



RWCFS

Head Start / Early Head Start

Serving Rock County & Walworth County, Wisconsin

PARENT ORIENTATION & POLICY HANDBOOK 2025-2026



Website: www.rwcfsheadstart.org



<https://www.facebook.com/RockWalworthCountyHeadStartAndEarlyHeadStart?mibextid=LQQJ4d>



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information contained in this book is important to its owner. If found, please return to the person(s) listed below.

This book belongs to: _____

My child's center and phone number: _____

My child's Classroom Code: _____

My teacher's name: _____

My family's FSC or Home Visitor's name: _____

My family's FSC or Home Visitor's phone number: _____

My child Development Specialist (CDS): _____

My child Development Specialist's phone number: _____

My child's arrival time: _____

My child's pick-up time _____

My scheduled home visit time and day: _____

Thank you in advance for your consideration.



Agency Philosophy

MISSION

In partnership with parents and collaborating with stakeholders, RWCFS will support children's readiness for school and life success, by developing independence, self-sufficiency, strengthening families and promoting social justice.

VALUE STATEMENTS

1. We celebrate every individual's strength, as well as each family's definition of itself.
2. We believe in providing healthy, safe environments and encouraging life-long learning.
3. We believe in shared leadership where opportunities are present for everyone to develop to their fullest potential.
4. We believe in every family as its child's most influential teacher and most powerful prevention mechanism.
5. We know we are stronger when we have meaningful partnerships within the community.
6. We believe healthy relationships will result when we reflect compassion, dignity, and mutual respect for diversity.
7. We believe all activities should promote the wellness and growth of our communities.
8. We embrace and encourage change to improve opportunities for our staff, children, and families.
9. We believe that our children and families deserve excellence in service provision.

Approved by the Rock-Walworth C.F.S. Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start Board of Directors and Policy Council March 2020

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBERS

Administrative Center located at the Beloit Head Start Child & Family Center:
1221 Henry Avenue, Beloit, WI 53511

Phone: 1-608-299-1500 Toll Free: 1-800-774-7778 Fax: 1-608-299-1629

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START LOCATIONS & PHONE NUMBERS

- **Beloit Head Start Child & Family Center, 1221 Henry Ave., Beloit**
Phone: (608)-299-1500
- **Community Kids EHS, 1221 Henry Ave., Beloit**
Phone: (608)-299-1500
- **Jackson Elementary, 13 N. Jackson, Elkhorn**
Phone: (262)-723-1200
- **Turtle Creek Elementary, 1235 Creek Rd, Delevan**
Phone: (262) 233-6301
- **JC-St. Peter's Church, 1422 Center Ave., Janesville**
Phone: (608) 531-0177
- **Walworth County EHS Center, 1001E Geneva St, Delevan,**

*(See section on page 3 to write in any new information regarding new classroom locations)

HANDBOOK CONTENTS

Head Start/Early Head Start Letter.....	Page 2
Assignments, Schedules & Administrative Staff Listings	Page 3
Required Records List.....	Page 4

Program Governance

Organizational Structure, Page 5

Family Engagement & Community Partnerships

HS & EHS Commitment & Family Engagement, Page 7

Head Start and Early Head Start Programming & The Basics

Pages 8-12

Volunteers

Page 13

Fatherhood & Family Services

Pages 14-15

Child Abuse Prevention-Mandated Reporting

Pages 16

Transportation Services

Page 17-19

ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance)

Pages 20

Recordkeeping

Page 21

Behavior Management

Page 22

Health and Nutrition

Page 23-27

Disabilities & Mental Health

Page 28

Center Emergencies

Page 29

Federal Requirements

Page 30

Parent Rights & Responsibilities

Page 31

Complaint Procedure

Page 32

“The World I Want Begins Within Me”

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Head Start and Early Head Start!

Your active participation in Head Start and Early Head Start is important to your child's future school success. Commit now and make your time with Head Start and Early Head Start a meaningful experience for the entire family. We need you to be our partner so that your child will be ready for their next education experience.

This Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Handbook is designed to give you the following:

- An explanation of all the services and service areas available to families.
- Answers to questions, guidance, and Policy & Procedure information in accordance with the rules and regulations we must follow set for us by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children & Family Services, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services,
- An understanding of the Performance Standards for Head Start and Early Head Start, as well as our own policies adopted by our Board of Directors and parent Policy Council.
- Information regarding center safety. A Background Check will be run for parents & volunteers who have contact with our children and would like to volunteer in the classroom.
- A list of required records as required by the State of WI and Federal Performance Standards (see page 4.)
- An explanation of our holiday policy around sponsorship from the community and gift giving (see page 7.)
- Our Program and School Readiness Goals will be given in a separate handout.

We ask that you become familiar with this handbook and use it as a tool for your child to receive the best social and educational experience possible, along with always keeping your infant/toddler and/or preschool child safe. If you do not find the answers to your questions in this handbook, you may ask any Service Area Manager, Site Supervisor, your child's teacher, or any Head Start/EHS staff person to help get your questions answered.

Our door will always be open to you. We welcome questions and suggestions. We believe your association with Head Start and Early Head Start will be a rewarding experience for you and your family.

~ Rock-Walworth Head Start and Early Head Start Staff

Administrative Center Management:

Executive Director	Emily Coddington
Fiscal Director	Vicky Mortimer
Human Resources	Brian Stults
Head Start Child Development Manager	Tamara Johnson
Health and Nutrition Manager	Michelle Genthe
Family Services Manager	Erik Perez
Early Head Start Child Development Manager	Chelsea Miller
Transportation Coordinator	Eileen Scheehle
Maintenance Coordinator	Christopher Koepke
Enrollment Specialist	Bri O'Brien
Beloit Head Start Site Team Leader	Angelita Richardson
Janesville Head Start Site Team Leader	Jennifer Webb
Walworth County Head Start Site Team Leader	Allison Kestol-Bauer
Early Head Start Site Team Leader	Pamela Allcorn

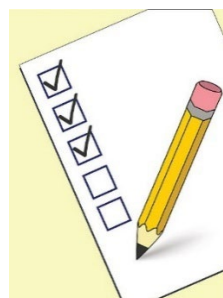
Assistants to Center Management:

Program Support Professional	Sheila Marshall
Program Support Professional	Dee Cervantes
Accounting Specialist	Linda Williams
Program Support Assistant	Toni Cox
Accountant	Lori Gonzales
Enrollment Assistant	Nancy Marx
Bilingual Program Support	Danielle Garcia
Education Support Specialist	Emily Gorges
Early Head Start Instructional Coach	Lisa Sandoval
Head Start Instructional Coach	Jennifer Haas

