8

Parent and family engagement in Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both

parents and children. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a road map for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families. The PFCE Frameworks was developed in partnership with programs, families, experts, and the National Center of Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. It is a research-based approach to program change that shown how an agency can work together as a whole-across systems and service areas- to promote parent and family engagement and children’s learning and development.

PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

When parent and family engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, family engagement outcomes are achieved, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school. Parent and family engagement activities are grounded in positive, ongoing, and goal-oriented relationships with families.



As research suggests, parents and family members are more likely to become engaged in their young child’s development and learning when they have positive and trusting relationships with those who support them¹ In Head Start and Early Head Start, these relationships focus on goals that families develop with the support of program leadership, staff, and engaged community partners. These goal-directed relationships are part of the two-generational approach of working with children and adult family members and distinguishing Head Start and Early Head Start from other early childhood initiatives.

They are most likely to take root within programs that take intentional steps to promote parent and family engagement.

Families play a critical role in helping their children to prepare for school and a lifetime of academic success. Agencies are required to consult with parents in establishing school readiness goals. It matters when programs engage parents and families in their children's development and learning. In fact, research indicates that:

- Children with supportive home learning environments show increased literacy development, better peer interactions, fewer behavior problems, and more motivation and persistence during learning activities.
- Among the youngest children, daily parent-child reading from infancy prompts cognitive skills as well as early vocabulary gains that lead to more reading and vocabulary growth, a pattern of growth that has been compared to a snowball. Continued family engagement is important through the school years. Longitudinal studies of low-income children show that high family involvement offsets the risks of children growing up in low-income households and in households with low parent education.

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ENGAGEMENT

The launch of the PFCE Framework marked the beginning of a new wave of technical assistance resources that were made available to programs through the National Center on

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. The PFCE Framework can be used in program-wide strategic planning, program design and management, systems of continuous improvement, professional development for staff, and with governing bodies and parent groups. It can be used to help improve program services or to inform community partners about Head Start parent and family engagement goals and the importance of those goals for school readiness. The PFCE Framework is intended to inspire a renewed spirit of collaboration with families and community partners as programs identify and take their next steps to engage parents, families, and the community to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT SERVES THREE PURPOSES

Parents' engagement serves three important purposes:



- A. **Parent Education** Through involvement in the program parents gain new skills and knowledge. They learn about nutrition, health, and child development. They learn new approaches to discipline and how to teach their children at home. They also have opportunities to gain new skills for themselves through programs that can include Adult Education, Career Development Activities, Adult Literacy, and English as a Second Language, Communications Skills, Budgeting, and Time Management. Parents can also receive training and experience which prepares them for jobs in the Head Start Program or elsewhere in their community.
- B. **Parent Empowerment.** Head Start seeks to enable parents to take control of their own lives. Lack of educational opportunity, poverty, racism, sexism, isolation and other factors often combine to create a sense of powerlessness in low-income parents. Head Start provides opportunities for parents to develop a sense of control over lives and to develop positive self-esteem and decision-making skills. They also develop the skills required to advocate for themselves and their children after they leave Head Start. Parents who develop a sense of control over high self-esteem will gain the ability to provide for their families and develop these attributes in their own children.



- C. **Maintain Program Responsiveness and Relevance.** Parents are involved in the classroom and board room of Head Start agencies. Head Start regulations mandate their personnel matters, program design, budgets, and program evaluation. Through the involvement of Head Start parents in the decision-making process, the architects of Head Start built in a mechanism that ensures continued responsiveness to the families served by Head Start.

We believe these functions of Parent Engagement are closely interrelated. They build upon one another and contribute to the positive impact of Head Start and the success of the program. Head Start parents gain new skills and understand through volunteering and parent training. With these new skills and the support of Head Start staff, parents assume new responsibilities and learn to exert more control of their lives. Parent Engagement in decision making provides an avenue for parents, to learn about themselves and about systems to exercise real authority and to bring about a change. This powerful combination of opportunities for growth coupled with the responsibility for program operation is a key factor in parents' willingness to participate in Head Start.

FAMILY FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

1. Family Well-being:

Parents and families are safe, healthy and have increased financial security

2. Positive Parent – Child Relationships:

Beginning with transition to parenthood, parents and families are to develop a warm relationship that helps them nurture a child's learning and development. This begins before your child is born.

3. Families as Lifelong Educators:

Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of your child at home, school, and their communities.

4. Families as Learners:

Parents and families will advance their learning interests through education, training, and experiences to support parenting, career and life goals.

5. Family Engagement in Transition:

Parent Engagement helps you learn your role as an advocate for your child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to Kindergarten through Elementary School.

6. Family Connection to Peers & Communities:

Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life. Encourage parent and families to participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy

development, or community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

7. Families as Advocates and Leaders:

Families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

HEAD START APPROACH TO SCHOOL READINESS

Overview

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for



Fun Day at Center- Children enjoy outside activities

school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Historically, Head Start has often led the early childhood field with a strong, clear, and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development. This includes physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, all of which are essential to children getting

ready for school. All agencies are required to establish school readiness goals, which are defined as "the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals and that appropriately reflect the ages of children, birth to five,

participating in the program. Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school, later learning, and life.

