Parent Handbook

Welcome to Head Start / Early Head Start 2025/2026

C.A.R.D. Head Start and Early Head Start want to ensure that all Parents and Guardians have information about important policies and guidelines within our program. This portion is provided for you to use as a handbook reference throughout the year.

Policies in this handbook include:

- Policy for Confidentiality
- Sibling Policy
- Participation Restrictions Criteria
- Motor Vehicle Safety Policy for Children
- Attendance Policy
- Policy for Abandonment
- Child Abuse / Neglect Reporting Procedures
- Field Trip Guidelines
- Guidelines for Visiting Animals
- Health Guidelines (including Head Lice Policy)
- Head Start Policy on Discipline
- Compliment and Complaint Procedure
- Volunteer Policy

You will also find other important information that will help maximize the benefits you receive from participating in our fine program.

LICENSING: A **Compliance File** is kept at each center. The Compliance File is accessible to parents and available for review upon request.

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Policy for Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained in Community Action Resource and Development Inc. (C.A.R.D.) Head Start at all times. The Head Start Community and Staff determine the confidentiality policy each year. This is done through parents attending Parent Committee Meetings, Policy Council, and Health Advisory Board Meetings. The Head Start centers and central office keep locked files of all children's records and relevant family information. Managers and Specialists are responsible for keeping their files shut and keeping keys in an appropriate place. Lead Teachers in each center are the primary individuals responsible for keeping necessary and relevant child information confidential and maintaining the keys' location. In the absence of the Lead Teacher, the Assistant Teacher is responsible. Family Workers also keep locked files and are specifically trained in appropriate confidentiality practices for their work with families.

Head Start Parents are the primary source of information about themselves and their children. Information sought from Parents will be limited to what is essential for services. During the initial interview process of each Head Start family, confidentiality will be addressed by the Teaching and Family Services staff. At this time, staff will discuss the need for **Release of Information (ROI)** forms, written permission for all screenings/observations, and the need to discuss family information with other appropriate Head Start staff.

Parents and volunteers are prohibited from viewing records other than their children's. Children's health, education, and family services information records will only be accessible to Head Start staff and designated consultants or professionals on a "*need-to-know basis*. Volunteers are prohibited from discussing children other than their own with the staff or other parents/guardians when volunteering in the classroom.

Staff may need to review records for:

- Updating records for each child
- Documenting referrals and family contacts
- Follow up on medical/mental health/nutritional concerns
- Update growth charts & immunization records

Consultants may need to review records for:

- Assessing health records, screening results, nutritional concerns, social service needs, etc.
- Conducting reviews (Federal Monitoring, audits, licensing, etc.)

Consultants must present I.D. to staff and sign in the front of every folder they review

Managers and Specialists may need to review records for:

- Monitoring staff completion of proper forms (ex., Family Partnership Agreement, Head Start Application, Health/Dental/Nutrition/Mental Health forms, etc.)
- Follow up on services for children and parents, such as referrals, DHS assistance, etc.

An authorization to release information (ROI) signed by parents will be used to give and obtain information to appropriate referral agencies for services.

No information will be released to anyone outside the program without written and signed consent from the family, except in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

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Sibling Policy

The following sibling policy will be observed at Head Start and Early Head Start centers:

1. **Siblings are not allowed in the classroom during program hours.**
2. **Siblings may attend parties or special activities at the center; restrictions *apply:***
    a. Siblings must always remain with their parent(s) while at the center
    b. Parents are solely responsible for their non-HS/EHS children while attending events at the center
3. **Parents are responsible for ALL their children during events held at locations other than the center.**

Inclement Weather Policy

At C.A.R.D. Head Start, the safety and well-being of our children, families, and staff is our highest priority. This Inclement Weather Policy outlines how we handle situations caused by severe weather conditions, ensuring everyone stays informed and prepared.

1. Closure and Delayed Opening Notifications

In the event of severe weather (e.g., snowstorms, ice storms, flooding, or other dangerous conditions):

- C.A.R.D. Parents will be notified of closures or delays via:
    - Email notifications.
    - Updates on our social media pages and website.
    - Local news station announcements.

Please ensure your contact information is up-to-date with your family service worker to receive timely notifications.

2. Early Dismissal

If weather conditions worsen during the day:

- Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible.
- Please ensure you or an authorized emergency contact can pick up your child promptly in such situations.