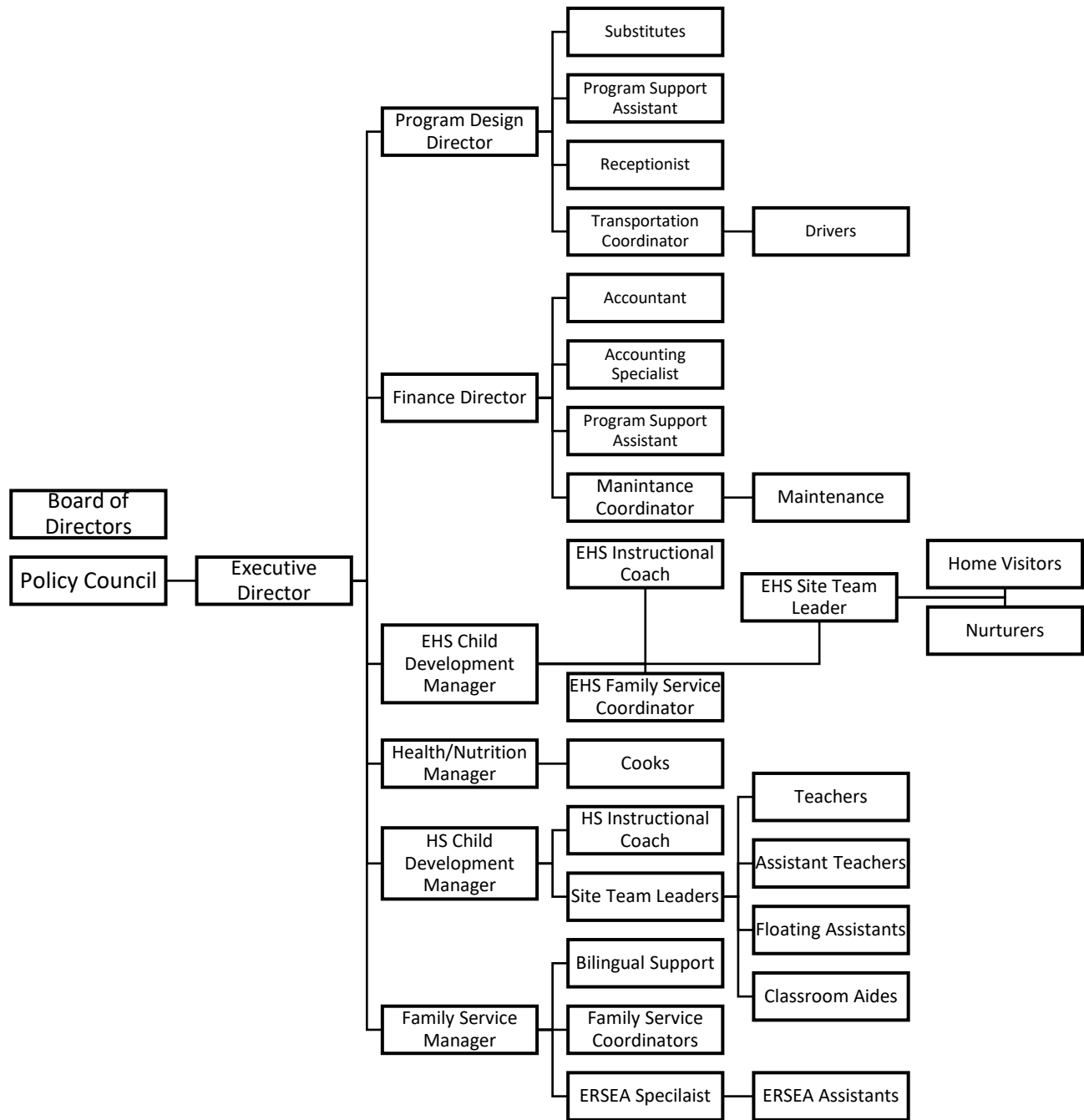
REQUIRED HEALTH & SAFETY RELATED PAPERWORK

Help us give your child a head start on their health and meet the requirement to obtain the current records for the items listed:

- ✓ **IMMUNIZATION RECORDS** *Needed to start the program*
- ✓ **MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION** *Needed before your child's first day to give medication*
- ✓ **FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS & OUTCOMES** *Needed within the first 30-60 days with two reviews after the initial agreement*
- ✓ **ASQ's (developmental screening) and ASQ-SE's (social emotional screening)** *Needed within first 45 days of a child's first day*
- ✓ **HEARING & VISION Screening** *Needed within first 45 days of child's first day*
- ✓ **PHYSICAL EXAM RECORD** *Needed within the first 30-90 days of the child's first day and must be updated as recommended (must include height, weight, lead level if over age 1, and blood pressure if over 3)*
- ✓ **DENTAL EXAM RECORD** *Needed within first 90 days of the child's first day (for children aged 1 and over); treatment follow-up records as recommended by dentist must also be provided after the treatment is received.*
- ✓ **BACKGROUND CHECK** *Only needed for parents who plan to regularly observe, visit, or volunteer in classrooms. This is a safety measure for our program as decided by our Board of Directors.*



HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM GOVERNANCE/ADMINISTRATIVE CHART



OUR AGENCY'S COMMITMENT TO PARENTS



Rock Walworth Comprehensive Family Services (RWCFS) will ensure that each parent will be:

- Treated with dignity and respect.
- Provided the opportunity to form a family partnership agreement, set personal and family goals, and develop plans to achieve those goals.
- Provided with both home visits and parent conferences to discuss their child's overall progress towards School Readiness.
- Welcomed into the classroom and encouraged to volunteer throughout the program.
- Provided with information and referrals through community resources dealing with health, education, and self-sufficiency.
- Provided opportunities to participate in program governance activities such as parent committees, health services advisory committee and Policy Council.
- Provided the opportunity to attend various trainings during the program year

RWCFS Birth to Five Goals for School Readiness

RWCFS will prepare and support children and families for success in school and beyond! Each child is unique and can succeed. Families are children's first and most important caregivers, teachers, and advocates. Children learn best when emotionally and physically safe.

- ✓ Social-Emotional
- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Cognitive
- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics

Parent Family and Community

The Family Services area represents an organized system of:

1. Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility and Attendance (ERSEA).
2. Services to build upon the individual strengths of families to meet their needs and goals.
3. Home visits, as needed, assisting parents with goal setting and assuring continuity of services offered to families.
4. Parent Family and Community Engagement

Family Service Staff use to help families include:

- Working with community agencies, making referrals as needed
- Parent meetings
- Family partnership agreements
- Family assessment and goal setting
- Information about available community resources
- Recruitment and enrollment of children
- Emergency assistance and/crisis intervention



PARENT CENTER COMMITTEES (Federal requirement):

A Parent Center Committee is made up of Head Start and Early Head Start mothers, fathers, guardians, and foster parents that attend one of the following centers: Head Start Center, Early Head Start Center or HS/EHS Center combination. The Parent Center Committee may have input in center classroom parent activities, Family Events, Socializations and decide what training or speakers they would like to invite.

POLICY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION FOR HS/EHS (Federal requirement):

The purpose of Policy Council is to provide a formal way for parents to be involved in the program planning and decision-making process of our program. The Policy Council is made up of parents and community representatives who want to support the Head Start program, and also have an interest in children, families and the community. The Policy Council members have a vital leadership role as a representative of their Head Start and Early Head Start center to receive information, training, and reports, which they take back to share with other parents at their monthly center parent meeting. Policy Council training is offered to all Council members early in the school year. The training increases members' knowledge of the Head Start program, enhances the parent/child relationship, and helps the parent in developing leadership skills. The Policy Council meets monthly at a time and location determined each year. The time and location of each monthly meeting along with information is provided to members in advance from our office. We offer Mileage reimbursed to Policy Council members. We encourage you to be a part of our Policy Council and participate in major decisions affecting the program, your children, and your family.

FAMILY NIGHTS:

Family Nights will be held 3 to 4 times a year (*as budgeting allows*) and are coordinated by the Family Service Coordinator or EHS Home Visitor in cooperation with the entire center staff. Family Nights will include food (most often a meal), a mother-father/child literacy activity, sometimes a speaker, lots of fun, and a door prize.

SPECIAL NOTES

- **CHILD SAFETY:** While attending a Family Night or any *Family Event*, parents, guardians, and caregivers must supervise their children to keep them safe. Children may not be in the hallway, another classroom, bathroom, or any area without their caregivers.
- **PHOTOS:** Some children cannot be photographed. Please check with staff prior to taking photos at playgroups or in the classroom. It's best to limit photography to pictures of your child only.
- **HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING:** Head Start & Early Head Start children may receive a holiday gift based on the offer of sponsors within the community the program is located. The goal is that each child receives a gift, but this cannot be guaranteed. You may also choose to exempt your child from gift giving, if desired. A copy of the Holiday Policy is available, upon request.



