

**MARATHON COUNTY CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY – HEAD START**

PARENT HANDBOOK

Head Start[®]



Making A World Of Difference

04/01/18

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WELCOME TO OUR HEAD START PROGRAM !!!

WHAT IS HEAD START?

Head Start is a Federal program for preschool children from low-income families. The Head Start program is operated by local non-profit organizations in almost every county in the country. Head Start is a program of the Marathon County Child Development Agency of Wausau, Wisconsin. The agency receives funds from the Administration for Children and Families and the Department of Health and Human Services to offer educational services to children and families. Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They also receive medical and dental care, have healthy meals and snacks, and enjoy playing indoors and outdoors in a safe, social setting.

Head Start helps all children succeed. Services are offered to meet the special needs of children with disabilities. Most children in Head Start are between the ages of three and five years of age. The Head Start classroom is informal, with time for free play, art, meals/snacks, and socialization. Children learn how to get along with others, share, play cooperatively, and solve problems. Head Start provides children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. The Head Start staff recognizes that, as parents, you are the first and most important teachers of your children. They will welcome your involvement in Head Start activities, and will work as partners with you to help your child progress. Your child will leave Head Start more prepared for kindergarten, excited about learning, and ready to succeed.

Head Start in Marathon County currently operates three centers. They are:

Barrington Center	616 Grant Street Wausau, 54403
Stoddard Center	6615 County Road J Schofield, 54476
Kathleen M. Czech Center	607 13th Street Mosinee, 54455

The Barrington and Stoddard centers operate a morning session from 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM, as well as an afternoon session from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM (Barrington only) on Monday through Thursday. The KM Czech Center, two classrooms at the Barrington Center, and the Stoddard Center operate a full day, full week schedule with class sessions from 8 AM to 3 PM on Monday through Friday. We are unable to consider requests for class time or center locations if the program is providing transportation. Class time and location are determined by the child's address and bus routes. Children will be placed in the nearest center for transportation with an opening available. If the parent is willing or able to provide transportation, we will make every effort to honor a request for center location and class time. Classes follow the Wausau, D.C. Everest or Mosinee school district's calendar and operate from September through late May or early June in all three school districts. Each classroom will have a maximum of 17 children in Wausau; 17 children in D.C. Everest and 18 children in the full day classrooms.

Head Start administrative and family services offices are located at:

Administration Offices	616 Grant Street Wausau, 54403
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WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE HEAD START PROGRAM?

Children are eligible for our program if they were born on or before August 31 of the current school year. Children are eligible if they are a foster child; if they receive TANF or SSI funds; or if their family earned less than the federal poverty family income guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Upon receipt of a child enrollment application form, a child is considered enrolled after eligibility by the above guidelines has been established and when an official acceptance to the program letter is sent to the family. Services to the family will begin immediately upon the parent's receipt of the acceptance letter. Classroom services to the child will begin as soon as the family completes the necessary procedures/paperwork with the family services program staff and the teacher. If a child is eligible for services but the program has no current openings available, a waiting list will be established. A current numerical value system is used to rate the applications submitted for possible enrollment that have been placed on the waiting list. This system is used in order to more adequately reflect the overall financial and family situations and to weight these risk factors of our applicants so as to enroll the child with the most need first. Each child will continue to be considered enrolled until a child withdrawal form is signed by the parent/guardian and filed by the program or the child is eligible for kindergarten services.

WHAT CAN HEAD START OFFER YOUR FAMILY?

Head Start offers you a sense of belonging, support services, and a chance to become involved in activities to help your whole family. You can take part in training classes on many subjects, such as parenting, job training, learning about health and nutrition, and using free resources in your own community. Head Start staff members refer families needing help to medical, social welfare, or employment specialists they know in the community, and will follow up to be sure you receive assistance.

You can become a Head Start volunteer and learn more about child development first hand in the classroom. This experience may later qualify you for training which can help you find employment in the child care field or at the Head Start program. You can also have a voice in the Head Start program by serving on the Policy Council or various committees. Parents' experiences in Head Start have raised their own self-confidence and improved their ability to make decisions.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

All parents/guardians are invited to visit the Head Start Center at any time during operating hours. Parents are considered an integral part of the program and parental involvement is always encouraged. Parent involvement in the Head Start program helps parents, children, and the program. By becoming involved in the program, parents learn more about their child, their child's development, and their child's individual needs. When children see that their parents are interested and involved in their school, they become more enthusiastic about their learning. Parent involvement also helps the Head Start Center. The staff welcomes and encourages all families to make suggestions and bring in ideas that help to enable them to provide a program that meets as many needs as possible. Your volunteered time is also valuable to us as an "in-kind" donation which helps the program to meet the required non-federal match of 20 % of our granted funds. The program highly values your involvement. **Please become involved. WE NEED YOU!!**

Some possible ways for you to become involved might be:

- 1. Volunteer time assisting in the classroom or on a field trip**
- 2. Work on Home-School projects with your child**

3. **Let the family take turns reading your child's weekly library book, or talk about the pictures in the book together**
4. **Share special skills, hobbies, or knowledge with the children**
5. **Sew clothing for dress up corner or doll clothes**
6. **Help to recruit new eligible children for Head Start programming**
7. **Become a class representative to the Policy Council or the Parents for Kids Committee at your Center**
8. **Help to repair classroom equipment and materials**
9. **Attend monthly informational Parent meetings/workshops**
10. **Help with the organization, set-up, and clean-up at our "All Family" events**
11. **Attend the Open House and Parent/Teacher Conferences to see your child's room and meet the teacher**

The list could go on and on, as there are many ways to become involved. We welcome all friends and family members over the age of 18 to volunteer.

CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES

Head Start recognizes the importance of both parents in a child's life. We provide services to both parents of an enrolled child, thereby complying with the legal rights of each parent to be involved in the education process. Information given to your child's other parent is strictly limited to child information and **will not** include any family information. Court orders, visitation schedules, and/or restraining orders will be closely followed. Please give a copy of any custody papers to Head Start as these will assist the agency in protecting your parental rights as we will enforce any conditions set by the court system. Staff will fill out our Non-custodial parent paperwork with you at enrollment.

Head Start will not take sides during a custody disagreement. Each parent has the right to complete a separate Emergency Contact form for the days which he/she has visitation or physical placement as set by the court system. The Administration office and Head Start attorney will assist with any difficult legal issues.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information shared with staff will be handled with care, respect, and in a professional manner. Please do not share any information about Head Start children, families, staff, or volunteers with anyone other than authorized Head Start staff. For example, if your child tells you a cute story about his classmates and their families, do not repeat that story to your friends and family. Please respect the privacy of other families and do not engage in repeating hearsay and gossip. Please note: Wisconsin law requires all staff and volunteers to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect.

NOTE REGARDING VISITORS TO THE CENTERS AND HEAD START SPONSORED EVENTS

Smoking in any form in any licensed day care and/or Head Start center – anywhere on the premises both indoors and outdoors, and at any time children are present, is expressly prohibited. Cigarette butts must not be left in places that are accessible to children.

Parents/guardians are always welcome in the classroom or on field trips to volunteer. Due to state law, we cannot allow other children not enrolled in Head Start to accompany you in the classroom, including siblings, during normal classroom operations.

NOTE REGARDING ALCOHOL/DRUG POLICY & PROCEDURE

Please note that all staff and visitors in our classrooms and centers must report to the center free of illegal drugs, intoxicants, alcohol, narcotics, or any other controlled substance. Possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited on any Head Start

premises or at any Head Start sponsored event and may constitute grounds for immediate termination of an employee and immediate escort off the premises and/or notification to authorities for any employee or visitor. Children will not be released to a person suspected of use of a controlled substance.