For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. Head Start recognizes that parents are their

children's primary teachers and advocates. Programs are required to consult with parents in establishing school readiness goals. Head Start programs and schools work together to promote school readiness and to engage families as their children make the transition to kindergarten. Schools will be ready for children.

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness encompasses three major frameworks that promote an understanding of school readiness for parents and families, infants/toddlers, and preschoolers. The three frameworks and their accompanying graphics provide the foundation for implementing systemic and integrated comprehensive child development services and family engagement efforts that lead to school readiness for young children and families.



Head Start Approach to School Readiness – Overview. Head Start Approach to School Readiness. HHS/ACF/OHS. 2011. English.

SPECIAL SERVICES PLAN

The Special Education Program for children ages 3 to 5 years is administered through Early Childhood Special Education at the Arkansas Department of Education. For children from birth to 3 years of age, special education is administered through the Division of Disability Services (DHS) First Connections.

Special education services are provided as a result of a child failing the developmental screening. A developmental screening must include the following areas: vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, fine and gross

motor skills, social skills and developmental milestones. The agency must refer to the LEA (Local Education Agency) or First Connections depending on the age of the child. After the referral has been made to the appropriate agency, a representative from that agency will meet with the parents to discuss their parental rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Parents of children eligible for services under the IDEA must understand the referral process, evaluation, and service timelines required under this act. A program must work to develop interagency agreements with the local education agency responsible for implementing IDEA regulations.

For any child placed on an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) the classroom teachers should play an active role in the planning of the IEP/IFSP goals and objectives. The IEP/IFSP should be implemented in the natural, least restrictive environment. A copy of the IEP/IFSP will be placed in the child's classroom folder. Records will be kept in a locked file cabinet and maintained in a strictly confidential manner. The ABC program is required to allow the special services identified on the plan to be implemented in the program setting.

THE PARENT CORNER

MCAEOC believes that parents are the prime educators of their children. Based on this information, we feel that parents are a vital part of the Head Start Program.

Parents need a special place where they can come together as a group to discuss the growth and development of their children. This also allows them an opportunity to communicate with other parents from their community. We want Head Start to be the primary resource for parents and volunteers. The “**Parent Corner**” is an important part of all the centers. Here parents can share ideas on what materials are needed to create a good working atmosphere between themselves and the staff.

Head Start wants parents to be informed about the everyday happenings in each center. Therefore, **a bulletin board** will contain information at a glance.

Our goal is to keep the parents informed about local attractions and interests. Each center has a **Lending Library**. We encourage parents to use the **Lending Library** to check out books to promote Family Literacy.

PROMOTING FAMILY LITERACY AT HOME

General

- Praise your children
- Set aside special time with your children
- Listen to your children

Oral language

- Sing and make up raps and/or chants with your children.
- Talk and interact with your child. Discuss events of the day
- Take children shopping or to concerts, the library, etc.



Writing

- Provide a writing area for children equipped with paper, crayons, pencils, and envelopes in order to write at their leisure.
- Serve as models for writing. Let them see you write grocery lists, letters, checks, etc.
- Do not criticize children's attempts to "spell" (inventive spelling)

Reading

- Serve as a model for reading
- Provide a special reading area for children
- Provide a variety of reading materials such as children's books, magazines, and newspapers
- Take children to the library and get them library cards
- Write the children's stories in print as they tell it to you
- Watch television with your children. Ask them questions about the program. Monitor and limit their TV viewing



Today's Activity: Play Simon Says!



ReadyRosie's modeled moments are designed to bring valuable lessons into real life situations in an engaging way for everyone.

You will receive a weekly playlist of videos that connect fun activities with serious learning opportunities. Who knew Simon Says could teach so much?!

How it works:

1

Families watch a 2 minute video from the playlist.

2

Families have fun learning and doing the activity.

3

Families can track progress and boost learning!



Ask your teacher
to connect you
to ReadyRosie!

LATE PICK - UP AND DROP - OFF POLICY

Policy: In no instance may a child remain at a center past the end of the child's scheduled class unless teachers are notified in advance and arrangements are made for an authorized adult to pick up the child at an agreed-upon time. The child may not remain at the center over thirty minutes past the end of his/her scheduled class.

Operational Procedure

1. All children enrolled in Head Start are picked up by the parent or designee at the end of the day.
2. The late pick-up and drop-off policy applies to parents who arrive late to pick up or drop off their children on a regular basis.
3. When parents are more than 30 minutes late picking up their children (lateness counts toward absences), teachers will remind the parents of this policy. Such parents or guardians must sign the "Late Pick Up Form" with the date and time of pick up.
4. On the second incidence of a late pick-up, the parent or guardian is given a copy of this policy in writing and are asked to sign the "Late Pick Up Form" with the date and time and acknowledge receipt of the policy.
5. If a child continually arrives more than thirty minutes late more than three times, warnings will be issued to the parent or guardian. If a child is not getting the benefit of the full program, a case conference will be held after two warnings. This counts toward the absence policy of a total of eleven missed days.
6. On the fourth incidence of a late pickup, the parent or guardian must remain in the Center for one session in the child's or another classroom. The choice of the classroom must be agreeable for teacher and parent/guardian. If this is not feasible, other alternatives will be considered ex. Parent Meeting, Parent Conference, etc.
7. If a parent or guardian fails to notify the school of a late pickup, if emergency contacts do not help, and if the parent or guardian arrives more than thirty minutes late, Children's Protective Services may be called as a last resort. In such circumstances, social workers will be called for children in foster homes.