Programming

Head Start programs support children's growth from birth to age 5 through services that facilitate early learning and development, health, and family well-being. Head Start staff actively engage parents, recognizing family participation throughout the program as key to strong child outcomes. Head Start services are available at no cost to children in eligible families. Early Head Start services work with families with children aged 3, and many also serve expectant families. Head Start Preschool services work with families with children ages 3 to 5. Many programs operate both Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start services. Programs deliver child development services in center-based, home-based, or family childcare settings. All Head Start programs continually work toward our mission for eligible children and families to receive high-quality services in safe and healthy settings that prepare children for school and life.

PROGRAM DESIGN OPTIONS FOR HEAD START

Head Start Program Models:

Includes programming for 4 to 6.5 hours daily with meals, snacks and *transportation where possible*.

- 4K School District Collaboration Model
- Mixed Age Community Based Model

FIELD TRIPS AT HEAD START happening as the budget allows. You will be informed prior to the field trip. You may also refer to your Emergency Fact Sheet regarding “walkabouts.” Let your teacher know if you want to attend a field trip.

Head Start will provide:

- Programming to meet your child’s unique needs
- Learning experiences to promote success and confidence
- A variety of activities in large & small group settings
- Opportunities for children with disabilities to be fully included
- Support to parents in all areas of their child’s education
- Encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom, field trips, etc.
- Parent input in lesson plans- will be posted
- schedules and information
- Initial home visits and conferences (three) to discuss progress, goals, and transitions.

*Parents please provide an additional change of clothing for your child Talk to your family Service Coordinator if you need assistance with this.

HEAD START CURRICULUM:

RWCFS uses **Creative Curriculum for Preschool** and other researched based curriculum supplements to create environments where children feel safe and confident to explore and learn in all learning domains listed in the Readiness Goals for School Success. Creative Curriculum is comprehensive, research-based, and features exploration and discovery as a way of learning. This curriculum engages children in project-based investigations and makes every moment of the day meaningful, intentional, and engaging. Creative Curriculum is based on five fundamental principles that guide, practice, and help RWCFS understand the reasons for intentionally setting up and operating our preschool program. These five principles include:

1. Positive interactions and relationships with adults that provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
2. Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
3. Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
4. The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
5. Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

Additional curricula and resources are embedded in our services. Supporting social and emotional development through Conscious Discipline, and Second Step. Reinforcing language and literacy with Jolly Phonics and Michael Heggerty. Providing Self-regulation by using Calm Connect activities. Health and nutrition support includes I Am Moving I Am Learning (IMIL) and The Two Bite Club.

Head Start will communicate with primary caregivers on a regular basis about the program, children's goals, progress and coming events in the following ways:

1. An initial home visit, to encourage school-home connections, and to complete necessary paperwork along with three additional parent conferences to talk about children's progress and support for transitions will be set up.
2. Notices of events will be found in a folder in your child's backpack. (NOTE: It is important that you look at the folder and respond as needed. Let other caregivers who may receive your child at the end of the child's day know whether you want them to see this information. If your child does not have a backpack talk to your Family Service Coordinator. There are no schools supplies that need to be sent to Head start other than a backpack.)
3. Parent newsletters (program-wide), classroom newsletters, activity calendars, digital two-way communication and phone calls will be the other forms of communication staff use to let you know what is happening.

SPECIAL NOTE: Children do not have to be toilet trained to attend Head Start Preschool.

School Readiness Committee

Parents are invited to join the School Readiness Committee. This committee helps establish the agency's 5-year goals and annual actions steps as they pertain to preschool services. They also inform staff training and make suggestions for changes to forms, policies, and systems. Parents unable to attend meetings may contact the Head Start Child Development Manager with concerns or suggestions.



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

RWCFS Head Start and Early Head Start program recognizes and supports the Office of Head Start's (OHS) emphasis of school readiness for all our children. School readiness for Head Start and Early Head Start means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

HOME-BASED EARLY HEAD START:

Our Home-Based Program promotes secure caregiver-child relationships and helps caregivers provide high-quality learning opportunities for children. Home visits are done weekly and are approximately 1.5 hours in length. Each home visit will include three components: parent/child educational activities to promote school readiness, child development information, and family well-being which includes goal setting and accessing needed resources.

PLAYGROUPS IN EARLY HEAD START HOME-BASED (required):

Play Groups are held twice a month and are 1-2 hours long. Some of our playgroups may be offered virtually.

CENTER-BASED EARLY HEAD START

Center-based services provide families that are working or going to school with high-quality childcare services. Children are provided with enriching learning opportunities in a safe, nurturing environment. Families also receive additional services, including support with goal setting and accessing needed resources.

- *Collaborative Child Care Program*
This model offers care six hours a day, five days per week for the full year (except holidays and professional development days). Additional hours of care may be available and are provided onsite by our childcare partner, Community Kids.
- *Teen Parent Program*
A program created in collaboration with the School District of Beloit to support teens on their journey to complete high school while parenting their infants and toddlers. While their child receives care, parents can complete their work at our Beloit Head Start & Early Head Start Facility.

EARLY HEAD START CURRICULUM:

Our program uses a variety of approaches, curricula, and resources to support strong learning outcomes and readiness for school success while empowering Early Head Start families. **Program for Infant and Toddler Care** (PITC) provides EHS with a foundation of understanding that is consistent, nurturing and promotes healthy relationships between families, caregivers, and children. The **Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos** provides research-based guidance on developing safe, inviting, and enriching learning environments for children. Our home-based program utilizes the home visiting curriculum, **Partners for a Healthy Baby**, which provides specific and pertinent information for families prenatally through baby's third year. Additional curricula and resources embedded in our services include Kindermusik, Conscious Discipline and Baby Doll Circle Time.

EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START WILL:

- Provide programming responsive to the child's unique needs.
- Provide learning experiences which build on strengths, encourage success, self-confidence, and communicate respect for everyone.
- Provide a rich set of learning activities through one-on-one, small group and large group experiences with teaching staff, other children, and their families. *(Refer to page 10 on Confidentiality and children's artwork).*
- Provide opportunities for children with disabilities to be fully included in program activities.
- Support parents in becoming helpers/volunteers in support of- classroom activities, home visits, at-home projects, field trips, sharing special talents, culture and traditions, center events, and parent education training.
- Request parent input on lesson plans and post lesson plans in the classrooms for easy viewing.
- Provide schedules & program information. Parents should always check their child's backpack and Parent Bulletin Board when visiting the classroom.
- Join parents in providing consistent positive guidance to children by providing guidelines that will be used in the classroom, during home visits, and on the bus ride to and from the center.

SPECIAL NOTE: Children do not have to be toilet trained to attend Early Head Start.

Curriculum Committees

Parents are invited to join the EHS/HS Curriculum Committees. These committees help establish the agency's 5-year goals and annual actions steps as they pertain to education. They also inform staff training and make suggestions for changes to forms, policies, and systems. Parents unable to attend meetings may contact the Head Start or Early Head Start Child Development Manager with concerns or suggestions.

The Basics Parent Curriculum



Basics Insights Text Messaging

Basics Insights text messages deliver developmentally appropriate guidance for establishing strong parent-child attachments and teaching young children. The messages build strategically on conversations about The Basics 5 Principles and are occurring throughout Rock County and through certain organizations in Walworth County, it is a science-based curriculum for busy caregivers.

Basics Insights has the following features for parents and caregivers.

A parenting curriculum spanning from birth to age five. Parents and caregivers can enroll at any point.

- **Two messages per week.** The first message shares a science-based "Fact" related to the child's or caregiver's development. The second message offers a "Try This," a suggested activity related to the previous Fact.
- **Developmental sequencing.** The program uses the child's birthdate to share age-appropriate content as the caregiver and child grow together.
- **Multiple Languages.** Messages are currently available in English, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, and Arabic.

The Basics 5 Principles

1. Maximize Love, Manage Stress
2. Talk, Sing, and Point
3. Count, Group, and Compare
4. Explore through Movement and Play
5. Read and Discuss Stories



The Basics Principles are **five simple and powerful ways to boost children's brain development and learning** that are based on the latest science.