PARENT/TEACHER HOME VISITS AND CONFERENCES

Families will take part in a startup meeting with the teacher at the beginning of their enrollment followed by a minimum of two children's school readiness and education home visits with the teacher each year. These visits will focus on how the parents and teacher can work together to meet the child's educational goals. Families will also receive family services home visits with their assigned Family Case Manager. Families have the opportunity to share their strengths and accomplishments, plan for the future, and explore ways Head Start can assist them in reaching their goals. In addition two educational parent/teacher conferences which will take place at the school will be scheduled each year to allow parents to further learn about their child's progress and to partner with the teachers on their child's education plan.

WHAT IS THE POLICY COUNCIL AND PARENTS FOR KIDS COMMITTEE?

Head Start parents traditionally have been Head Start's major volunteer resource. We consider parents full partners in our program. Parents have a voice in staff hiring and termination, budget authorization, and approval of all program plans. Parents become a part of this decision-making process by volunteering as a classroom representative for the Policy Council. The Head Start Policy Council is made up of past and current parents of Head Start children, and community representatives. As a member of the Policy Council, you are responsible for sharing information between the parents in your child's classroom, the Parents for Kids Committee (if in operation at your Center) and the Policy Council. Policy Council members are directly involved in decision making for Head Start program planning and operation. Policy Council members are elected each Fall and serve a one-year term.

What is Policy Council?

Policy Council is the parents' voice in major program decisions including such things as recruitment and selection policy, personnel policy, budgets and funding proposals.

Who is on Policy Council?

We would like to have a representative from each classroom serving as a Policy Council member. Policy Council members can be self-nominated or nominated by any Head Start parent and voted onto the Policy Council at the Center's Parents for Kids Center Committee meeting. Each representative receives one vote at the Policy Council meetings.

When is Policy Council?

The Policy Council meets once a month at a date and time set by the Policy Council.

Who Can Come to the Meetings?

Policy Council meetings are open to anyone who would like to come. However, only elected Policy Council members may vote.

What are the Responsibilities of a Policy Council Member?

- To be informed and keep parents informed about issues facing the program
- To attend meetings regularly and notify staff in advance if unable to attend
- To advocate for the best interests of all Head Start families
- To attend Parents for Kids parent meetings and represent parent concerns to the Policy Council
- To work on committees set up by the Policy Council

What support will be offered?

There will be training for all elected members. Child care will be provided during our meeting times for children 3 years of age or older. Other expenses which will be approved and reimbursed for your time and attendance at the Policy Council meetings include: other child care expenses for child care arranged directly by the parents and mileage for driving to and from the meetings.

What is Parents for Kids?

Parents for Kids committees are established for each of the program's three centers (Barrington, Stoddard, and KM Czech). These groups are one of the many ways for parents to be involved with our Head Start program. Parents for Kids give parents the opportunity to share ideas about how to meet the needs of both their child(ren) and their family with other parents and staff at their Head Start Center as well as a voice in the operation of the Head Start program at their center. Policy Council representatives will be elected at Parents for Kids Center Committee meetings.

Who is on the Parents for Kids committee?

Any parent/guardian of a child currently enrolled in the Head Start program and attending at the specific center is automatically a member of the Parents for Kids committee.

When are the Parents for Kids meetings held?

The meetings will be held at least once a month at a date and time that is convenient for the majority of parents to attend. Committee members at each center will determine when and how often meetings will occur.

What will happen at the Parents for Kids meetings?

The meetings will include a social-time and an informational/educational focused discussion on topics of interest to parents of young children.

What are the responsibilities of a Parents for Kids member?

- To be aware of issues/strengths affecting your center
- To attend meetings regularly and participate in discussions and activities
- To elect a representative from each classroom at the center to the Policy Council

What are the Benefits to my participation?

- You can play an active part in your child's education and help plan fun activities for families
- You can meet, learn from and work with other parents/guardians from the program
- You can use this experience for personal and professional growth
- You can create life-long relationships

I'm interested. What's the first step in becoming involved?

As a parent/guardian of a currently enrolled child, you are already a member of the Parents for Kids center committee. It is your choice whether or not you become an active participant. The first step to becoming active is to attend an introductory Parents for Kids meeting which will occur shortly after the beginning of the school year in the Fall. You can also let your Family Case Manager or your child's Teacher know that you would like to become involved.

What support will be offered?

Child care will be provided during our meeting times for children 3 years of age or older. Other expenses which will be approved and reimbursed for your time and attendance at the Parents for Kids meetings include: other child care expenses for child care arranged directly by the parents and mileage for driving to and from the meetings.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

All records pertaining to employees or enrolled children and their families will be kept strictly confidential in a locked file cabinet or in a password protected computer file. Applications and income eligibility information will be kept in locked files at the social

services' offices during the recruitment process and will be available on a needs basis to the director and social service staff. After children are enrolled the original applications and summaries of social service information will be kept in the central office files. Each teacher will maintain a confidential file of child records as required by state and federal regulations, anecdotal records and observations, and home visit documentation in a locked file cabinet in the classroom. Parents are allowed to examine only the records pertaining to their own children. Individual children's records can be viewed at the Central Office. Except for your local school district, records will only be sent to another agency with written permission of the parents or legal guardian.

NECESSARY FORMS NEEDED FOR RECORDS

- **Original Application and documentation of eligibility**
- **Child Enrollment form & Transportation Permission Form**
- **Birth Certificate Verification Form**
- **Child Health and Immunization form (signed by Physician) & Emergency Care Plan if needed**
- **Child Dental Health form (signed by Dentist)**
- **Health History form & Immunization form (signed by parent)**
- **Nutrition Information form**
- **Guardian Authorization form**
- **Volunteer forms**
- **Family Support/Needs Assessment form & Family Partnership Agreement**
- **Permission to Obtain/Release/Exchange Confidential Information**

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING

Wisconsin law requires schools to report all suspected incidents of child neglect and/or abuse to either the Marathon County Department of Social Services or the local law enforcement agency. All school personnel are required to report suspected abuse, including nurses, other medical or mental health professionals, social workers, teachers, administrators, counselors, physical therapists, speech clinicians, and teacher aides (including bus and lunch aides). Any of the above, having reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur, must report.

Whoever violates this section by failure to report as required may be fined not more than \$1000.00 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both. Professional license(s) and/or certification(s) may also be revoked. The person(s) who report in good faith are immune from criminal and/or civil liability.

While most neglect and abuse referrals are initiated by a telephone call from the appropriate staff member, a written report is also required to be completed by the staff member. After this, the Department of Social Services or the law enforcement agency shall make contact with the family. It is not the responsibility of the reporter to confirm that abuse has taken place.

The state law requires that all employees sign a statement certifying that they have not been convicted of, or are subject to a pending charge of child abuse or crimes against sexual morality involving children. This must be signed before you begin volunteering in the classroom. If you observe something in the classroom that you feel may be connected to abuse or neglect, please bring it to the attention of the teacher, social services staff, or director immediately.

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

It is the goal of MCCDA-Head Start to create a positive environment conducive to the development of the social, emotional, and physical maturity of each child. Children will be guided to develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights and property of

others through positive guidance techniques. Reasonable and fair limits of acceptable behavior are set and communicated clearly to the children.

All staff will receive approved training in shaken baby syndrome and impacted babies and appropriate ways to manage crying, fussing or distraught children. New staff will view a department-approved video on shaken baby syndrome prevention before the date on which the staff member begins to work with children and complete a department-approved, in-person training within 6 months of beginning to work with children.