3. Attendance During Severe Weather

- If your area is experiencing hazardous conditions and you cannot safely bring your child to school, please notify your child's teacher or the main office.
- Absences due to inclement weather will not be penalized.

4. Safety Reminders

- Please dress your child appropriately for cold weather, including warm coats, hats, gloves, and sturdy footwear.
- Always exercise caution in our parking lot and walkways, as icy or wet conditions may occur.
- Please limit unnecessary travel but if traveling, securely buckle children into car seats, wear seatbelts and exercise caution.

5. Updates and Further Information

- For updates and additional information, check our website: cardheadstart.com, local news stations and our Facebook page.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we work to keep everyone safe during inclement weather.

Participation Restrictions Criteria

C.A.R.D. Head Start/Early Head Start welcomes and encourages full parent and family involvement in all aspects of the program.

- Parents and guardians are expected to follow all HS/EHS policies and demonstrate appropriate behavior while in HS/EHS centers or attending HS/EHS events and activities.
- Parents and guardians who exhibit inappropriate behavior that disrupts the daily operation of the program and have been advised of the inappropriate behavior but continue to demonstrate the inappropriate behavior may have restrictions placed upon their participation in the program. The child's involvement will be unaffected, however.

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Children in Motor Vehicle Safety Policy

This policy aims to protect innocent children from being injured or left alone in a motor vehicle. No children will be left unattended in a motor vehicle on Head Start/Early Head Start property.

All children at our facility must be secured in a car seat or booster seat appropriate for their age, height, and weight, in accordance with best practices and safety recommendations.

Definitions:

Child-Anyone under the age of 14

Unattended Child- A child who an adult does not accompany.

Motor Vehicle- Any automobile, truck, truck-tractor, motor bus, or motor-propelled vehicle not exclusively operated or driven on fixed rails or tracks.

Anyone who violates this policy shall be subject to the following:

- 1st Offense- Oral reminder from HS/EHS staff at your center
- 2nd Offense-Written reminder sent to your home
- 3rd Offense-Written notice to local law enforcement

If staff suspects the pick up driver is impaired or under the influence of drugs, the staff will do the following:

1) **ask you to contact someone else to come pick up the child**
2) **if impaired person refuses and leaves with a child in the car, staff will contact local law enforcement.**

Child Abuse and Neglect

C.A.R.D. Head Start is required by Oklahoma Law to report injuries or behavior which may be suspicious of child abuse or neglect to DHS or any suspicion of human trafficking (adult or child) to local law enforcement.

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Together we can keep children safe!

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Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is required to receive the full benefit of all the services provided through Head Start.

Please limit absences to instances such as illnesses or emergencies. You, the Parent or Guardian, must call the center in the morning if your child cannot attend or will be late for class. Classroom hours vary from center to center. Children must arrive no later than 15 minutes after start time. Meals are ordered early in the morning, and we want to ensure we order enough food**. To ensure the safety of children, staff will attempt to contact parents when a child has an unexplained absence one hour after class begins.** If a child is unexpectedly absent for 3 days with no call/no contact from parents or guardians, CARD Staff will attempt to conduct a home visit to establish why the child has been absent and help develop a plan for the child to return to class. When a child misses *5 unexcused days* of class, the ERSEA Coordinator will send a letter to the parent or guardian. An individual attendance improvement plan will be used to aid in improving attendance with input from the family and staff. When a child misses *10 days* of class unexcused, a second letter will be sent informing the parents or guardians that their child's attendance has not met standards. If the center has an active waitlist the child may be placed back on the waiting list until arrangements have been made for the child to attend regularly. After arrangements have been made, the child may return if an enrollment vacancy exists.

Policy for Abandonment

Children must be picked up within 15 minutes after the end of class. **These minutes are only for emergencies and require prior notification to center staff. Failure to pick up a child or arrange alternative child care is considered *abandonment.***

Parents should discuss alternative child care with the center staff to be sure their child has a safe alternate plan for unexpected emergencies. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make certain emergency contacts are up to date at the center. Any changes to your child's pick-up list must be made in person, NOT over the phone or email/text messaging.