8. Staff makes every effort possible to assist families in meeting this policy. If you plan to bring your child to school and know that you are going to be late, you should call the center no later than 8:15 am. If you need to go to do some business and know that you are going to be late picking up your child, you should pick your child up early or plan to have someone else pick your child up.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Missing a day of school here and there may not seem like much, but absences add up!

When a student misses 2 days a month..

They will miss **20 DAYS** a year.

They will miss **30 HOURS** of math over the school year.

They will miss **60 HOURS** of reading & writing over the school year.

They will miss over **1 YEAR** of school by graduation.

When a student misses 4 days a month..

They will miss **40 DAYS** a year.

They will miss **60 HOURS** of math over the school year.

They will miss **120 HOURS** of reading & writing over the school year.

They will miss over **2 YEARS** of school by graduation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy: The Head Start and Early Head Start programs keep a record of absenteeism in order to ensure the highest benefits to enrolled children and their families to make sure the family as well as the child/children's well-being is optimal.

Procedure:

Promoting Regular Attendance

1. The children are expected to attend 85% of the program-funded enrollment daily. Attendance will be documented before children have their first meal of the day. After attendance has been documented, kitchen staff should have access to the daily attendance in order to obtain a meal count for that day. If children are tardy or leave school early, teachers must document the exact times on the daily attendance sheet, and children who are present in the classroom for any period of time will be counted as present for the entire day.
2. Parent(s) must notify teacher(s) within one hour of the program start time, including the reasons for absence, an expected date of return for the child to the classroom, and the name of the parent/guardian(s) who gave approval for the absence. If no contact is made by the parent(s), teachers must attempt to contact the parent(s) to establish the well-being of the child and their family. Teachers will document the attempts made and reasons for absences on the family contact form and the child's case notes. If a modified attendance or home visits plan is recommended, teachers will inform the Family Service Staff and/or the ERSEA Specialist.
3. If absences are due to a child's documented medical condition, illness or disability, an individualized service/attendance plan based on the child's developmental or health needs can be established with the Health Service Manager, the Special Service Manager, Behavioral Interventionist and/or the Program Director. Children with disabilities may not require additional home visits or supplementation per their IEP/IFSP program plan.
4. After a child is enrolled in the program and prior to classroom attendance, teachers will review all children's folders including screenings, health records and referral notes. Children should be screened prior to their first day of attendance. Teachers will review and analyze children's attendance reports weekly and notify Family Service Advocates (FSAs) when the child/children have had two days of expected or unexpected absences.



5. If a child is absent for two consecutive days, the teacher or FSA will be required to contact the parent(s) via telephone, email, text message or in person to make a home visit to offer support services such as supplemental education or consultations with the MCAEOC Health Team, etc. Once direct contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) has been made, the FSA will enter this data in the child's case notes.
6. Within the first 60 days of the program operations the teachers, Family Service Advocates, and Center Coordinator will meet to discuss children that have been identified with attendance concerns. A plan of action will be developed to support each family and identify patterns of absenteeism that put them at risk of missing 10 percent (%) of the program days per year. Teachers will develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children such as home visits, supplement education, consultation with health managers or case management staffing and complete an action plan for any health issue(s) and/or services regarding absences.
7. When a child stop attending regularly, the program will make every attempt to contact the family and offer support to assist the family in getting the child/children back into the center. When support services have been provided and the family continues to not participant in daily classroom activities, the program director, teacher, and ERSEA staff will determine the vacancy status of the child. The ERSEA staff will notify the family in writing of the decision to terminate the services denoting the effect date and reason for termination.
8. FSAs and teaching staff will continue to monitor and follow-up until the child/children's attendance improves and/or family's concerns are addressed. All progress or lack thereof will be documented and entered into GoEngage.

TARDY POLICY

MCAEOC Head Start strives to operate a learning program where all children have the best opportunity to learn. The program encourages parents to have their children at school in a timely manner. This ensures the children of receiving the maximum benefit of learning. However, **no child** will be sent home regardless of the arrival time at school. Any child coming late will be offered a snack. If the time is after 9:00 a.m., it will **not** be counted on the USDA roster for reimbursement.