Please remember that guidance is not punishment. Rather it is helping children to learn acceptable behavior. A variety of positive techniques may be used to help guide children's behavior. Children can be helped to learn alternatives to their unacceptable behavior by redirecting them, teaching them to express their feelings and frustrations with words, and helping them to be aware of the consequences of their actions on others. Staff should understand that there will be times when a child will become distraught, fussy or won't quit crying. The first course of action in such situations needs to be an attempt to determine the cause of the distress. It may be related to a basic need such as hunger or comfort, or it may be that the child just needs some extra time and attention. If a child is crying and fussing, staff need to stay calm and do whatever they can to soothe the child. Sometimes this may mean allowing the child to cry for a few minutes and then try again to soothe them.

When inappropriate behaviors arise and/or instances of crying, fussing, or distraught children, one of the following positive guidance strategies will be used:

- a) remove children from situations they cannot handle or indirectly change the situation;
- b) redirect children's behavior;
- c) provide opportunities for the child to express needs or feelings in personally and socially appropriate ways;
- d) use of extinction (ignoring the behavior) when appropriate to do so;
- e) letting children experience the consequences of their behavior when safe and appropriate to do so;
- f) using a time away break (may not be used for a time longer than 5 minutes; only to be used to help the child regain control and composure – immediately continue with a positive guidance technique)

Only the educational staff may take disciplinary action. Any form of discipline which is humiliating or frightening to a child or for lapses in toilet training is explicitly prohibited. Examples of prohibited disciplines as described in Wisconsin Administrative Code is as follows:

In no instance shall children be hit, spanked, or in other ways physically hurt in an attempt to punish or control them. Such use of force shall be sufficient grounds for immediate dismissal of a staff member. Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family are strictly prohibited. Under no circumstance shall meals/snacks or naps be withheld or forced. Inappropriate discipline of a child by a staff member must be reported to the DCF department within 24 hours after the occurrence.

Children who are behaving aggressively toward each other shall be encouraged to develop more appropriate alternative ways of handling conflicts. Children showing excessively aggressive behavior should be referred to the mental health specialist for additional support. All members of the staff shall attempt to understand why the child is behaving in the ways that she or he is and to work with the parents and Social Service and Mental Health staff as well as utilize the activities within the program to eliminate or minimize the aggressiveness.

Group rules governing behavior toward the children in the classroom shall be explained clearly to the children. General restrictions should be clearly imposed only when it is necessary to prevent the child from hurting himself or others, interfering with the rights of others, or seriously disrupting the experiences being provided by others. Disciplining the whole class or the threat to discipline the whole class for the behavior of some of the children is basically unfair and tends to promote hostility between members of the class and therefore, should never be employed in the Head Start classroom. Rules shall be enforced primarily through talking with the child and explaining to him the consequences of his behavior. Each classroom operates on these basic rules:

1. Follow Directions.
2. Feet and Hands to Yourself
3. Take Care of Your Things, and Keep the Classroom Neat & Clean.
4. Soft Voices Inside; Loud Voices Outside.
5. Work Together, Be Kind, and Respect Each Other.

Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)

When the above listed strategies are ineffective and challenging behaviors continue to be unsafe for the child and/or others the following will take place. First the child will be referred to the local school district for an evaluation to see if IEP services are necessary. If a child does not meet the requirements for an IEP, a Behavioral Intervention Team consisting of but not limited to the Mental Health Specialist, Education/Disability Specialist, Teacher, Family Case Manager, and Parent/Guardian(s), will meet to develop a Behavioral Intervention Plan to address the child's individual needs. The plan will be reviewed and signed by the Head Start Director and all individuals involved in the planning meeting. The plan will be regularly reviewed by the team as necessary.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The mental health services will emphasize a primary preventative approach to mental health. The services will be rendered through a series of activities designed to increase staff and parent awareness of the social and emotional needs of children, and will attempt to provide them with skills and techniques that ensure the children's emotional well-being. Staff and parents will be made aware of responses to stresses and changes which affect the child's development. Our program uses the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL) & Teaching Pyramid Model along with the Second Step curriculum with all children. Our Head Start program has staff available to parents to discuss mental health concerns at any time. Staff is available to provide assistance with referrals.

EDUCATION POLICY

The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood:

The philosophy behind The Creative Curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says, it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in. In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors, and they notice relationships between things. In time, they learn to use one object to stand for another. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. Children begin with concrete symbols and become more and more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. They learn to "read" pictures, which are symbols of real people, places, and things. This exciting development in symbolic thinking takes place during the pre-school years as children "play". Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children.

Program Curriculum Goals:

Based upon current theories of Early Childhood Education, the following curriculum goals have been established. The activities we plan for all children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and interact with children are all directed and designed toward meeting these goals.

1. To provide children with opportunities for social interaction with same age peers;
2. To assure that children have good starts in the development of a positive self-concept;
3. To assist children in the formation of positive attitudes toward school and learning.
4. To assist parents by collaborating in order to increase their knowledge about child development and education, thereby enhancing their ability to serve as their children's primary teacher and to assist staff in developing curriculum meaningful to their children.
5. To provide children with a variety of activities and experiences which will build firm foundations for later academic learning:
 - Concept understandings
 - Emergent Literacy and Numeracy development
 - Listening and following directions
 - Thinking and decision making
 - Independence and responsibility
6. To provide children with opportunities to practice large and small motor skills;
7. To encourage development of creativity.
8. To provide a responsive, inclusive environment which supports the needs of all children, and provides ways for each child to participate in all program activities.
9. To honor the individuality of each enrolled child; and when available following the child's IEP to ensure that each child receives the specialized education and support he or she requires.

Thematic Learning:

Our curriculum is developed through teacher observation and evaluation of each individual child. Concepts and skills are introduced through carefully planned activities that focus on a particular theme, which is appropriate to each child's developmental level and which reinforce social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth. Concrete, hands-on activities and experiences are planned according to a calendar of themes, which are relevant, and of interest to the children, providing meaningful learning. We use music, games, stories, large muscle equipment, art materials, and a variety of learning centers to help each child feel a sense of accomplishment and belonging through successful child-initiated activity as well as adult-child interactions. The equipment and materials will be chosen to compliment the theme and will be rotated approximately every other week. It is our goal to keep the learning progressing steadily and the child's interest and involvement high with ongoing assessment.

Educational program:

The program will provide each child with experiences, which will encourage the following:

A. Self-esteem and positive self-image

1. All classes emphasize socialization, communication, and personal daily living skills development along with focusing on building and enhancing each child's self-confidence.

2. Special projects will be implemented to provide experiences that provide each child with the feeling of success and help each child to progress at their own developmental level.
3. Staff using positive communication with children and parents will promote an environment in which children feel good about themselves and others.
4. Children will be encouraged to develop their own independence through activity choice and center time, getting dressed themselves, developing appropriate toileting habits, helping prepare nutritious meals/snacks, and helping with clean-up time.

B. Social Interaction

1. Many opportunities for socialization will be offered through creative play experiences such as puppet shows, dress up, dramatic play, kitchen play, real cooking experiences and other areas. Cooperative large motor games, table center areas where several children can choose to play together, special projects focused around a theme, snack time, circle time, and sharing time provide opportunities for children to interact, share their experiences of the day and express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and dreams.
2. Guest speakers and field trips will provide social interaction with outside sources.
3. The program will provide settings within the environment that allow and encourage children to socially interact with small groups of children in the classroom learning centers and develop friendships with peers.
4. All classes will adapt activities, make accommodations, and use other strategies that integrate children socially and encourage them to participate in all activities, regardless of abilities.