First Occurrence:

- Call all home and alternate numbers provided by parent/guardian
- Discuss with the parent /guardian the consequences of failure to pick up a child
- The teacher or center staff will notify DHS that the child has been abandoned and request that the child be taken into their custody (after the staff leaves for the day)

Second Occurrence:

- Call all numbers provided by parent/guardian
- If a late pick up of 15 minutes or more after your child's scheduled pick-up time occurs two or more times, a meeting with the Family Advocate will be required to develop a plan supporting timely pick up.
- If, after an hour, we have not been able to reach you or someone listed as an Emergency Contact, we will call the local child protective services and request that the child be taken into their custody.

Releasing Children

Children will only be released to their parents/legal guardian or the adults they designated. All parents/guardians will sign the Child Pick-Up Authorization form (AD045) at the enrollment home visit. **ONLY** those listed (by parent/guardian) on this form will have authorization to pick up a child.

A confidential code for emergencies will also be needed. When someone other than those listed needs to pick up your child, please contact your child's center. You will be asked for the code you provided and the name of the individual picking up your child. Proper ID will be required to verify anyone on the list that the staff are unfamiliar with. If a parent/guardian wishes to add or remove anyone from the approved list, the parent/guardian **MUST** come into the center and remove that person. For safety reasons, phone calls or text messages will not be permitted to change the emergency code, or add/remove someone from the list. Staff CANNOT be listed to pick up.

Safety for Everyone

A child may be sent home for the remainder of the day with the approval of the Head Start Director, Mental Health Manager, Education Manager, or Education Specialist under the following circumstances:

If a child seriously harms another child or staff member

If the child's behavior threatens the health and safety of the child or other children. Serious harm is defined as, but not limited to:

- **Intentionally wounding a child or staff so that blood is evident (biting, scratching, hitting) or intentional wounding such as pinching, hitting, kicking, choking, etc.**
- **Physical intimidation, including choking or threatening with an object which could harm another**
- **Excessive verbal threats occurring out of the context of the play, which occur more than twice (i.e., "I'm going to kill you")**
- **Individual verbal threats coupled with physical intimidation**
- **Property destruction that presents a threat, such as pulling or pushing shelves over or throwing sharp or heavy objects**
- **Overt sexual behavior that interferes with other children or staff, including, but not limited to, touching oneself in view of others, touching other's private areas, continuing sexual acting out after redirection, etc.**

These behaviors will be documented, and the Mental Health and Education Manager or Specialist will be notified before any child is sent home or placed on short-term exclusion. The Mental Health Manager, Education Manager/Specialist, and the child's parent/guardian must be notified of the behaviors that have occurred as soon as possible.

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Health Guidelines

Head Start and Early Head Start centers require that we protect the health and safety of all children participating in our program. Therefore, all children are visually inspected or checked for problems that may harm themselves or others.

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following:

- Temperature above 100.4°F anytime within 24 hours before school (before fever medicine is given)
- Vomiting or diarrhea anytime within 24 hours before school
- Open and draining skin sores
- Unknown or unfamiliar rash
- Red, inflamed, or draining eyes or ears
- Constant cough or nasal drainage
- Signs of pain – stomach ache, headache, sore throat, etc.
- Unusual tiredness, paleness, or irritability
- Any infectious disease

When you doubt your child's health condition, please play it safe for them and the other children at your HS/EHS center by keeping them at home!

Your child may be sent home from school if they have any of the following:

- Elevated temperature of 100.4°F or more
- Vomiting since admission that day. A decision will be made based on feedback we get from staff as to whether the child needs to go home after the first occurrence of vomiting or if we want to wait and see if it happens a second time.
- Diarrhea or loose stools
- Constantly crying, fussiness, unexplained lethargy
- Symptoms of the illness include red throat, constant cough, red, inflamed eyes or ears, rashes, contagious conjunctivitis, drainage from eyes, ears, etc.
- A reportable illness or contagious condition that has not been sufficiently treated to reduce the health risk to others
- Break out with Chicken Pox, measles, lice, scabies, ringworm, or impetigo that appears untreated and contagious to others.
- Significant respiratory distress
- A bacterial infection such as Streptococcal pharyngitis ("strep throat") or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy (antibiotics)
- Difficulty participating in program activities comfortably
- **Any** condition requiring more care than HS/EHS staff can provide without compromising the health & safety of other children

Health Guidelines (continued)