BEWARE OF ABUSE & NEGLECT

More than two thousand children die from child abuse in America each year. Many others suffer permanent injuries such as blindness, crippled limbs, burns, and brain damage which can leave emotional scars for life. Neglect is a continued failure to provide a child with needed care and protection. Studies indicated that abused and neglected children often become abusers, thereby perpetuating the cycle. Not all child abuse and neglect occur in the home; a limited number of accusations have been made against child care givers. *To ensure that this does not occur in your center, consider the following reasons why it may occur:*

- Inadequate supervision of children
- Lack of understanding of the child's physical, emotional, and psychological needs
- Unrealistic expectations of the child-demanding behavior beyond the child's ability or age
- A staff member who wants his/her needs met before the children's need
- A staff member who has low self-concept or exhibits irrational behavior

Some types of child abuse are:

Physical: shaking, beating, burning, failure to provide the necessities of life (adequate food, clothing)

Verbal: excessive yelling, belittling, or teasing

Sexual: incest, rape, and other sexual activity

Fondling: caressing, touching with sexual intent

Child abuse happens often, and its effects can be severe. Abused children may never learn to love or trust people and may have poor self-images. Abused children may become anti-social as a teenager or adult. An abused child usually becomes an abusive parent, thus, continuing the cycle of child abuse. The final tragic result of child abuse is that the abused child may end up dead.

The best assurance against child abuse or/and neglect is a well-informed, supervised staff and a good child development program offered in your center. Staff must be alert to signs of abuse.

They should watch for these indicators: *repeated injuries, bruises, welts, burns, neglected appearance, child left alone, badly nourished, inadequately clothed, wandering at all hours, extreme changes in behavior, loss of appetite, overly anxious*

to please, withdrawal, school failure, aggressive or disruptive behavior, running away, delinquent behavior, fear of a person, intensive dislike at being left somewhere with someone, interest in knowledge of sexual matters, expressing affection in ways inappropriate for a child at that age, torn or stained underclothing, vaginal or rectal bleeding, pain, itching, swollen genitals and vaginal discharge.

All MCAEOC Head Start and Child Development staff is mandated by law to identify suspected child abuse or neglect. Calls made to report suspected child abuse and neglect may be anonymous. The Statewide Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-482-5964 and is available 24 hours a day.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

1. Behavior guidance shall be individualized and consistent for each child; it shall be appropriate to the child's level of understanding and be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
2. Physical punishment shall not be administered to children.
3. Acceptable behavior guidance techniques include:
 - a. Look for appropriate behavior and reinforce the children with praise and encouragement when they are behaving well.
 - b. Remind the children daily of the rules by using clear positive statements regarding how they are expected to behave rather than what they are not supposed to do.
 - c. Attempt to ignore minor inappropriate behavior and concentrate on what the child is doing properly.
 - d. Use brief supervised separation from the group only when the child does not respond to a verbal command which instructs the child as to how he or she is supposed to behave.
 - e. When a misbehaving child begins to behave appropriately, encourage and praise small positive steps rather than waiting until the child had behaved for a long period of time.

- f. Attend to the children who are behaving appropriately, and other children will follow their example in order to obtain your attention.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

No child shall be dismissed, suspended, or expelled from the program for behavioral problems. Discipline shall:

- a. Reflect positive guidance
- b. Be consistent and individualized for each child
- c. Such discipline should be appropriate to the child's level of understanding.

Please Note: Corporal punishment is an unacceptable method of discipline and shall not be used.

When a child presents challenging behavior, teaching staff follow the standards of NAEYC Accreditation:

- Observe the child to identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that may predict and may contribute to challenging behavior
- Rather than focus only on eliminating behavior, teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, adult or peer support and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that:
 - provides safety of the child
 - provides safety for others in the classroom
 - is calm
 - is respectful to the child
 - provides the child with information on acceptable behavior (*from Accreditation Standards, National Association for the Education of Young Children*)

Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private and focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success (*adapted from NAEYC*).

If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services required to meet their individual needs. If a child has a disability and is in the process or has been identified under (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) IDEA, the program shall follow state special education rules and regulations.

For any child also receiving special education services, appropriate staff from Education Cooperative or school district shall have access to the child at mutually agreeable times during the program day in order to provide services outlined in the child's IEP.

For any child receiving the intervention services of special education, the program shall collaborate with special education professionals to ensure appropriate services. Early Education Special Education teachers shall have access to any information pertaining to a child receiving special education on a need-to-know basis.

A child shall not be dismissed from the program due to lack of toilet training skills. Nor may a program refuse to admit a child because of toilet training issues if the child meets all other age and income eligibility requirements.

The program shall assist children not, yet toilet trained with cooperation and enthusiasm. The Program shall not employ toilet-training techniques which could seem to be a form of punishment or shame to the child. The Program is encouraged to include the parent or guardian in any plan so it may be reinforced at home. Funds from the programs may be used to purchase resources necessary to support toilet training.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The use of discipline is not to be humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to children. Discipline is not, for any reason, to be associated with food, rest, toilet training, or isolation for illness. Labeling a child as "bad" or "naughty", etc. will be avoided. Inappropriate punishment, unnecessary restraint, scolding, shouting, harsh treatment, isolation without supervision, verbal abuse, sarcasm, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family or any type of physical punishment will not be tolerated. Any of the above actions will be grounds for disciplinary action.