C. Self-expression and communication skills

1. Staff using positive communication, which centers on language that is developmentally appropriate with children and parents will promote enhancement of children's skills to communicate in a positive manner with adults and other children.
2. Staff will utilize an English immersion approach (i.e. all instruction administered in English) in the classroom in order to promote progress towards the acquisition of the English language. Bilingual teacher assistants will be employed as positive role models and to support primary language needs with the children and their families.
3. Group discussions, story time where children participate, snack time, creative play experiences, dramatic play, exploration of nature, science and discovery will all work to facilitate communication.
4. Children will be encouraged to try new activities and to express themselves through music, movement, dance, art, and writing.

D. Creative Expression

1. Arts, crafts and project materials will be readily available to children such as paint, play dough, markers, variety of paper, glue, scissors, beads, yarn, fabric, and other creative materials.
2. Areas will be set up for children to work with manipulatives such as legos, blocks, puzzles, counters and others.
3. Creative play equipment such as puppets and props for creative dramatics, dress up materials, and dolls will be made accessible to children on a regular basis.

4. Tape player, musical instruments, and headsets will be available to children to explore and experience the fine arts.

E. Large and Small Muscle Development

1. Opportunities for age/developmentally appropriate large motor skills such as climbing, jumping, tumbling, hopping, running and skipping will be offered as well as participation opportunities in appropriate large motor games, both indoors and outdoors.
2. Small motor development will be enhanced through the use of puzzles, manipulatives, art materials, fingerplays and other such materials.

F. Cognitive Development

1. All center activities and areas will be open to all children to encourage children to try new experiences, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration. These strategies will engage children in creative activities and problem solving.
2. The curriculum will be theme based. The themes will be chosen to be of interest and importance to the children. Anti-bias and multicultural aspects are an important element of the curriculum.
3. Stories will be read daily to the children and the children also have the opportunity to look at books and have them read for them throughout the class time. Books will be located throughout the classroom for this purpose.
4. Numeracy development will be encouraged through designing opportunities for activities which relate numerical concepts to other concepts. Activities such as cooking experiences, science, games, fingerplays, computer use, puzzles, and unit blocks will be routinely offered.

G. Child/Adult Interactions

1. Interactions between children and adults will provide opportunities for children to build trust, to develop an understanding of self and others, and to encourage respect for the feelings and rights of others. Children will be encouraged to resolve their own conflicts with adult support. All interactions between children and adults will be respectful and supportive of each child's gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition.
2. Adults will greet each child to acknowledge that they belong in the classroom.
3. Adults will actively listen to children and observe non-verbal communication. Adults will physically place themselves at the child's eye level while interacting.
4. For the safety of the children both indoors and outdoors, adults will appropriately place themselves to provide sight and sound supervision to the entire environment.
5. Adults will observe children carefully to identify their preferred ways of interacting with others and their environment.
6. Adults will encourage children to talk about their feelings. Adults will demonstrate respect and caring for children in all interactions, giving reinforcement for children's communication efforts.
7. Adults will stimulate critical thinking skills and cognitive concepts by using open-ended questioning, modeling and other appropriate communication strategies.

H. Classroom Environment

1. The Head Start classroom will ensure a safe and healthy environment that promotes optimal development in all areas through positive, supportive, individualized relationships with adults and opportunities for exploration, hands-on learning, and peer interactions appropriate to children's age and stage of development, special needs and cultural background.
2. Teachers will determine the activity learning centers and make sure they are clearly defined. The classroom space will be arranged to provide clear pathways for children to move from one area to another and to minimize distractions. All work areas are to be kept clean and clear of all trip and fall hazards.
3. The classroom space will facilitate block building, dramatic play, use of manipulatives, experiences in art, music, creative movement, science/discovery, social studies, numeracy, computers and emergent literacy. Included will be soft elements such as rugs, cushions, or rocking chairs and quiet areas for children to have solitude.
4. Shelves will be provided for equipment and supplies in the classrooms that are of appropriate height for the children's independent use. Equipment and supplies will be arranged in an orderly fashion so that children may select, use and replace items with minimal adult assistance. Ensure sufficient quantity and durability of materials and equipment. In order to maintain children's interests and extend their experiences, learning centers will be changed on a regular basis, rotating and adapting materials.
5. Sufficient storage space for clothing and personal belongings will be provided for as many children as are in the licensed capacity of the center.
6. All furnishings shall be scaled to the proper height and size for children's comfort and reach.
7. The backgrounds and interests of the families and children represented in the classroom will be reflected in pictures, photographs and materials chosen for the classroom displays and activities. Environment will reflect non-stereotypical, cultural diversity.
8. Outdoor play environments shall include a variety of surfaces such as grass, soil, sand, hills, flat sections, and hard areas for wheel toys whenever possible. Space should include shade if possible; open space; digging space; and a variety of equipment for riding, climbing, balancing, and individual play. The space will be protected by fences or natural barriers from access to streets or other dangers.
9. Indoor play environments when providing large motor opportunities will include play surfaces that are appropriately cushioned.

Parent/Staff Interactions

1. Opportunities will be provided to increase child observation skills through participation with their children in the classroom and in the home. Staff will encourage parental input and feedback from these observations.
2. Staff/parent conferences and home visits will be scheduled on a regular basis to enhance the parent's understanding of their child's growth and development. Samples of the child's progress will be shared with the parents by use of child development checklists and portfolios. Staff will be sensitive to and aware of each parents' expectations.
3. Each home language, culture and family composition will be integrated throughout the curriculum supporting the values and beliefs of all families.

4. Communication between staff and parents will be regular and on going in both formal and informal ways such as monthly program and weekly classroom newsletters, telephone calls and written notes.
5. Staff will provide opportunities for parent/child interaction in both the home and program sponsored activities.

Program Schedule:

Activities will be planned to include a healthy balance of the following:

- A. Active and quiet activities
- B. Free selection of individual activities; child initiated activities must be scheduled for at least 60 minutes each day
- C. Reasonable regularity in routines such as meals/snacks, clean up time, circle time, project time, story time and others.
- D. Conduct smooth and unregimented transitions between activities. Children should not always be required to move from one activity to another as a group. Transitions will be used as a vehicle for learning. Waiting time in group settings will be minimized.
- E. Incorporate routine tasks into the program as a means of furthering children’s learning self-help skills and social skills. Routines such as toileting, eating, dressing, hand washing, tooth brushing, etc. will be handled in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized way based on developmental needs.
- F. Health, nutrition, dental, mental health, and safety experiences will be integrated into lesson plans and documented on the lesson plan form. Adults will model good health and safety practices.
- G. The daily schedule and weekly lesson plans will be posted in the classroom.
- H. Each child will receive individual and small group attention during each class time on a one-to-one basis with a staff member to develop emerging skills and to practice existing skills.
- I. Cultural diversity will be shown by exposing children to different languages, music, art, literature as well as different cultural celebrations and customs, lifestyles, and ethnic foods.
- J. Children in our full-day program shall have a nap/rest period each day. If a child does not sleep after 30 minutes or awakens before the other children, they will be provided with quiet activity time. Each child will be provided with an individual cot and individually identified sheet and blanket or sleeping bag which will be washed immediately if wet or soiled and at least once after every 5 uses.