The Basics Principles are free. They do not require any fancy toys or adding hours to your day. It's all about the way you interact **during the time you already spend together.**

When **everyone in a child's life** uses The Basics Principles from the very beginning, the child arrives at school ready to succeed and thrive.



CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

In order to ensure the safety of the children in the program, parents, family, and community members will be asked to complete a short Volunteer Application each program year. Volunteer instructions will be provided to classroom volunteers during the enrollment process and during Volunteer/Chaperone trainings.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage you to share your talents, knowledge, time, and energy with us by volunteering. Some examples of parent volunteer activities include:

- Volunteering in your child's classroom.
- Attending parent committee meetings.
- Serving as an officer of the parent committee.
- Serving as a center representative at the Policy Council meetings.
- Assisting at center events, activities, and field trips.

VOLUNTEER POLICY & VOLUNTEER MANUAL

As a parent volunteer, you will be presented with the Volunteer Policy Manual training on your child's first day, **or** when you can arrange a first visit to the classroom. This training manual follows the guidelines of the **State of Wisconsin Child Care Licensing Regulations** and the Head Start Volunteer Policy and will be presented by your child's teacher, or Family Service Coordinator.

It is important you have the volunteer training before visiting the classroom regularly. After your child has adjusted to the classroom, we invite you to join us at your convenience to observe, join us for a meal, or work side by side with the teaching staff.

AT-HOME PROJECTS: What parents do at home will raise their child's outcome scores! Parents, guardians, and caregivers will be offered at-home projects with written instructions to support their child's learning and projects to support the curriculum or parenting assignments. When completing learning activities at home, please fill out an in-kind form or log it into Learning Genie. These hours help us reach our goal for volunteer hours, and ensure we are meeting the requirements established by our federal partners.

Fatherhood!!!



The Federal Performance Standards:

FATHERHOOD AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

All children need a positive male role model in their life, and they are counting on you. Fathers, who live in the home, and fathers who live out of the home are encouraged and welcomed to share in their child's Head Start/EHS experience. Male Involvement opportunities are offered to encourage fathers and other men to participate in our program. We encourage parents to get involved in their child's classroom, center activities, attend field trips, parent meetings, home activities, and to serve on committees. Every parent has something to offer.

RESEARCH SHOWS that fathers who *actively participate* in their child's education and daily activities increase their child's self-confidence, success in school and social/emotional development. Other benefits include preventing drug use, gang participation, dropping out of school and early teen pregnancy.



FAMILY SERVICES

A FEDERAL PERFORMANCE STANDARD REQUIREMENT

FAMILY WELL-BEING

FAMILY SERVICES STAFF IN HEAD START & EHS WILL help support the parent's personal growth and development, as well as the family's social/emotional health, physical well-being, and educational development as self-identified by the family.

CONFIDENTIALITY

ALL RWCFS STAFF WILL: Assure that all services to families are confidential, unless the a signed Release of Information is on file and indicates the information that can be shared, and with whom it can be shared. Artwork, children's stories, children's photos, and any activity pieces produced in classrooms and/or through home-based education and/or activities will not be used for HS/EHS publications *unless* written permission has been obtained. The child produced art may have a first name and/or class code on the front of the work and be displayed.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (Federal Requirement)

Family Service Coordinators or EHS Home Visitors will approach parents, guardians, and caregivers *early in the program year right after classes start* to complete a Family Partnership Agreement around child health or as parent's self-identify individual and family goals.

- ✓ FAMILY OUTCOMES AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS will be gathered three times during the program year.
- ✓ FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS WILL BE SUPPORTED BY FAMILY MAPPING.
Family Mapping is an activity and a visual tool for the family as well as for receiving Head Start/EHS services. The family map is done by the mother and/or father or guardian drawing and sharing family members and extended family members by using symbols. This map may include their relationships within the family, outside family member support, along with neighborhood and community support. The completed Family Map provides the family a look at their "family system." This **visual** supports the parent(s), *as well as the Family Services worker* in assisting a family that may want to make a change by identifying family and individual strengths as well as meeting their *needs and goals*.

REFERRALS FOR SERVICES

Family Service Coordinators and Home Visitors assist families in finding resources and information to help meet family-identified needs, related to the following:

Emergency food/clothing/shelter	Substance use/misuse/abuse treatment
Tenant and landlord rights	Healthy eating and activities
Budgeting (finances and food)	Medical/Dental insurance and care
Legal counseling	English language classes
Parenting classes/education	Mental Health care and treatment
Child/Family safety	Domestic violence services
GED/HSED support	Job coaching

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT (State & Federal requirement)

All RWCFS staff, under penalty of law, are mandated to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect immediately to a county human services department or law enforcement. In addition, Mandated Reporters are required to report threats of school violence to law enforcement.

There are many forms of abuse, including physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse. The definitions below were retrieved from: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cps/signs>.

Physical Abuse: In Wisconsin, physical abuse can be summarized as causing serious physical harm and injury by other than accidental means. The full statutory definition can be found in [Wis Ch. 48.02\(1\)\(a\)](#). Some injuries are a normal part of childhood. Bruises, scrapes and sometimes even broken bones can be the result of children taking part in activities that are expected for their age, like learning to walk, riding a bike or playing sports. These injuries may raise concern for physical abuse when they are unlikely for the child's age and ability, are located on an unusual place on the body and/or happen with frequency.

Sexual Abuse: In Wisconsin, sexual abuse can be summarized as sexual intercourse or sexual touching of a child, forced viewing of sexual activity, child sex trafficking or sexual exploitation. The full statutory definition can be found in [Wis Ch. 48.02\(1\)\(b\)-\(f\)](#). Sexual behaviors in children range from normal to very concerning and are highly dependent on the child's age and ability.

Emotional Abuse: In Wisconsin, emotional abuse can be summarized as serious harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning for which the parents have not provided the needed treatment. The full statutory definition can be found in [Wis Ch. 48.02\(1\)\(gm\)](#). Emotional abuse in children can be observed through behavior, emotional response or mental functioning that is outside the normal range for the child's age and stage of development. Serious harm to the child's psychological functioning is usually indicated by a licensed mental health professional.

- ❖ Domestic Violence Danger is the most serious form of emotional abuse and puts the child in continual danger of physical and emotional harm. Even if a child is not present during the violence, their sense of safety at home and in all future settings has been compromised. *This includes harm done to a pregnant mother and her unborn baby.*
- ❖ Verbal abuse are words that may be spoken daily, or in times of anger, and includes negative name calling and/or letting a child know they are not important, unwanted, or that they are a burden.

Neglect: In Wisconsin, neglect can be summarized as seriously endangering the physical health of the child by not providing necessary care, food, clothing, shelter, medical or dental care or supervision for reasons other than poverty. The full statutory definition can be found in [Wis Ch. 48.02\(12g\)](#). Neglect is the most common type of alleged maltreatment in Wisconsin, and often it can feel the most unclear. Neglect is frequently misidentified when complex family dynamics like substance use, domestic violence and homelessness are present. Any of these conditions alone do not automatically mean that a child is being neglected, but in combination with other factors, they can put a child at an increased risk for neglect. If the concern could be explained by a difference in parenting styles (perhaps differences related to hygiene, food choices, youth supervision or disciplinary practices), it is possible that the concern stems from poverty, as opposed to neglect.



Transportation

TRANSPORTATION LOCATION:

ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER 608-299-1500 OR TOLL FREE: 1-800-774-7778

Transportation in Head Start is recognized as a valuable learning experience in safety and learning social skills. Providing safe transition to and from the center the child attends require cooperation and teamwork between caregivers and Head Start staff. Transportation will only be provided to those children who would be unable to attend without it. You must live over 1 mile from the center to be eligible for bussing.