The form of discipline that is acceptable for all Head Start Staff is positive redirecting, stating the rules to children in simple terms, talking with parents when the need arises, so they are aware of the techniques used at school. Only in extreme cases, children may need to be isolated from the group. In this case, the child is exhibiting behavior that will be harmful to others or themselves.

VISITING POLICY

All visitors must report to the *Center Coordinator's* office when entering the center. The Center Coordinator will explain the requirements to the visitor.

PAID SLOTS FOR CHILDREN

Mississippi County, Arkansas, E.O.C. Early Childhood Education Program paid slots offer these services to children between the ages of six weeks to five years at the State rate. As an increasing number of mothers are entering the work force, it has become vital that Mississippi County, Arkansas, E.O.C offers paid slots as an alternative to the Early Childhood Education Program. The Child Development program provides educational, nutritional and Parent Engagement services. Paid slots are not inclusive of other comprehensive services, like Early Head Start. In other words, parents/guardians will not be paying for Head Start services.

The program offers quality childcare services, along with individualized educational programs. We believe that good early childhood programs will enhance a child's ability to communicate ideas, feelings, and get along with others. As a result, children who attend a high-quality early childhood program are more likely to succeed in school and later in life.

The MCAEOC Early Childhood Education Program offers full-day services. The hours of operation for your child/children will be determined by the School District in which the Head Start center is located in. Anyone interested in this program may apply at any Head Start Center or Parent Center.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

It is the goal of the Mississippi County, Arkansas, Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc. to operate facilities that are free from threats and acts of violence.

The agency will not tolerate violence of any type, from any source. This includes threatening or violent actions by employees, parents, clients, or visitors. Reports of such acts will be taken seriously with the police being promptly called to the facility and charges filed when necessary.

While MCAEOC will never expel a child for parent behavior, the company reserves the right to transfer a child/ren to a different facility as needed to maintain the safety and wellbeing of both families and employees.

PARENT ACTIVITY FUND

The Mississippi County EOC has allotted funds in the budget for Parent Activities. This includes funds for food, travel, training, and other planned activities proposed by parents.

The purpose is to assist parent committees and policy groups in planning, coordinating, and organizing parent activities with the assistance of staff. This will ensure funds are set aside from the program budget and are used to support parent activities. As a result, the Head Start vision for parents will create and sustain a partnership and collaboration with all Head Start parents with the following goals:

- ✓ *Support parents as primary educators, nurturers, and advocates for their children;*
- ✓ *Provide every parent with opportunities for a significant experience in Head Start*
- ✓ *Ensure that parents are involved in making policy and program decisions for their Head Start Program.*

FIELD TRIP POLICY

All field trips will be approved by the Program Director. Requests for field trips will be made by the Center Coordinator and Transportation/Facilities Coordinator at least 15 workdays prior to the scheduled field trip. All out-of-town field trips must be parent-planned activity and staff will accompany parents. Field trips are defined as leaving the facility such as nature walks, motor transportation (*Preschool classroom only*).

All classrooms are expected to regularly participate in field trips. Permission slips will be signed by the parent or guardian authorizing the child to be taken on specific field trips; at least 3 days prior to the field trip. Parents will be encouraged to

attend/volunteer. Families will not be charged for anything related to special events, such as: shirts, food, and field trips.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Head Start follows the same schedule as the Public-School system.

FIRST DAY NEEDS

Head Start children will need a complete change of clothes, including socks and underwear for emergencies. Clothing needs may change according to the seasons and should be replenished according to the child's use.

Parents shall sign a statement stating they have received a copy of the handbook and understand its contents. MCAEOC SHALL MAINTAIN A COPY OF THE SIGNED STATEMENT IN THE CHILD'S RECORD.

HEALTH

Parents will be responsible for their child/children's physical and dental examinations. Parents are also responsible for all follow-up services needed.

Disabling conditions are also identified and addressed. Follow-up medical treatment, dental care, and psychological services are provided as needed, with transportation provided by Head Start.

PARENT PERMISSION CONSENT

All children enrolled in MCAEOC HEAD START PROGRAMS must have an age-appropriate, up-to-date Oral and Medical exam in accordance with the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) scheduled and be fully immunized. This is a Head Start and State Child Care Licensing requirement.

All enrolled children are required to have all age-appropriate immunizations according to state immunization guidelines and provide a current immunization record showing vaccines are up to date. A child who is not up to date may be temporarily admitted into the program, but immunizations are to be "in process" to being brought up to date within fifteen (15) program days after original admission.

MEDICATION POLICY

Medication will not be administered to children unless written permission and written instructions for administering medication is obtained from the parent or guardian.