Typical Class Schedule:

Part-Day Program Schedule

- Welcome and breakfast/lunch
- Free Choice time at learning centers
- Story time
- Circle/sharing time
- Music, movement, and games
- Outdoor play time
- Individualization/small group time
- Lunch/snack time and farewell time

Full-Day Program Schedule

- Welcome and breakfast
- Circle time/Story
- Free choice time—learning
- Outdoor play time
- Lunch
- Story/Nap time
- Quiet Free Choice time
- Individualization/small group
- Snack
- Music, movement, and games
- Outdoor play time and
- Farewell

Child Screening and Assessments:

Assessment and evaluations are conducted to determine children's current development. Our agency uses several tools to help staff gain information over time, and to use this information to plan for each child's continued growth and school readiness. All children will be screened prior to starting date in the Head Start classroom by the teacher in collaboration with the parents/guardians of the child. The parent will be asked to complete the Ages & Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ:SE) which will be given to the parent at their child's registration visit with their Family Case Manager. The teacher will accomplish this screening with an initial visit by utilizing the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ3) system appropriate to the child's current age. Within 45 days of child's first day of attendance, at the mid-year point, and at the end of the program year, each teacher will assess the child's development by utilizing the Creative Curriculum Gold Assessment System. The teacher will record the results of this assessment on ChildPlus and will present the information to the parents/guardians during each educational home visit. These tools give the teaching staff a picture of where your child is developmentally, and gives each parent the opportunity to report their child's skills to the teacher. This screener also helps parents and staff to see where a child may need some assistance as well as allowing parents a chance to voice any concerns they may have. Three times a year, in the Fall (or within 45 days of the child's first day of attendance), Winter, and the Spring, our teaching staff will administer our assessment tool called, "The Creative Curriculum Gold Assessment System". This tool is very detailed and covers skills in all areas of child development. The teachers use the results from these assessments to compare how a child has grown and progressed over the year, as well as to individual programming for each child. This tool also allows for intervention if it is needed. When the final home visit is conducted, a report is given to the family detailing the growth their child has made over the year as well as the developmental areas the family can continue working on with their child over the summer. This is a wonderful way to have our parents included in sharing in the education of their children. The Education Specialist will utilize the information gathered from the assessment tool to strategically plan educational programming for the current and following year and to evaluate the agency's school readiness goals.

Newsletters

Every week your child's teacher will send home a short newsletter telling you what the class will be experiencing during that week. Once a month the Head Start director compiles a newsletter from all content areas of the program. Be sure to read all of the interesting and informative articles in these letters.

School Supplies

All school supplies are provided by the Head Start program. Each child has a cubby or locker to keep their own things in at school. The only thing that they must bring to school each day is a back pack with their name clearly marked on it. It is recommended that the parents send a backup change of clothing to keep in the child's cubby as well. Please check your child's back pack daily when your child comes home. A lot of communication is sent home to you in this way as well as all of the wonderful creations your child has made at school.

Attendance

If your child will be absent, please notify your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible, as well as the transportation specialist. Please give the reason for the absence and the return date. It helps teachers plan for the day if they know a child will not be coming to Head Start because of illness or vacation plans. We also do need to know if a child is unable to attend school because he/she has been exposed to or has developed

any communicable disease. As a licensed center we are required to report all communicable diseases to the Marathon County Health Department and to notify all families enrolled in the center. Consistent attendance is essential to your child's progress in school. If you do not contact us regarding absence(s), a staff member will contact you to discuss this. Please keep us informed of illnesses or emergencies that will prevent your child from attending. If your child has three or more consecutive days of unexcused absences, your Family Case Manager will make a home visit to discuss what is causing the attendance issue and to make an attendance plan to ensure better attendance patterns for your child.

Inclement(Bad) Weather

Classes will be cancelled at any particular Center if the school district that the Center is located within has announced that either the full district or the district's Early Childhood Program have cancelled for the day due to bad weather. If only one district closes and not the others, only the Center in that specific school district will be closed for the day. Please listen to the announcements of these cancellations or our full agency cancellation on the radio or TV. Please do not call our staff or the bus company as both will be very busy dealing with the weather situation at the time. If the Wausau or DC Everest School Districts announce a 'late start' or a 'yellow bus delay', the Barrington Head Start Center in Wausau and/or the Stoddard Head Start Center in Schofield will be CLOSED for the ENTIRE day. If the Mosinee School District announces a 'late start' or a 'yellow bus delay', the Kathleen M. Czech Head Start Center in Mosinee will start classes for the day at the SAME time as the Mosinee School District. If any of the school districts make an announcement BEFORE 10:30 AM that they will be closing school early, transporting parents need to pick up their children at or before 11:30 AM. All buses will return the head start transported children home (both AM and Full day classes) starting the routes at 11:30 AM as usual. Please note the PM Bus children will NOT be picked up. If the school districts announce an early school closure AFTER 11:00 AM, transporting parents may pick up their children at or before 3:00 PM. All buses will return the head start bus transported children home at their normal times, with the routes beginning at 3:00 PM. Staff will contact parents and/or emergency contacts to let them know if our full day classes will be closing early at 11:30 AM or if the PM classes will be cancelled. Please keep your phone number and your emergency contact phone numbers current!

What to Wear

Please dress your child casually for school so that they will be comfortable. Sometimes the children do messy projects and even though paint smocks are worn, clothes may get soiled. Children go outside when weather permits. In the spring and fall the play areas outside are often muddy. Because of this, please be sure to send boots or old shoes to school with your child. Hats, mittens, and snowpants are also important on cold days. Try to have a back pack for your child that is big enough to send appropriate clothing along to school. We do have a supply of extra clothing available at school in case of accidents. Please be sure to return these items to your child's teacher so they will be ready for the next time we have a need for them.

All through the year we will be working with the children on gaining responsibility. Part of this will include learning to dress themselves for outside play. Please work with us in helping your child to learn to do this at home as well. It takes a lot of patience and is sometimes easier to do it for them, but the children take a lot of pride in learning and being able to do it for themselves.

Working with your Child at Home

There are two specific ways we ask you to work with your child at home:

1. **LIBRARY BOOKS** Although preschool children do not have the necessary skills yet to read, it is very important for them to be exposed to words and to

develop an enjoyment of reading. Each week your child will bring home a library book from the classroom library. Help your child to find a safe place to keep the book until it is returned to school. This will help to teach your child responsibility. We ask that you or another family member read to your child as often as possible. If you cannot read, make up a story while looking at the pictures. You'd be surprised at the wonderful stories you can come up with together! Literacy is very important. If you or another family member cannot read and would like to learn how, please let us know. We will be glad to help get you started.

- 2. HOME-SCHOOL PROJECTS** Once a month your child's teacher will send home a home-school project. This will allow some special one-on-one time for you to work at teaching your child. These projects are often asked to be sent back to school for a special sharing time. The purpose of this is not to do "home work", but to help your child to understand that learning is a continual process that happens outside of the classroom too. Make it fun!!

HEALTH CARE POLICY

Physical Exam:

All children **MUST** have a physical exam **YEARLY**. **The required Head Start physical form must be completed, signed by a physician and returned to the Head Start office in order for your child to participate in the program.**

Families who are not covered by Medical Assistance (MA) or private health insurance may be eligible to receive a percentage of payment from Head Start.

Dental Exam:

Your child **MUST** have a dental examination and **the required form completed, signed by a dentist and returned to the Head Start office in order for your child to participate in the program.**

Families who are not covered by MA or private dental insurance may be eligible to receive a percentage of payment from Head Start. Head Start will work with the parents to ensure follow up treatment is received.

Immunizations:

All children **MUST** be up-to-date on their immunizations or be in the process of completing them. Dates of all shots must be provided by parents.

Special Needs:

Through screening and observation, children suspected of having special needs will be identified. The Disability Specialist, Mental Health Specialist, and/or your Family Case Manager will contact you if we see a concern. As well, if you have a concern you may contact the agency's staff to answer any questions you might have.