Important Notes for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers of Children Receiving Bussing Services

- ✓ **Report a child's absence at least 1 hour prior to class start time** via Learning Genie, the bus monitor cell phone, or by calling the classroom.

NOTE: If there is no response at your child's pick-up location for four (4) consecutive days, HeadStart will discontinue transportation. The caregiver will need to contact the Family Service Coordinator to discuss if resuming transportation will be an option. ****You may request the policy on Attendance and Absent Children.***

- ✓ **Have your child ready and waiting for the bus 10-15 minutes early**, in case we are running early due to other cancelations.
- ✓ **Be home and ready to receive your child 10-15 minutes prior to drop off**, in case we are running early.

NOTE: If you or another authorized adult is not available to receive the child off the bus and we have not heard from you, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Emergency Fact Sheet will be used to contact the caregiver or another approved designated individual to receive the child. The designated adult picking up the child in the place of the caregiver **must be on the Emergency Fact Sheet and must be prepared to show a picture I.D.**
2. When staff have **NOT** made contact with the caregiver/emergency contact, your child will be returned to the center. This is considered a "takeback". Four takebacks will result in transportation services being discontinued. **If no one responds, at the end of the day the local human services department or law enforcement will be contacted.**

SAFETY RULES FOR HEAD START/EHS STAFF, PARENTS & CAREGIVERS*:

- ✓ The caregiver must walk their child to the bus to pick up and meet the bus for drop off. Please hold your child's hand and walk in a straight line to and from the bus entry door. **DO NOT WALK ALONG SIDE THE BUS!**
- ✓ Bus drivers will ensure that the requested pick up and drop off are done safely. Some locations may be unsafe or cause traffic disruptions. Bus drivers do not pull into driveways or use their horn to alert you. (It is important that buses do not back out into traffic, and avoid U-turns, or backing up when possible).
- ✓ Families who live in the same immediate area may be required to bring their child or receive their child at a central "bus stop."
- ✓ The bus driver will pick up your child on the same side of the street as your residence when possible. If it is necessary for your child to cross the street to enter or exit the bus, the caregiver must accompany the child.
- ✓ The bus will only wait 1 minute at each stop. You will then be responsible for transporting your child to school; the bus will not come back to a stop.
- ✓ Each child must be signed on and off the bus by an approved adult. Children will only be released to custodial parents, guardians, or another designated adult. Authorized adults will be asked for a photo I.D. if the staff person is not familiar with the person receiving the child.
- ✓ Parents must give consent in writing for field trips and other special bus transport.
- ✓ All children must wear appropriate safety restraints when the bus is in motion.
- ✓ Head Start vehicles are always "smoke and tobacco free".
- ✓ If your child must transition to or from his/her classroom to a different assigned bus, the parent(s) must sign an Individual Service Plan (ISP).
- ✓ Backpacks with hard plastic or metal wheels and/or handles are not allowed on the bus.

*REFER TO: BUS & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY HANDOUT MATERIALS that will be distributed at the initial home visit or Parent Orientation. Please read the bus rules in the parent packet.

PICKUP OR DROP OFF ADDRESS CHANGES

Pick up and drop off changes **require a minimum of 48-72 hours' notice.** Some changes may take up to five (5) working days to complete. We are not able to accommodate all requests.

- Communicate changes to the teaching staff or Family Service Coordinator. If unavailable, call your child's center/site or the Administrative Center.
- Route changes must be approved by the Transportation Coordinator and Site Team Leader. Changes may not be approved by the bus driver or staff on the bus.
- If you move or change your address, transportation may not be available for the new address, or your child may be moved to a different classroom. RWCFS will attempt to accommodate changes and will provide transportation, if possible; services are not guaranteed.

Repeated disregard for safety rules and specific procedures may result in the termination of transportation services.



SELF-TRANSPORT: DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES

When bringing children to one of our locations for services, it is important to understand that many other parents, guardians, and caregivers will be doing the same. Center parking lots and the surrounding areas can be very busy and require 100% of your attention.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS FOR SAFE SELF-TRANSPORTING

- 1) Arrival or drop off time for self-transporting should be limited to no more than 5 minutes before class time.
- 2) Always walk your child into the center and release your child to your child's Head Start or Early Head Start teacher. If drop-off areas outside of the location are provided, ensure the Head Start representative you are dropping your child off with is wearing their badge.
- 3) Your child must be signed in and out of the classroom; this would include if you pick them up early (before class dismissal).
- 4) If your child's class is outside the building when you are walking your child to or from the classroom be sure to coordinate the child's sign in/out and release or pick up with your child's teacher.
- 5) Pick up time should be 5 minutes before class ends, or on time. Staff often must leave centers immediately after class, so it is important that you do not come late for pick-up.
- 6) The receiving adult must come into the center/site to sign the child out.
- 7) While waiting for your child in lobbies, offices, hallways, or anywhere in the center, please use inside voices and keep your younger children close to you and supervised.

IMPORTANT NOTES REGARDING TRANSPORTION

- ✓ ***Do not leave infants, toddlers, or preschoolers unattended in vehicles. This is unsafe for many reasons and reportable to the local authorities. Working with the HS/EHS staff the safest way for picking up and dropping off your child at the HS/EHS center.***
- ✓ ***Be sure you have planned for your child's pick up at the center and keep emergency contact information current.*** If you send someone in your place to pick up your child, you must let us know ahead of time and the person must be on the Emergency Fact Sheet and provide a photo I.D. Individuals on your Emergency Fact Sheet should also be informed of our self-transportation procedures.

ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE (ERSEA)

There are staff at RWCFS dedicated to ensuring children and families: are aware of the services available to them in their community; understand the eligibility criteria and how to apply for services; know what to expect when receiving services; and understand the importance of attendance. Below you will find information that may be helpful during the enrollment process and while your child is attending home-based, center-based, or preschool services.

Recruitment

To meet the requirement of full funded enrollment, recruiting children is ongoing.

Families are our best recruiters! Please share your experience with others and encourage them to apply for enrollment if they are eligible for services. You may also be interested in joining the Recruitment Committee made up of HS/EHS parents, staff, and Board/Policy Council Members. The committee helps to develop the application, selection criteria, and recruitment plan.

Enrollment and Attendance

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

☑ COMPLETE REQUIREMENTS AFTER YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN ACCEPTED: Children start in their classroom/services only after: 1) Parents, Guardians, or Caregivers have attended **Parent Orientation**, and 2) The **Emergency Fact Sheet** has been completed and turned in by the parent/guardian. **Required medical records should also be turned in.**

☑ KEEP US INFORMED OF CHANGES IN: address, phone numbers, work, or school.

☑ PROVIDE ALL COURT DOCUMENTS that relate to custody, visitation, and/or no contact/restraining orders.

☑ HAVE YOUR CHILD ATTEND SCHOOL/SERVICES EVERY DAY and notify us when your child will be absent. Parents receiving Early Head Start home-based services are expected to be present and on time for their weekly home visits, and are highly encouraged to attend the two playgroups provided each month.

NOTE: RWCFS must be notified of absences per the State of Wisconsin Child Care Licensing Regulations. If your child is going to be absent for any reason, notify your child's teacher, Family Service Coordinator, or EHS Nurturer **one hour before** the class starts, or the home visit is scheduled. When calling, inform staff of the reason for the absence and possible return date. You will be contacted if your child's absence has not been reported.

If your child is absent for two (2) days in a row without notification, or has a pattern of irregular attendance, staff will reach out to you to talk about the absences and help, as needed, to improve attendance. An Attendance Success Plan may be developed. This plan will need to be followed in order for your child to remain in the program. If your child stops attending the program, we will work with you to get your child back in school. If your child doesn't return the program will consider the spot vacant and place a child from the community waitlist.