C.A.R.D. Head Start / Early Head Start Head Lice Policy and Procedures

When screening a child reveals that a child has head lice, the parent will be notified and asked to pick up their child. The child will be excluded from the center until treated with a head louse shampoo. When the child returns, the teacher will check/re-check the child to ensure that the child is lice-free before being readmitted to class. The Parent will be responsible for following the head lice treatment calendar (H054A - can get a copy from the center staff). The calendar includes the following steps:

- Use of lice treatment shampoo
- Comb out lice/nits from hair using a lice comb
- Check other members of the household for lice or nits (treat if infested)
- Clean the entire home
- Perform lice/nit re-checks and comb daily for 7-10 days

If lice are found on the 10th-day re-check, the parent will repeat the use of lice treatment shampoo, combing, lice/nits out, check other members of the household for lice/nits, clean the household, and begin another lice/nit re-check and comb daily for 7-10 days.

If lice are found on the 2nd 10-day re-check, the parent will be given a Medical Referral form (H037) requesting the child be taken to their health provider for assistance, bringing the results to the center before the child can be readmitted.

Information about TICK REMOVAL: If a tick is found on a child while at HS/EHS, with the parent's signed consent, staff will follow the program's removal procedure.

Information about BED BUGS - **Introduction vs. Infestation:** "Introduction" occurs when a bed bug enters a bed bug–free area by traveling on clothing, belongings, or shoes from an infested area. If an introduction occurs, the health team will be informed, and identification will be determined. The child's clothing will be changed, and the current clothing (and belongings, if applicable) will be sealed in a plastic bag and isolated. If the center has a clothes dryer on site, the items will be heated in the dryer for 20 minutes at 120 degrees (dry heat kills all stages of bed bugs). The child's parent/guardian will be notified, and resources will be shared. The site will be inspected for signs of a possible infestation. "Infestation" is defined as bed bugs living in the environment, reproducing, and feeding. If an infestation is suspected at any of our sites, families will receive notification, professional exterminators will be contacted and recommended actions and treatment will occur.

Health Guidelines (continued)

Poison Exposure: If poison exposure to a child occurs while attending HS/EHS, program staff will call the Poison Control Center and follow the instructions given by the operator. A poison exposure report will be completed by staff, the incident will be recorded on the Injury and Poison Log, and DHS licensing will be contacted to inform them of the incident.

Medication Administration: Each medication requires a Permission to Give Medication form (H019) and a Medication Information form (H019 B1) to administer. If a child has more than one medication, a set of forms for each medication will be required. Forms must be filled out completely and signed by the child's doctor and parent/guardian. All medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, prescribing doctor, dosage, and frequency. Any unused or expired medication must be returned immediately to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot or will not pick up the unused or expired medication, staff will contact the Health Manager or Specialist for proper disposal. If medication does not require refrigeration, it will be stored in a cool, dry location out of reach of children in a clearly labeled medication bag. **NO** medication is to be sent in the child's backpack. If the parent/guardian cannot deliver the medication personally, it must be delivered by an authorized person, such as a daycare provider, bus driver, or adult family member previously approved by the parent/guardian.

Sunscreen Policy: C.A.R.D. HS/EHS's policy is to administer sunscreen to every child with a signed parent's consent. If we do not have a signed consent form on file, we will not be able to apply the sunscreen to your child. Sunscreen will only be applied to children over 6 months of age. Head Start will supply the sunscreen. If your child has allergies to sunscreen or you prefer a specific brand, you must provide an alternative sunscreen. Sunscreen must be store-bought, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. It must be labeled with your child's name and date of birth. To help minimize the risk of a child getting sunburn, sunscreen will be applied 30 minutes before sun exposure. On the days children have extended outdoor time of longer than one hour, sunscreen must be reapplied every 2 hours.

Insect Repellent: Insect repellent will not be applied without a Permission to Administer Medication form signed by the doctor. (No aerosol insect repellent, due to allergies and sensitivities)

Bio-Hazard Control Procedure: Each classroom has a bio-hazard bucket and bags to dispose of medical waste, such as syringes, needles, and lancets.

Notice of Exposure: Staff will notify the Health Manager or Specialist when a classroom or center has had a confirmed case/cases of a communicable disease. The Health Manager or Specialist will then notify the Parent/Guardian verbally, through text, email, or with a Notice of Exposure Letter. The Notice of Exposure Letter will be posted in the classroom and sent home to notify parents/guardians.