If there seems to be a suspected need, the specialist will contact you and discuss the possibility of making a referral to the local education agency (local school district). If the suspected need does not seem to warrant a referral to the school district, accommodations may be made in the classroom and/or the Family Case Managers may help you to seek relevant resources.

Emergency Care/Accidental Injuries

In the case of a medical emergency involving your child, MCCDA Head Start staff will contact the parents as soon as possible. If parents cannot be reached, or in the case of extreme emergency, the first aid provider will accompany the child to the Wausau Aspirus or Saint Clare's Hospital, taking along the medical consent form. The Health Specialist

will be notified of emergency care given. Any incident in which any first aid treatment has been administered will be recorded in the medical log book and an incident report form will be filled out and sent home for the parents signature.

MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Physician Prescribed Medications – Basic Requirements:

No medication shall be given to a student by an employee of Head Start unless the following are delivered to the individual(s) responsible for administering the medication:

- A. Written instructions from the prescribing physician for the administration of the prescribed medication. Said written instruction must be signed by the physician.
- B. A written statement from the prescribing physician which:
 1. Identifies the specific conditions and circumstances under which contact should be made with the physician concerning the condition or reactions of the student to the prescribed medication.
 2. Indicates a willingness on the part of the physician to accept direct communication(s) from the person(s) administering the medication.
- C. A written statement from the parent or guardian of the affected:
 1. Authorizing school staff to give the medication in the prescribed dosage.
 2. Authorizing school staff to contact physician directly.

Physician Prescribed Medications – Procedures:

- A. Consent Forms required; No medications will be administered by school staff unless and until the following forms are completed and returned to the classroom teacher and nurse:
 1. Parent/Guardian Medication Consent Form
 2. Physician Order for Medication Administration Form
- B. Medication Information Required; Medication to be administered at school must have the following information printed in language understandable to the lay person on the container:
 1. Child's full name
 2. Name of the drug, dosage, and duration
 3. Time and quantity to be given
 4. Physician's name
- C. Medications will be administered by the classroom teacher or classroom staff as designated by the Health Specialist. Except where an emergency is believed to exist, in no instances shall medications be dispensed by other than a Head Start employee while the student is at school unless specifically approved by the parent/guardian.
- D. Storage of Medications; All medications are to be kept in a locked, safe place, not accessible to students and checked out only by the Head Start employee designated to administer the medication.
- E. The length of time for which a medication is to be administered shall be specified in the written instructions from the prescribing physician. Any change in dosage, time to be administered or

discontinuance of administration must be in writing; said changes to be at the request of the physician only.

- F. Updating of Prescriptions and Other requirements; All consent forms and related materials must be renewed annually and/or at any time a medication is changed.
- G. Records required; Accurate and confidential written records shall be established and maintained for each student receiving medication.
 - 1. Completed consent forms and medication log sheets are to be maintained in the student's classroom file.
 - 2. Classroom staff are asked to report any unusual behavior of the student on medication to the Health Specialist and the parent(s).

Non-Prescription Medications:

Designated staff will administer non-prescription (over the counter) medications only with parental approval as indicated by written consent on the Parent Medical Consent Form.

COMMON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

COMMON COLD:

- 1. Check temperature. If elevated (over 100 degrees F), it is an indication that the infection is probably more severe than a common cold.
- 2. Notify parents and exclude from school until child is fever-free without medication for 24 hours. Recommend referral to physician.
- 3. In mild cases, advise rest and copious fluids. Teach prevention of spread of infection – use of handkerchiefs, hand washing, etc.

EYE INFECTIONS:

Pink eye or inflamed eyes can be due to acute infection and may be contagious. Notify parents and urge medical care. Exclude from school until condition clears. A child with diagnosed pink eye may return 24 hours after beginning medication or with Doctor approval.

FEVER:

- 1. An elevation of 100 degrees F or more suggests need for medical care.
- 2. Exclude student with temperature of 100 degrees F with other symptoms.

SKIN RASHES:

- 1. Any skin rash may be the onset of a communicable disease. Notify parents and exclude from school until one of the following has occurred:
 - a. when rash is absent or able to be treated and covered
 - b. on doctor's affirmation of non-contagious

CHICKEN POX:

- 1. Generalized itchy rash with small fluid filled vesicles; mild fever.
- 2. Exclude the student from school until all blisters have dried and formed scabs, usually 7 days from onset of rash.
- 3. Chicken pox notification handout sent home with all children who may have been exposed in center or on bus.

SORE THROAT:

- 1. Any persistent sore throat or one associated with fever needs medical care. Exclude student from school and advise medical care.
- 2. If the student is diagnosed with Strep Throat exclude the child from school until they have been on medication for 24 hours or with Doctor approval.

ACCIDENTAL EXTRACTION OF TOOTH:

- 1. Place tooth in a carton of milk, if available. Otherwise, place in a container of warm water or wrap it in a clean, wet cloth. Do not wash tooth and do not place in mouth.
- 2. Teacher and/or teaching assistant will notify parents. If unable to reach parents, follow emergency procedures.

3. See that person is transported immediately to dentist or emergency room.

ACCIDENTAL INTRUSION OF TOOTH:

1. Do not attempt to free or pull on the tooth.
2. Rinse out the child's mouth.
3. Teacher and/or teaching assistant will notify parents. If unable to reach parents, transport child immediately to dentist or emergency room.

ACCIDENTAL LOOSENING OF TOOTH:

1. Rinse out child's mouth.
2. Do not attempt to move teeth or jaw.
3. Teacher and/or teaching assistant will notify parents. If unable to reach parents, transport child immediately to dentist or emergency room.

CHIPPED TEETH:

A delay in treatment frequently results in the loss of the remaining portion of the tooth and makes repair much more difficult. Notify parents and advise immediate care. If unable to reach parents, follow emergency procedures.

TOOTHACHE:

1. Rinse mouth with warm water.
2. If jaw is swollen, apply ice pack. Teacher and/or teaching assistant will notify parents and advise dental care.

INJURIES TO MOUTH OR LIPS:

1. Control bleeding, if necessary, by using pressure with sterile gauze or cotton.
2. Apply ice to reduce swelling. Clean wound carefully with soap and water, if wound is external.
3. Rinse mouth with clear water, if wound is internal. Teacher and/or teaching assistant will notify parents.

GUIDELINES FOR EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL:

Students/Staff will be excluded from school for the following conditions:

1. **Uncoverable sores, undiagnosed or untreated skin eruptions and/or weeping lesions.**
2. **Acute illness**
3. **Acute conjunctivitis (Pink eye)**
4. **Diarrhea – 5 or 6 loose stools within a 24 hour period**
5. **Vomiting – within a 12 hour period before bus would pick them up for school**
6. **Respiratory illness and cough**
7. **Fever – temperature 100 degrees F or above**
8. **Head Lice – can return once treated and no live lice are found (child can return if only nits are present)**

When a child becomes apparently ill while at the Head Start Center, the following procedures shall apply:

- Children with a sore throat, inflammation of the eyes, fever, lice, ringworm of the scalp, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or other illness or condition having the potential to affect the health of other persons in the Center will be isolated. The designated isolation area will either be a separate room, or will be separated from space used by other children by a partition, screen or other means.
- The child will be provided with a cot, sheet, or blanket and pillow in the designated isolation area. A staff member will be within sight and sound of the child at all times.
- The child will remain in the designated isolation area until the child can be picked up from the Center either by the parent/guardian or designated emergency contact person. Center staff will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible after the illness is discovered. Center staff will also contact the program Health Specialist.
- When a child is suspected of having a communicable disease or condition including but not limited to: chicken pox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles,

mumps, lice, ringworm of the scalp, scarlet fever, whooping cough, or meningitis, the program Health Specialist will be notified immediately by the Center staff. The Health Specialist will in turn notify the county or city public health nurse or appropriate health department of the nature of the illness. When a diagnosis of a communicable disease is made, a notice will be posted and parents will be notified. The exposed children will be watched for symptoms of the disease. Parents are asked to notify the Center if their child has been exposed to or develops any communicable disease. A child may be readmitted to the Center if the parents provide documentation from a physician stating that the child's condition is no longer contagious or if the child has been absent for a period of time equal to the longest usual incubation period for the disease as specified by the Department of Health.