Children who attend every day are the most successful in school and life! We are also required to meet certain attendance benchmarks to continue receiving funding. **The required average monthly classroom attendance is 85% and individual attendance is 90%.**

Withdrawing your child from the program

The parent/guardian may withdraw their child at any time during the program year. Please notify your Family Service Coordinator, EHS Home Visitor, Teacher, or Nurturer as soon as possible, and, if comfortable, provide the reason for withdrawal. You may also call the Enrollment Office.

CHILD AND FAMILY RECORDS

Recordkeeping is an important part of our programs!

Files may be accessed without parent permission by the following: Federal and Fiscal Auditors, USDA Audit, with a Judicial order and/or order from Child Protective Services.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTACT INFORMATION AND EMERGENCYFACT SHEET MUST BE ACCURATE AND CURRENT:

- ✓ Home address and phone numbers.
- ✓ Employers name, address, and phone numbers.
- ✓ Emergency contacts, addresses, & phone numbers of at least one person.
- ✓ Childcare provider's names, addresses and phone numbers.
- ✓ School locations (*example*: Blackhawk Technical College), and phone numbers.

When there are changes to contact information, it is your responsibility to tell the Teacher, Nurturer/Home Visitor or assigned Family Service Coordinator.

CUSTODY INFORMATION:

Parents with **shared custody/visitation schedules must provide** the program with copies that support the **visitation schedule** when a parent will be picking up the child from the classroom, or when the bus transports the child back home. Parents with shared custody may only make record changes for their own visitation schedule.

HS/EHS staff will assume **both parents have parental rights** to visit the classroom and receive information about their child unless we have received a copy of a valid, current court order to the contrary. The court order must be signed, dated, and entered into the court's record by a judge or court commissioner. Letters from a parent's attorney that refer to a court order **are not sufficient** to change our records regarding the child's custody and parental rights information and access to the classroom. **We will need a copy of the court documents or other legal documents as soon as possible after the order is entered and the order is effective. Court records include but are not limited to the following:**

- Divorce papers with established custody, placement and/or visitation.
- Restraining order against a parent/non-custodial parent. The order must specify that the parent is to have no contact or limited contact with the child.
- Parent guardian paperwork.

If the person picking up your child or taking your child off the bus is not listed on the Emergency Fact Sheet, the child **will not be released** to the person.

If custody is not established in the order, the mother is presumed to have placement and sole custody until HS/EHS receives a valid court order that provides for another placement or custody arrangement.

***** If needed, HS/EHS may consult with its own legal counsel to assist with questions regarding a child's placement, parental access, or related issues. *****

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR CHILDREN AT HEAD START and EARLY HEAD START

We believe in a program that encourages children and adults to respect one another, helps children control their own actions, encourages peaceful solutions to problems, and helps children develop a sense of responsibility and esteem for themselves, others, and their world. Head Start and Early Head Start work in partnership with parents and others in the community to promote these goals. **Please refer to RWCFS Positive Guidance Parent Handbook.**

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT RWCFS

Head Start requires the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of our Head Start program is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees but is the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters a center. It is important to understand the rules and expectations outlined below, and to conduct oneself accordingly.

Swearing/Cursing: No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward Head Start staff.

Threatening of Employees, Children, Other Parents or Adults Associated with RWCFS: Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats shall be reported to appropriate authorities. Parents must always be responsible for, and in control of, their behavior.

Physical/Verbal Punishment of your Child or Other Children in Head Start: When providing behavioral guidance to their children at an RWCFS function or facility, parents will use positive methods. The use of corporal punishment (i.e., physically striking a child or inflicting physical punishment) or verbal humiliation is prohibited.

Confrontational Interactions with Employees, Other Parents, or Associates of Head Start: While it is understood that parents will not always agree with RWCFS employees or the parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner and in a location away from children



HEALTH, NUTRITION AND CHILD SAFETY PROCEDURES

PRIORITIES FOR PARENTS IN THIS SERVICE AREA

- ✓ PROVIDE CURRENT PHYSICAL AND DENTAL EXAMS
- ✓ PROVIDE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM DOCTOR ABOUT SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS (IE: ALLERGIES, ASTHMA) TO DEVELOP AN INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLAN (ISP)
- ✓ PROVIDE PARENT AND DOCTOR PERMISSION FOR STAFF TO GIVE ANY NEEDED MEDICATIONS, INCLUDING OVER THE COUNTER
- ✓ PROVIDE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS IN AN ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION CONTAINER THAT IS CURRENT AND CLEARLY LABELED
- ✓ WORK WITH STAFF TO ENSURE WE GET A RECORD OF ANY NEEDED FOLLOW-UP EXAMS &/OR TREATMENT

HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START'S COMMITMENT TO WELLNESS includes a broad range of health and nutrition services for children, families, and staff. Staff will practice effective hygiene, sanitation, and disinfecting measures to reduce the spread of germs and risk of illness/disease.

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are encouraged to talk to children about upcoming screenings like hearing, vision, oral health, etc. Parents should explain that screenings are done to help us make sure their ears, eyes, mouth, etc. are healthy. Parents should explain that screenings do not hurt and that they will want to hear all about how the screenings go when their child gets home. Parents are encouraged to talk to their family service coordinator or child's teacher if they would like to know more about the screenings or for the language to use to know how to help prepare their children for screenings.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND STATE OF WISCONSIN CHILD CARE LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS

To be in compliance and continue receiving funding, we are required to obtain and maintain up to date health records for each child, and to help families find and/or maintain insurance coverage and consistent health/dental health providers.

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT for our program to have current medical information for your child. If your child's recommended physical due date comes at any time during the school year, you must provide us with a current record as soon as possible if we are to meet our program requirements.

To monitor children's health, we will provide oral health preliminary exams, and hearing, vision, weight, and developmental and social/emotional screenings with parent permission and input. To accomplish this, we collaborate with several professionals, such as hygienists, dentists, and other service providers. These providers have access to a child's records and are bound by the same mandates to keep family information confidential.

Emergencies & Injuries

Head Start/EHS staff is prepared to act quickly in a health emergency and have received training in health emergency procedures, basic first aid, infant/child CPR, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and Shaken Baby Syndrome (also known as Abusive Head Trauma).

Head Start facilities and equipment are well maintained and hazard free. Safety education (including transportation, pedestrian, and personal safety), and using “teachable moments” to discuss safety for children are promoted regularly in the classroom and on bus rides.

First aid kits are well supplied and are available in each classroom, kitchen, and bus. Fanny-pack first aid kits are also provided for use on field trips, walks and for playing outside.

When you sign the Emergency FACT Sheet, you give HS/EHS staff permission to respond to:

- medical incidents within the scope of their training.
- to call emergency medical professionals to respond to emergency medical incidents and understand that payment for these services would be your responsibility.
- release your child to authorized medical personnel in order to receive prompt medical attention.

CHILD SAFETY DURING CENTER EMERGENCIES

The center has procedures for emergency situations, such as fire, tornado, bomb threat or other disaster. The center has determined alternative locations if evacuation is necessary. For their safety, children may not be released during emergency situations such as a tornado warning or facility lock-down. Reuniting children and parents will occur as soon as it is possible to do so in a safe and organized way.

Illness Management

Short-Term contagious illnesses or conditions may temporarily exclude child from program participation to protect the health of the child, other children, and staff. **You may request a copy of the policy on Attendance & Absent Children*

In general, there are four reasons to exclude an ill child from a childcare setting:

- 1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the program activities.
- 2) The illness makes the child have a greater need for care than the caregivers can manage without compromising the care of the other children.
- 3) The child has a specific condition that is likely to expose others to a communicable disease.
- 4) The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has provided exclusion guidelines, including COVID-19.