The RN must be notified before administering medication. We encourage the parent to administer medication before and/or after Head Start hours. In the event medication must be administered during classroom hours, **ONLY DOCTOR-PRESCRIBED MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED**, and we encourage parents to come to the center and administer the required dosage. If medication must be administered by staff (ex: parents working during classroom hours, etc.) A special consent form must be filled out and signed by the parent or guardian before dispensing medication. A copy of this consent form will be kept in the child's folder, and the original will be retained by the Health Associate. In the event a staff person must administer medication, **ONLY ONE STAFF PERSON, PER CENTER** (with the assistance of the Center Coordinator) **WILL BE ASSIGNED TO DO SO AND ONLY DOCTOR-PRESCRIBED MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED.**

A written schedule reflecting the time and required dosage must be posted in the child's classroom. ***Confidentiality will be maintained for the child/children receiving medication.***

CONSENT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL TREATMENT

At the time of enrollment, each parent must sign a Consents/Permissions/Agreement Form for emergency medical or dental treatment by a licensed medical professional, which includes physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice nurses, doctors of osteopathy or dentists while under the care of MCAEOC Head Start for treatment. This care may include examinations and any test, which in the opinion of the physician or dentist, are deemed necessary or advisable.

MCAEOC will be responsible for transporting the child/children from the source of emergency to the dentist or physician. This does not include the right to perform surgical operations or transferring to another facility without further consent from the parent.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND DENTAL PLAN

Each Head Start center will have access to a copy of the Emergency Medical and Dental Plan. It will include the following:

- At the time of enrollment, each parent will be asked to sign a permission and consent form to secure medical and dental attention.
- Each center will post the telephone numbers of the nearest hospital and doctor's office in clear view near the telephone. They will also post the phone numbers of the Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance Service, Medical and Dental providers. Emergency contacts and a contact where parents can be reached must also be posted. These numbers and names etc. are confidential information.
- The RN will be familiar with Head Start Insurance Forms and will contact Emergency Health Care Providers for services when needed.
- In-Service training in First Aid will be arranged by the RN for Head Start staff.
- At least one staff person in the center will be trained in First Aid. Our goal is to have at least half the staff trained in First Aid.
- In the event of an accident, the Center Coordinator or other staff person in charge will assign a person trained in First Aid to attend the injured.
- A copy of the Procedures for Accidents and Emergencies will be posted in the classrooms.

Order of Phone Notification

1. Call the Emergency Room
 2. Call Physician
 3. Notify Parents
 4. Notify Head Start RN or Health Associate
 5. Notify Program Director and Head Start Business Office.
- a. Depending on the seriousness of the injury, the victim will wait for an ambulance or be transported by the Head Start vehicle to the nearest emergency facility.
 - b. Upon arrival at the emergency facility, one person will stay with the injured victim while the other person gives needed information to the admitting personnel of the hospital or emergency facility.

SANITATION PLAN

Hand washing is essential in the Head Start centers for all staff and volunteers. Proper hand washing will eliminate germs and help stop the spread of infectious disease. To wash hands properly, staff, children, and volunteers will follow these steps:

- Children will wash their hands in the presence of an adult
- Use soap (liquid soap preferred) and running water
- Wash back and front of hands thoroughly slightly past wrists, between fingers and under fingernails
- Rinse well
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Turn the faucet off with a paper towel
- Throw paper towel in the trash can

Hands will be washed:

- ✓ After toileting
- ✓ Before setting tables
- ✓ Before eating
- ✓ After playing outside
- ✓ As needed

Bleach is effective in the elimination of germs. *A mixture of one-fourth cup of bleach in one (1) gallon of water is the bleach mixture referred to.*

Bleach will be used to clean and disinfect surfaces, utensils, clothing, linen, gloves, etc. exposed to body fluids. It will be used for commodes, urinals, sinks, changing tables, etc. after they have been cleaned with soap and water, and sprayed on the walls in the bathroom. Walls will be cleaned on a regular basis and sprayed at least once daily with the Bleach mixture. The Bleach mixture will be sprayed on the bathroom floors daily after they have been mopped. This will be done as often, at any time, or on any other articles, surfaces, etc., as deemed necessary by the staff to help eliminate germs. Use a solution of 1/4 cup of bleach to one (1) gallon of water (1 tablespoon to 1 quart) to disinfect toys, furniture, and other surfaces.

HEAD LICE

MCAEOC Head Start adheres to a “live infestation” policy regarding head lice. Parents are informed and given a copy of the Head Lice Policy during Parent Orientation. If a child has head lice a parent or guardian is contacted to take the child home. A child may be re-admitted when it is determined that the child is completely free of lice. For more detailed information, see *Head Start Head Lice Policy*.

GRIEVANCES PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNITY AND/OR PARENTS

All complaints or issues concerning the Head Start program, its’ policies, children, and/or operations come to the attention of the Program Director. These concerns will be discussed between the Program Director and the complainant. A signed statement with two copies will be made for further investigation. If the complaint cannot be resolved, then it will be forwarded to the Executive Director and later to the Policy Council.

In the event the complaint still is not resolved, and an appeal is warranted, the following steps are necessary to carry out the grievance procedure:

- The Executive Director must have the written appeal notice within ten days of the Policy Council’s decision.
- A meeting must occur with the Mississippi County EOC Governing Board within five (5) days of the notice.

METHOD OF HEARING OR RESOLVING COMMUNITY GRIEVANCES

The MCAEOC Head Start Policy Council has the greatest responsibility to establish a method for hearing and resolving community complaints about the MCAEOC Head Start Program

As a component for the community human services network, Head Start has the responsibility of working with others in the network and in the community at large, for maintenance and development of the community.