NUTRITION POLICY

Children need to be healthy so that they can learn. How a person eats makes a big difference in how healthy that person is. For this reason, nutrition is an important part of the Head Start experience. At the health screening, parents are asked to answer many questions about how their child eats. The child's height and weight are taken and a blood test is taken at the doctor's office to check for the amount of iron in the child's blood. All of these things help us know how healthy the child is, and if there are things that can be done to help the child improve your child's health. A healthy child learns better. Second, at Head Start, children and parents learn about nutrition. Children learn about how foods are produced and prepared, what foods are nutritious, and what foods make up a good meal. Children also use food activities to learn other important skills like counting, following directions, cooperation with others, colors, shapes and language. Children learn to feel good about themselves by making choices and serving their own food, setting the table and helping at mealtimes. Parents learn about nutrition from information they receive at the health screening, by reading the nutrition sections of the Head Start Newsletter and by attending the parent meetings where different topics about preschool nutrition and health are discussed.

Finally, Head Start serves children nutritious meals and snacks. All children are served a lunch that meets the standards set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for 1/3 of their daily nutritional needs. In addition, morning class students receive a nutritious breakfast, and afternoon students receive a nutritious afternoon snack. These foods also meet requirements set by the USDA. At Head Start, we try very hard to see that the children receive a serving of a fruit or vegetable high in Vitamin C every single day, and a serving of a fruit or vegetable high in Vitamin A at least twice a week. Children are encouraged to take a taste of all foods offered at meals and snacks. This helps children learn about new foods.

The meals/snacks are funded through both the Head Start grant funds and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Parents will be assisted in completing a CACFP application for Free and Reduced-priced Meals form during the registration meeting. These meals are provided free of charge to all Head Start children. In the administration of the CACFP, and in accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866)

632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 by fax (202) 690-7442, or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDED BY HEAD START

The overall objective of providing family services in our Head Start program is to recruit eligible children, regardless of race, national origin or handicapping condition, and to assist families to achieve life goals. An important part of the family services is also to make parents aware of community services/resources and facilitate their use. Head Start is committed to supporting your family. We will help you identify your goals and support you in reaching them by using your family strengths and community resources. This will reinforce the gains made by your child at Head Start.

In our Head Start program, each family will be assigned to a caring and knowledgeable "Family Case Manager" who will be available to help with information and resources for your family. We want to support your own personal growth and independence.

Services provided include:

- Home visits and phone contacts by the Family Case Manager.
- Help in identifying concerns, needs and goals your family or child may have
- Information about community resources
- Resource Directory listing services available in the area
- Emergency or crisis intervention
- Encouragement and support for your own efforts to obtain the quality services you deserve
- Development of goals and strategies that you identify as areas for personal growth
- Head Start sponsored parenting classes and informative workshops
- Support for child development and discipline/guidance issues
- Advocacy for you in dealing with agencies or individuals
- Availability to computer with internet access

Family Strengths Assessment

The Family Strengths Assessment is one of the ways for the Family Case Manager to get to know the families in our program. It is also part of their job duties to let the family guide them in finding out their strengths and areas of need. We understand that it is sometimes difficult to share information with someone that you really do not know. The Family Based Assessment is an on-going process and after the initial assessment a goal is developed. Support is given in a manner that is important to the family in achieving this goal, but not "doing" for a family.

We are looking forward to working with you to provide a meaningful Head Start experience for the whole family.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY GRIEVANCE

POLICY/APPROACH:

Our Head Start program deeply values the feedback provided by parents and community members. In the instance that a parent or community member has a grievance with the program, our agency has put in place a formal process to ensure that the concern is both heard and adequately addressed.

The procedures outlined below are approved by the Board and Policy Council and reviewed annually or as needed to ensure they meet the needs of the program and community.

PROCEDURES:

While the procedure below refers to "parents" throughout, note that the majority of these steps (one through five) are equally applicable to parents and other community members;

the sixth step is required only for parents. Attention to the confidentiality of all parties involved will be paid throughout the steps of the following procedure, and resolutions for grievances will be reached within a reasonable timeframe. However, if a written complaint report is filed and resolution is not reached within 45 days, written reports on progress towards resolution will be made to all involved parties in 45 day increments until there is resolution.

1. Meet with appropriate staff person

The first step in the process for parents is to meet with the appropriate staff person with whom there is an issue. For instance, if parents have a concern about something occurring within the classroom, they are encouraged first to meet with the classroom teacher.

2. Meet with appropriate manager

If meeting with the appropriate staff person does not yield a mutually agreeable outcome – or if it is uncomfortable to speak directly to the relevant staff person – the parent is encouraged to meet with the appropriate manager. We encourage parents to be straightforward in discussing the issue with the manager and to set a date for a follow up check-in. The manager should share this information with the Head Start Director, and if appropriate, the Head Start Director should intervene at this point.

3. Capture complaint in writing, share with Head Start Director

After meeting with the manager, if a satisfactory outcome is not reached, the complaint should be captured in writing (using the supplied Grievance Form) and delivered to the Head Start Director. At this point in the process, the Head Start Director will follow up directly with the parent or community member, and strive toward resolution. All such complaints in writing will be shared with the Board of Directors and Policy Council and documentation maintained by the Head Start Director.

4. Share concern with Policy Council, Board

Finally, if working with the Head Start Director to address the complaint is not effective, the issue will be formally presented at the next meetings of the Policy Council and the Board of Directors. Special meetings of both governing bodies can also be called expressly for this purpose. Both bodies will discuss the issue and work to come to resolution.

5. Collaboration between Policy Council and Board of Directors

The President of the Board and the President of the Policy Council will both sign off on the resolution to the complaint, and this resolution will be documented in writing.

6. Communication back with the Parent (originator)

The Head Start Director will communicate the resolution, follow-up, and/or outcome with the parent who originated the complaint. This should be done in writing and in person.

7. Communication back with Staff

The Head Start Director will communicate the resolution, follow-up, and/or outcome with the appropriate staff. This should be done in writing and in person.

DOCUMENTATION:

Whenever this procedure is implemented, each step will be documented clearly and thoroughly, for example through Board of Director minutes, Policy Council minutes, the Parent Complaint form, and other means as necessitated.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Transportation is provided by the agency only through a contracted services with Lamers transit who only uses buses that meet all state and federal codes and regulations for transporting children in yellow school buses which each have the required vehicle safety alarms.

1. Head Start children will be picked up and dropped off at the same location, unless otherwise worked out with the Transportation Specialist. Drivers are instructed to stop at assigned stops only. Any address changed must be reported to the Transportation Specialist. We are unable to honor requests for temporary pick up or drop off changes.

2. If a child will not be riding the bus on any given day, the parents are to call the Head Start center. The AM parents should call before 7:00 AM and the PM parents should call before 10:00 AM. The teacher is to document the call in the child's file.

3. If the Head Start bus aide is concerned that a child is ill, he/she will ask the parent not to put the child on the bus.