Health Guidelines (continued)

Information about biting: Biting is a common "side effect" of toddlerhood. Bites are treated like other injuries; parents will receive notification if a child is bitten. You may opt to receive notification during your work day or when you pick up your child.
What if *your* child is biting? We will not share this with other parents. We see this as developmentally normal behavior, and much like if a child throws a tantrum, we would not contact the parent with an expectation that the parent "fix it." Like any other behavior challenge, we visit with the parent to share observations and jointly problem-solve, but not in the child's presence.

Child Abuse: All HS/EHS program staff are required to report child abuse and neglect immediately upon becoming aware of it. If program staff notice any suspicious injuries or behavior of an HS/EHS child, they will immediately document the finding on the "Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Forms" (CAN-010 & CAN-010A). Program staff will then call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-522-3511 to make a report. Reporting cannot be done anonymously. After reporting, the program staff will call the HS/EHS Health team to advise them of the report, send them the completed CAN-010 & 010A forms, and notify the program director of the report.

Safe Sleep: Approved training through the University of Oklahoma Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (OUCECPD) is provided at orientation to those hired to work with infants and toddlers. All sleeping arrangements for children under 18 months of age use firm mattresses or cots, and for children under 12 months of age, a firm mattress will be used as appropriate. Children under 12 months will not have soft bedding materials or toys in the crib.

Accident/Illness Incident Reporting: If an accident or illness occurs while a child is at HS/EHS, 1st Aid procedures are followed by staff. An Accident/Illness report is completed, and the parent/guardian is notified (by phone, face-to-face, text, or email). If medical attention is required, the parent/guardian is advised to seek medical attention. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, staff will seek appropriate medical care on the child's behalf. If medical attention were required, the child would need a medical release to return to HS/EHS.

If you would like further information, please contact your County Health Department or the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

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Guidelines for Visiting Animals

- Each animal may visit the classroom for no more than 2 days per month
- Animals may remain in the classroom no more than 8 hours per day
- All visiting animals must be appropriately vaccinated and free of disease
- All visiting animals must be properly caged or restrained during the visit
- Parents/guardians will be notified of visiting animals before visits
- Teachers must check health records and be aware of all allergy problems with all children before animals visit. The animal must be immediately removed from the classroom if any child shows signs of an allergic reaction during the visit.

If animals are kept as part of the classroom, the following guidelines must be observed:

- Parents/guardians are advised of the presence of animals
- The animal must be in good health, not showing evidence of any disease, does not present a threat to the health, safety, and well-being of children
- Local ordinances pertaining to animals on the premises are followed
- Animals are maintained in a visibly clean manner
- All vaccinations must be current and on record at the center
- All reptiles are inaccessible to children
- Animals are restricted from areas where food is stored, prepared, or served
- All outdoor play areas are kept clean of any animal excrement or litter
- If an animal bites a child and the skin is broken, the Health Manager/Specialist, parent/guardian, and (if necessary) Health Department is notified. The incident is documented as other injuries would be
- Fish are the only animals permitted permanently in the classroom

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Head Start Policy on Discipline

Our goal is to teach self-regulation. This is achieved by:

- Building self-esteem,
- Teaching children to resolve conflicts peacefully,
- Positive redirection and providing choices
- Setting good examples and limits for the children,
- Encouraging children to talk about their feelings and validate them
- Teach children how to deal with feelings in a positive way
- Being fair and non-judgmental
- Being consistent
- Supporting the development of self-regulation
- In only certain instances, positive time for reflection is used

Compliment and Complaint Procedure

Compliments

Compliments from Parents and Community Partners are welcomed and appreciated. When a verbal or written compliment is received, the local Center Supervisor or Representative will forward documentation to the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Manager, who will then present the documentation to the Head Start/Early Head Start Director.

Complaints

- When a verbal or written complaint is received from a Parent or Community Partner, it will be brought to the attention of the local Center Supervisor or Representative. If that person is involved or unable to resolve the issue, the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Manager will be contacted for advice, assistance, or intervention.
- If the resolution is not obtained, the Center Supervisor and PFCE Manager will notify the HS/EHS Director for assistance
- If a resolution still needs to be obtained, the situation may be presented to the Executive Director and then to the Policy Council. This will be in the form of a formal written grievance. No further action is required if a mutual resolution is reached between the complainant and administrative staff. The process will be documented and filed at the central office.