SMOKING & PROHIBITED SUBSTANCE POLICY

All MCAEOC buildings will be smoke-free. The following policy applies to all Head Start facilities:

- Head Start programs must prohibit smoking at all times in all space utilized by the program. This includes classrooms, staff offices, kitchens, restrooms, parent and staff meeting rooms (used in the evenings as well as during the day), hallways, outdoor play areas, and vehicles used for transporting children.
- The use of illegal drugs is prohibited in or on the Head Start Center property.
-

PARENT SUPPORT

Parents are provided opportunities to serve on the Parent Committee, Focus Groups, Policy Council, Health Advisory Committee, UAMS & MCAEOC Health Fair, Early Childhood Advisory Committee, Family & Community Partnership Committee, Self-Assessment Team, and Special Projects: **Fatherhood /Male Engagement** and **Healthy Marriage**.

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

MCAEOC assists in providing children with a smooth transition from preschool into kindergarten. At a minimum, transition activities must include the utilization of individual child data, getting parent information on kindergarten registration, ensuring the transfer of records to parents and/or kindergarten teachers, kindergarten orientation, and open communication with local school districts on kindergarten issues.

- There is a written contract with all seven public school districts in Mississippi County
- ABC and Head Start receive information regarding kindergarten registration
- Transition folders include: shot records, birth certificates, physicals, and social security card
- Records are transported by MCAEOC staff to public schools
- Kindergarten orientation occurs at parent meetings and on Step-Up Day
- Local school districts communicate openly with the 21st Century Coordinator and Head Start Director
- Parents are invited to the public-school activities in order to become familiar with rules, regulations, and routines in public school
- The Kindergarten Readiness Indicators from the Arkansas Department of Education are taught to children and discussed with parents throughout the school year
- Children and parents participate at the public-school sites for Step-Up Day
- Each child is provided a Transition Packet by Head Start that includes reading and math materials that can be used during the summer months.

- Head Start and 21st Century purchases and provides a booklet, *“Parents’ Guide After Head Start: Success in Public School”*.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

“To encourage marriage and promote the well-being of children, I have proposed a healthy marriage initiative to help couples develop the skills and knowledge to form and sustain healthy marriages. Research has shown that, on average, children raised in households headed by married parents fare better than children who grow up in other family structures. Through education and counseling programs, faith-based, community, and government organizations promote healthy marriages and a better quality of life for children. By supporting responsible child-rearing and strong families, every child can grow up in a safe and loving home.”

FATHERHOOD/MALE ENGAGEMENT

The Fatherhood Initiative is a program with a purpose. It recognizes the fact that many young children come from single-parent homes. It is a fact that children who have parental engagement do better in school, especially when there is male involvement. The Fatherhood/Male Engagement program seeks activities and opportunities for father and child interaction. We encourage not only male involvement but, in those cases, where children have no father present or available, we welcome uncles, grandfathers, cousins, and male figures who simply see the need and want to meet it.

HEALTHY MARRIAGE INITIATIVE

Each child deserves a chance to become healthy, happy, and productive citizens of society. We understand that for this to happen, each child must emerge from healthy, happy and productive homes. The Initiative provides education and information concerning healthy marriage. It will also embrace and embellish the principles that will nurture marriage unions and provide the foundation that will be necessary if we are to manufacture the scholars and thinkers for tomorrow.

SHORT TERM EXCLUSION POLICY

Policy: MCAEOC Head Start does not exclude any child from enrolling or participating in the program because of health concerns or disability. The program will review each child's needs individually. Arrangements will be made to provide the child with whatever support he/she needs to ensure the best possible experience with the Head Start Program.

Procedure: Any child with a compromised immune system or condition which could become life threatening if exposed to a contagious disease will be asked to stay at home until the risk has decreased. The child may have to remain out of the program for two weeks following the last documented case. The child's place in the classroom will be held open until he/she can return. Every effort will be made to maintain a safe, healthy environment for the children, their families and the staff.

ABC REGULATIONS

No religious activities may occur during any ABC day and no ABC funds may be used to support religious services, rituals, prayer, instruction, or programming at any time.

PREPARING, FEEDING, AND STORAGE OF HUMAN BREAST MILK

Policy:

MCAEOC will support and encourage mothers who choose to provide human breast milk for their infants.

Procedures:

- A quiet, private, and comfortable area will be provided for the mother to pump breastmilk.
- Handwashing facilities and hygiene supplies will be readily available: towels, disposable wipes, gloves, and bottled drinking water.
- Work schedules will be modified to accommodate staff while on duty.
- Mothers will be assisted with breastfeeding as needed.
- Non-frozen expressed milk will be labeled appropriately in a clean and sanitized container and immediately placed in the refrigerator.