FEVERS (Including COVID-19 PANDEMIC):

Any individual with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent home. If a fever is less than 100.4 Fahrenheit, the following policy will be used to determine whether a child with a fever shall be excluded from participation in programming: A child's temperature will be taken if staff observes one or more indicators of illness. In Early Head Start, an auxiliary or armpit temperature will be taken. Staff members will consider factors that might affect body temperature, such as strong emotional upset, high activity level, warm clothing or coverings, to avoid high temperature readings due to influences other than illness. NOTE: Our program exclusion policy is lengthy and provides greater detail regarding specific temperatures considered to be indicators of when specific age groups should be sent home or kept home. ****You may request a copy of our full exclusion policy*** if you have questions or concerns or would like to review it. Where we collaborate with a childcare program, their fever exclusion policy and procedures may be followed.

COVID-19: RWCFS will continue following guidance from our local health departments, the State of Wisconsin, and the Center for Disease Control regarding best practices to limit the spread of Covid-19 and to keep our children, parents and staff safe and healthy.

The specific conditions that require exclusion are as follows-

- **Symptoms of severe illness** such as coughing, inexplicable crying or irritability, difficulty breathing, wheezing, and lethargy.
- **Diarrhea defined** as more watery and frequent stools not associated with diet or medication change- and the stool is not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet. Children in diapers must be excluded. Children who have learned to use the toilet but cannot make it in time must be excluded.
- **Blood in stools** or hard stools- not explained by diet or medication change.
- **Vomiting** two (2) or more times in 24 hours.
- **Persistent abdominal pain.**
- **Mouth sores with drooling.**
- **Purulent conjunctivitis** (pink or red eye lining or whites of eyes with white or yellow pus coming from the eyes).
 - Lice.
 - Impetigo.
 - Whooping cough (pertussis).
 - Measles.
 - Herpes simplex.
 - Scabies.
 - Strep throat.
 - Mumps.
 - Rubella.
 - Rash with fever and behavior change.
 - Tuberculosis.
 - Chickenpox or shingles (varicella).
 - Hepatitis A.
 - Some Flu viruses

Medications & Special Health Care Needs

Prescription medications will be given to children, in accordance with Head Start standards and State of Wisconsin Child Care Licensing Regulations and only when:

- ✓ Medication is provided in an original prescription container, and
- ✓ we have a Medication Authorization form with a physician's and parent's signature on file. A new authorization must be completed whenever a prescription is changed or renewed (this is a childcare licensing regulation).

Individual plans will be developed for prompt and appropriate response to health care needs.

Non-Prescription (over the counter) medications will be given according to written instruction and written signature of a physician and with written permission and signature from a child's parent and/or guardian. Keep us informed and updated about your child's health needs.

We Are Smoke-Free!

Smoking and vaping is prohibited in all Head Start/EHS Centers, on the grounds, in the bus and at any time children are present. ****You may request a copy of our Smoking Policy.***

- Cigarette butts must not be left in places that are accessible to children or on the grounds of any locations.
- Secondhand smoke has been recognized as a health hazard and a trigger for Asthma.
- If you would like information or support on how to quit smoking, please talk with your Family Service Coordinator or Home Visitor. We would love to help.

Health & Mental Health Advisory Committee

Parents are invited to join the Health & Mental Health Advisory Committee. This committee helps establish the agency's 5-year goals and annual actions steps as they pertain to health and mental health services. They also inform staff training and make suggestions for changes to forms, policies, and systems. Parents unable to attend meetings may call the Health and Nutrition Manager with concerns or suggestions.

Nutrition

Children receive healthy meals and snacks while attending Head Start/Early Head Start. Food served meets the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program requirements.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement with Complaint Procedure (12/2022 Rev.)

"In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by mail to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
email: Program.Intake@usda.gov

Head Start staff will work with mothers, fathers, guardians, and caregivers to identify each child's nutritional needs such as:

- * Cultural or religious preferences
- * Family food budget
- * Accommodations needed for children with disabilities
- * Eating concerns or weight issues
- * Family eating patterns
- * Food allergies
- * Special diets

NUTRITION STATUS

Head Start may request your permission to obtain information that will identify nutrition needs your child may have. Program staff will review your child's height, weight, lead level and hemoglobin/hematocrit, as well as information you share with us about your child's health history, meals, and your child's eating pattern, including any concerns you have regarding these things.

MEAL SERVICE AT HEAD START

- As able, meals are served family style so children will have the opportunity to set the table, pour their own drink, make their own food choices, and help clean up.
- Children are encouraged to socialize during meals and mothers, fathers, and guardians are invited to join us during mealtimes.
- Children and staff engage in conversations during mealtimes about food color, textures, hot and cold food, and the importance of making good food choices.



MEALTIME GUIDELINES:

- 1) At no time is a child forced to eat all the food on their plate.
- 2) At no time is a child forced to eat food they do not like.
- 3) At no time is food withheld as a punishment or given as a reward.
- 4) Children are encouraged to try new foods, but never required to try new foods.

FOOD “TREATS” RULES:

Head Start will only serve children’s food prepared by Head Start or a contracted vendor.

NOTE: STAFF AND PARENTS are asked not to send or bring in food for any reason.

This allows the program to help ensure children are not exposed to an allergen or other unknown ingredient. Parents are welcome to ask the teacher for suggestions of other fun things to do.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Head Start Programs are required to do everything possible to support children and families in responding to:

- Preventing and responding to childhood underweight and overweight issues.
- Finding adequate health resources,
- Finding a medical and dental “home” and ensuring all treatment needs are met.
- Responding to individual needs like asthma, allergies, seizures etc.
- Ensuring children’s immunizations are current

Please Note: Studies show that children should receive at least 2 hours per day of moderate to vigorous exercise. Head Start requires teachers to promote good nutritional habits, oral health habits, and we try to get in at least 45 minutes or more physical exercise in a school day. We count on parents to ensure children get the other physical activity time and opportunities they need.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

PLEASE HELP US MAKE SURE THAT EVERY CHILD GETS THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES THEY NEED TO HAVE AND KEEP GOOD HEALTH ALL OF THEIR LIVES.

SERVING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

We at RWCFS believe that all children are unique and special. Each child comes to us with different strengths and abilities, and we believe that every child has something wonderful to offer. Our agency complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that children and parents, guardians, and/or caregivers with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy programs, services, and activities.

- 10% of available enrollment spaces are filled with children who have disabilities and are receiving Special Education Services.
- All children receive one or more developmental screenings to identify possible areas of strength and potential areas of concern.
- Head Start/EHS staff are available to assist parents/guardians in finding answers to questions regarding a child's specific need or development.
- When necessary, if developmental concerns arise, and with parents' permission RWCFS staff will assist families in making a referral for a professional evaluation, special education, and/or therapeutic services for their child.
- We partner with local school districts to provide Special Education Services in classrooms whenever possible, and coordinate with offsite programs to ensure that each child's unique needs are met. Early Head Start partners with Birth to Three programs to ensure children age birth to three receive beneficial services they qualify for.
- When an evaluation indicates a child may benefit from special education or related services, RWCFS staff will assist the parents and guardians in understanding their options and legal rights and responsibilities.
- Transportation and/or public-school transportation will be arranged to and from other programs when appropriate and possible.
- RWCFS staff will work with mothers, fathers, guardians, and caregivers to help children grow and develop to their fullest potential.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

RWCFS supports the health and wellbeing of children, families, and staff alike. Supporting mental health and wellness means:

- Feeling good, building on strengths, and seeing concerns as challenges that can be addressed is the program's approach. Head Start/EHS promotes good social/emotional and mental health wellness for children, parents, and staff.
- **Parents will complete a social emotional screening tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire - SE (Social/Emotional).** Parents will be informed about options they can choose to pursue if screening scores indicate potential concerns.
- Staff and parents may work together to complete further screening tools that will support efforts to address behavior or mental health issues or to decide on the most appropriate next step to address the concern.
- An Individual Service Plan (ISP) will be developed with parent input to address a child's unique needs in areas like health, toileting, behavioral, attendance and/or transportation when needed. Parents may be asked to partner with staff in the classroom to support behavioral needs if safety becomes a concern.