C.A.R.D. Head Start/Early Head Start -School Success & Readiness Plan

C.A.R.D.'s leadership recognizes that the following goals are broad statements outlining the knowledge and skills necessary for preschool children as they prepare to enter kindergarten. These goals will focus on various developmental areas, including social and emotional development; language and literacy; physical development and health; approaches to learning; and cognitive development, which encompasses mathematics and science. The goals are detailed below:

- Social & Emotional Development: Children will learn to recognize and manage their emotions, attention, impulses, and behaviors.
- Language Development: Children will effectively use language to communicate their needs and express ideas to both adults and peers. They will also start to understand and utilize oral language for conversations and communication.
- Literacy Knowledge and Skills: Children will demonstrate an understanding of print and its usage.
- Approaches to Learning: Children will show persistence in their learning and exploration.
- Cognitive and General Knowledge: Children will begin to investigate their environment, discovering what objects and people do, how things work, and how they can cause things to happen.
- Physical Development and Health: Children will develop control over small muscles, enabling them to use utensils, manage self-care tasks, engage in building activities, write, and explore their surroundings.

Operational Procedure:

C.A.R.D. Head Start/Early Head Start has created school readiness goals and plans as appropriate, to be reviewed annually or as needed.

C.A.R.D. Head Start/ Early Head Start focuses on the development of children ages 0-5 years in physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. The program focuses on developing the child, enhancing and developing skills, self-esteem, and academic preparation.

Data related to school success and readiness will be collected quarterly for analysis, which will assist in knowledge of recommended training for professional development and changes needed in the program.
The data collected is listed below:

- Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) for the current school year
- Health/Dental exams and screenings
- Disabilities (Individualized Family Service Plans [IFSPs] and Individualized Educational Plans [IEPs])
- Mental Health (behavior plans, referrals)
- Professional Degreed staff (# of each type)
- Education (child) PIR
- Family and Community Partnerships PIRs (family goal setting, social services, and referrals)
- Education Outcomes Report

Educational Child Outcomes:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment data will be analyzed for fall, winter, and spring, and recommendations for professional development, curricula, and parent involvement will be made for the upcoming quarter and school year. Early Head Start will similarly analyze the data collected four times a year using DRDP.
- Teaching Strategies GOLD provides added tools to be used to enhance letter knowledge, number concepts, and shape recognition and will strengthen the underlying literacy skills goals utilized alongside Creative Curriculum Literacy.
- Head Start program staff are trained in Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
  Scores are documented and reviewed by CLASS observers to determine strengths and areas for improvement to support staff training and professional development..
- Ongoing Monitoring and Self-Assessment are utilized for program planning and staff development.
- Dual Language Learners - A language survey is completed on all children to determine how the assessment toll can best be utilized.

Transitions:

Change is HARD! Parents are supported in becoming their child's advocate as they transition into Early Head Start or Head Start from home or other childcare settings. Transition begins at the time of application. Family Advocate meet and engage with parents to help them complete the application and discuss the needs of each family. Parents are encouraged to attend Meet the Teacher and Parent Orientation. Families will also receive a home visit from the Teacher/Educator before the child's enrollment. The Family Advocate will meet with the family and assist in setting goals as soon after enrollment as possible.

EHS Transition:

Early Head Start transitions look different from some Head Start transitions. EHS serves very young children and expectant moms, and the program is "year-round," so there may not be large group experiences of transitions such as Meet the Teacher , etc. Each family is supported through the many transitions which occur during a family's time in the program. Transitions come in *many* forms. Here are a few examples:

- From expectant parent to active parenting of a new baby
- From the child being at home with a parent to being in a classroom
- From being in the classroom to being in a "Learning at Home" program
- Going from EHS to HS or another pre-K program

Early Head Start journeys with the family through the transition process, and the plan for the transition is specific to that family and child. Temperament, individual, and family needs are considered in the joint planning typically done at a parent conference or home visit, and the strategies chosen. Parents have specific roles and responsibilities in carrying out the transition. A well-planned transition can make a difficult change happen more smoothly.

When a child is around 2 years old, EHS staff members start talking about the transition that will take place at age 3, and by age 2 ½, parents are asked to start planning that "goodbye" even though it's tough to think of the baby as "no longer a baby!"