- Container will be labeled with the child's first and last name, date and time expressed.
- Unused refrigerated milk will be returned to the mother at the end of each day.
- Breastmilk will be discarded from the bottle after child is finished eating and bottle rinsed.
- Frozen breastmilk will be stored immediately in the freezer for up to three (3) months, labeled appropriately.
- Frozen breastmilk must be thawed in the refrigerator or under warm running water. Once thawed, it cannot be refrozen.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE POLICY VISUAL AND AUDIO

Mississippi County, Arkansas, Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc., uses video surveillance equipment with sound to enhance safety measures, training, and quality improvement; verify compliance with safety standards; support staff accountability; document incidents; and protect against liability.

In accordance with the Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers, video recordings are made available to licensing staff upon request. Photos or video recordings with sound shall not be made of any child without prior written permission from the child's parent or guardian. Written permission documentation allowing MCAEOC to photograph or videotape their child is kept in the child's folder.

Cameras are installed at the main exits and entrances, in the lobby and reception areas, hallways and transition areas, classrooms, play and learning areas, playgrounds, and drop-off zones. MCAEOC does not place cameras in bathrooms, diaper-changing areas, staff break rooms, nursing or feeding privacy areas, or any space where a person has a

reasonable expectation of privacy. Footage is not for sharing with the public, social media, or marketing. Signs will be posted in areas with recording devices.

Only MCAEOC directors and other assigned technical team members are permitted to remove, reposition, dismantle, adjust volume, or turn equipment on or off. Technology suppliers or vendors may adjust equipment only with prior authorization from MCAEOC directors.

Only authorized individuals may access recorded footage. This includes, but is not limited to, Arkansas licensing investigators, law enforcement officials, insurance representatives, designated compliance/safety officials and staff, directors, and others as stated by local, state, and federal law. Only MCAEOC directors and approved technical personnel are permitted to access or monitor cameras on mobile devices.

Each childcare and resource center has audio and visual capabilities. Audio and video recordings will be kept for at least 30 days and managed securely to protect privacy.

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CHILD MALTREATMENT or ABUSE INVESTIGATION POLICY

Safety Practices (45 CFR Part 1302.47)

Personnel Policies (45CFR Part 1302.90)

Management Systems (45 CFR Part 1302.101 (a) (b1) (a1) (a4) and 1302.102 (a4) (b1)(d)

GOAL STATEMENT:

MCAEOC makes every effort to address matters related to standards of conduct, ongoing monitoring, continuous improvement, and the safety and well-being of children and employees, to help ensure the delivery of effective, high-quality program services.

POLICY:

MCAEOC maintains a strong commitment to quality for the children and families it serves, employees, and the community by conducting fair, impartial, and timely investigations of child maltreatment or abuse.

PURPOSE:

Children's safety must always be a priority at MCAEOC. When allegations of misconduct, safety violations, child abuse/neglect, policy breaches, or other incidents that may affect program integrity arise, an internal investigation may be conducted.

PROCEDURE:

Parents, staff, volunteers, contractors, and community members may file a report (complaint) by submitting a written, signed statement to the appropriate party as described in this policy. Verbal reports will also be accepted and considered official. Anonymous reporting options may be available based on MCAEOC's whistleblower policy. However, the reporter may be required to sign a statement as the investigation progresses. All investigations are handled promptly and fairly by the Health and Safety team or Human Resources. Investigations are conducted in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and practices to protect children, staff, and the community and to ensure due process. If external agencies are involved, the investigator will cooperate fully and pause the internal investigation if directed by law enforcement, while continuing internal safety measures.

Reports (complaints) may be made by email, postal mail, or in person. Virtual and in-person meetings may be requested to discuss the report. The investigator will determine the course of action based on whether the report comes from a parent, client, employee, or community member. The Program Director must be notified of all reports of misconduct and investigations.

Information related to investigations is shared only with individuals who need to know. Based on the investigation, the investigator(s) should determine whether the allegation(s) were founded, unfounded or inconclusive. This determination should be documented in writing and included in the investigative report.

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

As a classroom volunteer, you can:

- **Sign the Sign-In form and Volunteer In-Kind form (on all visits)**
- **Spend your first visit observing the children, staff, and environment**
- **Establish a rapport with staff and children**
- **Learn as many names as possible**
- **Have a meal with the children**
- **Go on field trips, parties and special events as a volunteer**

If you volunteer, you will need an up-to-date volunteer file. This will include a volunteer application, reference checks, copy of an application for

child abuse and neglect, central registry check, copy of a current health card, signed oath of confidentiality, volunteer job description, and record of volunteer training. Proof of a criminal record check is also necessary for volunteers.

Since Head Start is a program designed for the development of the total child, all learning experiences and services must be coordinated with the staff. This will eliminate too many demands on the child at one time.

PARENT RESOURCES

Period of PURPLE crying	<u>National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome – PURPLE Crying</u>
Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head	<u>National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome – Learn More</u>
ARKids First	<u>Arkansas DHS – ARKids First</u>
Kindergarten Readiness Skills Checklist	<u>Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist for Families – PDF</u>
Kindergarten Readiness-main resource page	<u>Arkansas DESE – Early Childhood Education Resources</u>
Your Medical home	<u>AFMC – Health Resources & Tool</u>