Mental Health Consultants (MHC) observe regularly in all Head Start & Early Head Start classrooms. Staff and parents may request the MHC to do individual child observations. The MHC can provide recommendations to staff and parents that will aid children's learning and development and may support the creation of an individual service plan. Written permission for this is requested/obtained at the time families apply for services on behalf of their child(ren).

Our agency also offers educational support for regulation and skill development. If your child and/or the family has an individualized plan for services, we will ensure you receive the individualized care needed.

CHILD SAFETY AND CENTER EMERGENCIES

Reuniting children and parents will occur as soon as it is possible to do so in a safe and organized way.

BUILDING LOCKDOWN

A building lockdown is a precautionary measure in response to a threat directly to the school or in the surrounding community. During an actual lockdown, access to our building(s) may be limited to just known authorized individuals or in the case of a major or imminent threat no persons may be allowed to enter. This decision will be based on the level of threat to our site after consultation with local law enforcement. Should this occur, we will make every reasonable attempt to communicate with parents as soon as possible.

CLOSED CIRCUIT VIDEO RECORDINGS are done where possible in HS and EHS classrooms, hallways, and outside areas of the Beloit Center for safety purposes.

EVACUATION

The center has procedures for fire, bomb threat or other disasters. If there is an emergency building evacuation, staff and children will be located at:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

Secondary Location: _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

HEAD START WILL:

Provide access to the DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers and Rock-Walworth, C.F.S., Inc. Head Start Policies. These documents are available for parents to review at the center their child attends and may be found in the following area:

_____ (H.S. teacher will fill in the location).

- Use an emergency facility for a medical emergency. The following facility will be used:

_____ (H.S. Teacher will fill in the name and location of the facility).

DANGEROUS WEATHER

TORNADO WARNINGS: It is not safe to travel during a tornado warning. Head Start will not transport children on buses during a tornado warning and we ask that parents do not self-transport during these times of danger. Listen to sirens and local radio and TV stations (listed below).

WINTER WEATHER AND SAFETY: Unplowed streets and snow- and ice-covered sidewalks will slow down the route. We will do our best to continue the program and transportation services during the winter months.

If your child rides the bus, be prepared: Have your child's boots on, and jacket ready to put on for bus pick up. Shovel your sidewalks and driveways where your child boards and gets off the bus.

CANCELLATIONS AND DELAYS (LOCAL RADIO AND TV STATIONS) Listen for public school closings in your area.

- **Rock County:** WCLO/1230 / WJVL/99.9 FM / Channel 27 TV-WKOW

- **Walworth County:** WCLO/1230 AM / WJVL/99.9 FM / Channel 27 TV-WKOW

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Outcomes

We are required to demonstrate how our program supports children, families and communities in the areas of literacy, language and thinking skills; physical and coordination skills; social/emotional skills; and promoting good attitudes towards learning. As a result, outcomes are tracked and ongoing monitoring occurs frequently.

Data gathered is used to inform program goals and objectives. Outcomes information helps us plan for each child individually and support RWCFS staff in developing lesson plans and providing environments and teaching approaches that promote good self-esteem.

PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REQUEST OUTCOMES INFORMATION AND REVIEW THE AGENCY'S ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT POSTED OUR WEBSITE.

LITERACY

We know that reading can take a person to places unimagined, teaches many things, and inspires incredible ideas. Everyone deserves to be able to read. Head Start is committed to giving every child the tools and environments needed to begin to learn to read. You can help us by reading to your child often- everyday, if possible. Together we will give your child the confidence he/she needs to love to learn. *If you would like to read better, we can help with that too.*

FATHERHOOD

Research has shown that children benefit greatly when fathers take an active role in parenting- even if the father does not live in the home. Fatherhood programming focuses on helping fathers gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to play an active role in the child's life. There will be dedicated events held at centers throughout the year and in the classroom for fathers. Due to COVID-19 we cannot be sure of the events.

ORAL HEALTH

Research clearly shows that oral health is just as important as physical and mental health. Head Start is dedicated to supporting the following: helping families to meet the oral health needs- as well as finding dental homes, providing training and education to parents, staff and the community, promoting prevention and advocating for oral health initiatives that will benefit families.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Research indicates that it is important for children to continue to learn and develop in their first language as they begin or continue to learn a new language. RWCFS is committed to supporting children and families who are learning more than one language at the same time.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

RWCFS is regularly monitored to ensure compliance with federal Performance Standards and State of Wisconsin Group Child Care Licensing Requirements. Parents can find information regarding regulations, a copy of the license (including any exceptions/exemptions permitted), parent notices, non-compliance information, etc. on parent boards located within the relevant center or classroom.

PARENT/CAREGIVER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENT/CAREGIVER RIGHTS:

- To be treated with respect and dignity.
- To be welcome in the classroom at any time.
- To be involved in planning for your child and kept informed of his/her progress.
- To take part in planning ways to increase your family's strengths and skills.
- To have input on program planning and decision making.
- To have input on developing parent training.
- To be informed about available community resources and how to access them.



PARENT/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To schedule appointments and turn in required paperwork for immunizations at enrollment, and to follow up with records on physical and dental exams.
- To prepare your child for school each day so they are comfortable, rested, and ready to learn.
- To notify Head Start/Early Head Start immediately if your child will be absent from the classroom or not home for a home visit.
- To learn about Head Start/Early Head Start and the opportunities it provides for your children and family.
- To keep your home visit appointments with Teachers, Nurturers, EHS Home Visitors and Family Service Coordinators.
- To notify Head Start/Early Head Start of new phone numbers, addresses and emergency contact changes.
- To participate by helping in the classroom and attending family events.

FOR THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN - Read Carefully:

It is an unlawful act to enter or remain on RWCFS property while in possession of a weapon after having been notified of the no weapons policy. Notification may be verbal but shall also include posting "no weapons" signs at the entrances of buildings and grounds. All violations by any person, with or without a permit (including employees) shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Enrolled children are prohibited from bringing any weapons, including toy knives, guns, or other facsimile of a weapon to any RWCFS site or activity. Anything brought to the site or an RWCFS sponsored activity will be confiscated and may be reported to authorities, if appropriate.

At no time can a parent enter a Head Start/EHS under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If suspected, you will be asked to leave the center. If you are driving and plan to take your child with you, you will be discouraged from driving and authorities may be called.

Smoking is prohibited at HS/EHS centers. Please do not throw cigarettes in parking lots or by entrance doors. Smoke smell on clothing can trigger asthmatic reactions in young children.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

You may request a copy of the Community Complaint Policy as approved by the Policy Council and Board of Directors for complete details.

STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT:

1. If a person has a complaint, they should tell a staff person who can talk to them about possible next steps or options. Staff will then involve a supervisor.
2. If the concern or complaint is not resolved by the Supervisor, it will be passed on to the Executive Director who will work with the staff and person who has the complaint.
3. At each level, the person with the complaint will be helped with the next step.
4. Rock-Walworth Head Start/EHS will follow up on anonymous complaints based on the seriousness of the alleged concern or complaint.
5. At any time, persons with concerns may request to submit a formal written complaint. The Executive Director will then follow procedure to involve the appropriate Policy Council and Board of Director committees to investigate and respond to the complaint. This complaint must also be signed and dated.
6. A form for the written complaint is available. Persons with concerns can request this form from any staff person, obtain it by contacting the Administrative Center, pick one up at the Administrative Center or request that one be mailed.

Note: Ideally concerns will be addressed through joint problem solving and effective communication working in partnership with agency staff and before someone with a concern feels the need to make a formal written complaint.



RWCFS

Head Start / Early Head Start

Serving Rock County & Walworth County, Wisconsin