Kindergarten Transition:

As Parents assume a larger role as their child's first and most important teacher, there will be initiatives to support the role of the parents as their advocate and teacher. There will be parent meetings, which involve local school staff informing parents of what their expectations are as the child enters kindergarten. When possible, some classrooms will make field trips to visit the local kindergarten classrooms. With signed permission from parents, information can be sent to the subsequent school placement. Families will receive *transition information* with informative documents for parents and activities they can accomplish with their child during the summer months to assist in preparing their child's school readiness. They will receive assessment reports and a *portfolio* with samples of their child's work.

C.A.R.D. Head Start/Early Head Start School Success & Readiness Plan *(continued)*

Special Education:

The Mental Health/Disability Manager, Content area Managers, Family Advocate, Teachers/Educators, and Specialists support parents of children with disabilities by providing information on connecting families with the services offered by the early intervention and local education agencies. Parents are informed of their rights and are actively involved during the special education referral process. Transition meetings are held for each child on an IEP/IFSP.

Special Needs:

C.A.R.D. welcomes children who have special needs. To ensure compliance with the congressional and ACYF mandate C.A.R.D. actively seeks to serve children with disabilities in the program. At least 10% of enrolled children in the program are children with disabilities.

Activities to accomplish this goal include:

- Recruitment through Child Find Outreach
- Use of the information provided by parents from medical professionals that include diagnoses; or a copy of an IEP/IFSP to determine services needed and enrollment eligibility
- Conduct parent conferences to discuss concerns, results of any evaluations, and available services
- Obtain parental consent in writing to refer a child for further evaluation; discuss results with parents
- Decision-making team made up of the parent, staff, and service provider(s) meets regularly to discuss diagnoses, placement, treatment, and follow-up of services, with all matters handled professionally and kept confidential
- Head Start/ Early Head Start staff will work with parents, schools, Sooner Start, and other agencies to secure resources for services to be provided
- Training will be provided for staff and parents of special needs children, as well as individual consultations when needed.

What is "Early Childhood Mental Health"?

"Early Childhood Mental Health" refers to the ***healthy social and emotional development*** of a child from birth to 5 years, and a growing field of research and practice is devoted to the following:

- Promotion of healthy social and emotional development;
- Prevention of mental health problems;
- Treatment of the mental health problems of very young children in the context of their families

C.A.R.D. Head Start/Early Head Start School Success & Readiness Plan *(continued)*

What is "Early Childhood Mental Health"? (*continued)*

All children and families may benefit from mental health services because promoting healthy development and preventing problems in all areas of development is a good thing. Social and emotional development is observed in how children regulate their emotions in play and behavior and in relationships with their friends and adults. So, just like we make observations (and ask parents about their observations) regarding other areas of development (like how your child uses his hands to manipulate learning materials), staff and parents are also making observations about social and emotional development (like how the child plays, calms themselves when upset, negotiates conflicts, and maintains appropriate focus on learning experiences). Social and emotional development is critically important to school success! Yes, it is more important than learning your numbers or the alphabet!!!

For more information on this topic, contact your HS/EHS staff or visit:
http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-childhood-mental-health/

Parent and Family Support Groups:

Families are offered referrals and information to encourage participation in family support groups during the school year if interested.

Parent, Family & Community Engagement:

Your child's school readiness is affected by many things. C.A.R.D. HS/EHS knows that several things need to work well to have the best outcomes for your child. Enlisting the parents in the school readiness success process opens the door for parent involvement. Parent and family engagement in Head Start and Early Heads Start is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, supporting strong relationships between parents and their children, and nurturing ongoing learning and development for both parents and children.

The Framework we use identifies these main areas for Family Engagement Outcomes:

- Family Well-Being - Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security
- Parent-Child Relationships – Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development
- Families as Lifelong Educators – Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities

C.A.R.D. Head Start/Early Head Start School Success & Readiness Plan *(continued)*

Parent, Family & Community Engagement: *(continued)*

- Families as Learners – Parents and families advance their learning interests through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, career, and life goals
- Family Engagement in Transitions – Parents and families support and advocate for their 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
- Family Connection to Peers and Community – Parents and families form connections to peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and educational and enhance social well-being and community life.
- Families as Advocates and Leaders – Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

The Framework targets outcomes for children to be ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade. Parents are encouraged to serve on Content Area Advisory Committees, Center Parent Committees, and Policy Council as volunteers and, most importantly, to have a voice in their child's learning. C.A.R.D. Head Start's Philosophy is that parents are the child's first and most important teachers. Parents are provided the opportunity for individual and family goal-setting and to participate in all areas of the program.

For more information about the Framework, visit: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family

Monthly Training for Parents:

Topics of parental interests are presented throughout the school year, such as Child Development, Behavior, Guidance, Nutrition, Fire Safety, Immunizations, etc. Parents are also notified that they may attend Staff In-Service Training and 1st Aid & CPR training. Parent training opportunities are also offered at monthly center Parent Committee Meetings.

As the annual C.A.R.D. Head Start/ Early Head Start plans are being updated, and results from the self-assessment and ongoing monitoring are utilized to ensure best practices and compliance with federal and state regulations. Community Collaborations with Public Schools are revisited each year and updated. With the Outcomes data analysis, we seek information concerning needed materials, equipment, and staff training necessary to support children's growth in school readiness skills. We expect data analysis to indicate areas in need of improvement and to identify those areas where C.A.R.D. Head Start has successfully prepared children to excel in learning.

Transportation:

C.A.R.D. Head Start / Early Head Start is unable to offer daily transportation services. However, we do encourage parents to carpool. Attending parent meetings is a great time to make friends and get a carpool started. We encourage families to contact your local Community Action Agency for information on nearby transit systems. Many communities have free or low-cost public transit. Please get in touch with your

HS/EHS center for the telephone number of the Community Action Office nearest you.

Volunteer Policy

General. To protect the rights of clients and volunteers and to properly integrate volunteers into the CARD Head Start programs, volunteers are required to:

- be at least 18 years of age and demonstrate an interest in and a concern for the needs of others;
- attend an orientation and training session
- agree to the confidentiality requirement on all cases
- wear Volunteer Badge, while on duty
- Screening requirements are less restrictive for volunteers who will not be placed in one-on-one situations with clients.

- **Individual Volunteers**-An extensive screening process is required for prospective volunteers recruited for direct care services to CARD Head Start.
- **Volunteer Groups-**In situations where a group of individuals volunteer their services for a group project such as Boy Scouts, a high school class, or military group, the minimum age requirement may be waived.
- **Student Volunteers-**Students may volunteer after a request is approved by the school and CARD Head Start program.

Head Start Classrooms

BROKEN ARROW

Southside Head Start
(Classrooms 1-7)
509 W Houston
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
(918) 258 – 3464

MAYES COUNTY

Pryor Central HS 1 & 2

708 SE 1st ST
Pryor, OK 74361
(918) 835 – 4583

ROGERS COUNTY

Catoosa HS 1-2
2607 N Old Hwy 66
Catoosa, OK 74015
(918) 266 – 6161

Claremore HS 1 & 2

1701 N Lynn Riggs Blvd
Claremore, OK 74017
(918) 342 – 8996

WAGONER COUNTY

Coweta HS 1 & 2
211 S Broadway
Coweta, OK 74429
(918) 486 – 6656

Wagoner HS 1 & 2
108 N Moss
Wagoner, OK 74467
(918) 485 – 2685/3351

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Bartlesville HS East 1
117 N Cholwell
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 335 – 3000

Bartlesville HS East 2
3618 E Tuxedo
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 333 – 0776

Early Head Start Classrooms

BROKEN ARROW

Broken Arrow Early Learning Center (BA/ELC)
411 W New Orleans Broken Arrow, OK 74011
(918) 451 – 7113

Southside Early Learning Center & Learning at Home Program
509 W Houston
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
(918) 258 – 3464

MAYES COUNTY

Pryor Central Early Head Start

708 SE 1st ST
Pryor, OK 74361
(918) 825 – 7121

Pryor South Early Learning Center & Learning at Home Program
4201 S Armin Road Pryor, OK 74361
(918) 825 – 2240

ROGERS COUNTY

Catoosa Early Head Start & Learning at Home Program

2607 N Old Hwy 66
Catoosa, OK 74015
(918) 266 – 6624

WAGONER COUNTY

Wagoner EHS
108 N Moss
Wagoner, OK 74467

(918) 485 – 2685/3351

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Bartlesville Quapaw Early Learning Center (Quapaw ELC)
513 SE Quapaw
Bartlesville, OK 74003
(918) 337 - 9355