4. If the child gets sick on the way to school within one block of their pick-up, the bus will return the child to their pick-up. If the child becomes ill after the bus is outside the one block radius of the child's pick-up, the child will be transported to the Head Start Center where the teacher or the Transportation Specialist will contact the parent and/or emergency contact to pick the child up.

5. When the bus gets to the designated pick-up or drop-off location, an authorized adult must come out to the Head Start bus or be visible in a doorway or window to signal to the bus aide that someone is home. If no one signals, the bus aide will knock on the door to verify no one is at home. After verifying, the bus aide will document time at the location and continue on route either to the Head Start Center or to return children to drop-off locations. Children whose drop-off was not at home will be brought to the designated Child Care Center.

6. Parents who transport their children may not leave their children in the teacher's care until either 8:00 for the AM classes or 11:30 for the PM classes. You are welcome to remain in the classroom or designated drop-off spot in the building with your child until this time. Please be prompt in returning to pick your child up at dismissal time (11:30 AM or 3:00 PM). Please wait until class has dismissed before leaving with your child. Parents will be asked to sign their child both in and out with the classroom teacher.

Children will not be released to an adult who is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The emergency contact will be notified to pick up the child if the teacher has reasonable suspicion.

Please use the proper parking lot as identified at each center and be extra careful of speed limits around center buildings (we need cars to be traveling at MUCH SLOWER speeds due to the large number of children on the premises). We also remind parents not to leave other children unattended in their car while dropping off or picking up your Head Start student – please take all children into the building with you.

7. Teachers will pick-up and return children to the busing stations promptly at 8:00 AM, 11:30 AM, and 3:00 PM. Bus aides will remain with the children on the bus until the designated classroom staff member accepts responsibility for the children;

the aide must ascertain that the designated classroom staff member accepting responsibility transfer of the child has acknowledged the transfer. At no time are children to be on the bus without a bus aide's supervision. During these bus transition times there must be ALL staff from each classroom at the busing station. Bus aides will hand the designated classroom staff member a listing of which children (**written attendance checklist**) were picked up on the route in to school and notification of known reason why particular child(ren) are not in attendance. The designated classroom staff member will document each child by name and sight that was transferred to their care on this list and will give the list to the teacher. On the way home from the Head Start Center, the designated classroom staff member will hand the bus aide a list of each child (**written attendance checklist**) being put on the bus to be taken home and the bus aide will document each child by name and sight that was transferred to their care on this list. These documentation forms will be turned in daily to the Transportation Specialist.

Bus aides will walk to the back of the bus at the completion of each route to check for forgotten items in each seat or area around the seat, and to ascertain that no children remain on the bus.

Classroom staff members are to call to confirm the absence of any child who is NOT on the bus and for whom the parent/guardian did NOT previously call the classroom to indicate the reason for the child's absence or give a reason in person to the bus aide. This call is to occur immediately upon arrival at the Center by the bussed children each day and is to be documented in the family services area notes in the Child Plus database. **If a child is expected to arrive at the center by transportation other than the provided school bus transportation, and does not arrive within 30 minutes of his/her normal arrival time and for whom the parent/guardian did NOT previously contact the classroom to indicate the reason for the child's absence, the classroom staff will attempt to contact the parent to determine the child's whereabouts and will document this contact attempt in the Child Plus database.**

8. Eating, drinking, gum chewing and playing with toys are not allowed on the bus. Children may bring a toy to school in their backpack/bag on Show and Tell day.

9. Only Head Start children will be transported to the Head Start Center. Parents will not be allowed to ride the bus even if they are volunteering that day.

10. All Head Start bus passengers must be secured in Q-Straint safety vests or integrated child restraint systems.

11. If a child who has a limited ability to respond in an emergency situation is being transported by the Head Start program, the following procedures will be implemented. Children with limited ability to respond in an emergency situation need to be closely monitored by the bus assistant during their bus rides; any special transportation requirements shall be specified in the child's Individualized Education Plan and/or on the Child Transportation Permission form to include information including special pick-up and drop-off requirements, special seating requirements, special equipment needs, and any special assistance that may be required.

12. Each bus aide and driver shall conduct a minimum of three bus evacuation drills, inclusive of the children who ride on the bus, each program year. Both the driver and aide must know exactly which children should be taken from the bus

first in an emergency evacuation (bus will be evacuated from front to back; right side first for each row and then left), and who will remain inside the bus and who will be outside the bus in the emergency evacuation (aide will be inside; driver will be outside). The decision to evacuate the bus in an emergency should not be made lightly. Children may be safer left on the bus after an accident. If determined necessary to evacuate due to safety concerns, the driver and aide need to first determine the “best exit” before starting to evacuate. Children who have limited ability to respond in an emergency situation need to be closely monitored by the aide and should be the last to be evacuated along with the aide behind the other children.

13. Children need to be dressed and ready when the bus arrives. No more than three minutes is planned for each stop so that the length of the route does not exceed an hour for any child. If the child misses the bus, it is the parent’s responsibility to take the child to school.

14. If the family is going to move, the teacher, Transportation Specialist and Lamers need to be notified as soon as possible but at least two weeks before the move.

15. If an authorized adult is not at home at drop-off time the following rules apply:

1. If the child attends the Barrington or Stoddard Head Start Center, they will be transported back to the Head Start Center. If no one can be reached by the center closing time, the children will be referred to social services and/or the police.

2. If the child attends the Kathleen M Czech Head Start Center, they will be transported to the Story Book Kids Child Care Center, 658 Maple Ridge Road, Mosinee, 693-5580. The parent will be charged a fee of \$5.00 per hour to be paid when picking child up. Story Book Kids Care Center closes at 5:00 PM.

3. If the transporting parent is not on time picking their child up at dismissal time, the parent and emergency contact will be called and notified to come and pick up the child. If no one can be reached within one half hour of the pick up time, the children will be taken to the designated child care center until their closing time at which time they will be referred to social services.

IF A CHILD IS NOT PICKED UP AT THE HEAD START CENTER BY THE TRANSPORTING PARENT OR IF AN AUTHORIZED ADULT IS NOT AT HOME AT THE DESIGNATED DROP-OFF TIME ON THREE OCCASIONS, THE CHILD WILL NO LONGER RECEIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND/OR WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE PROGRAM. IF THE CHILD IS STILL AT THE CHILD CARE CENTER OR HEAD START CENTER AT THE CLOSING TIME, SOCIAL SERVICES OR THE NEAREST LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICE WILL BE NOTIFIED.

Teachers need to remain at the Head Start Centers until the children are all dropped-off by the buses or picked-up by transporting parents. Head Start bus aides will call the Transportation Specialist, who in turn will call the teachers when the routes are finished. The director will be notified of any transportation problems as soon as they occur.

BARRINGTON CENTER VISITOR PROCEDURES:

- Park in the lot at the back of the school whenever you are transporting your child, visiting one of the classrooms, etc. This parking lot can be entered off of Franklin Street. For safety reasons, we do not want visitors/transporters parking in the front of the school – this area is used strictly for our yellow school bus transportation.
- Never leave a child in your car unattended.
- When you are transporting your child to and from the school, please wait in the front entrance of the school for your child's teacher to come and greet you. The teacher will have the sign-in/sign-out sheet with them for you to sign for your child.
- If you are visiting or volunteering in the classroom, or if you need to pick your child up early from school, you must stop in the front entrance of the school to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass. It does not matter if you are only going to be in the building for a few minutes or longer, everyone must sign-in as a visitor to our school.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned to offer enrichment experiences to the children. Parents will be informed of the specific date, time, place and means of transportation for each field trip. All parents must sign a form stating they give their permission for their child to participate on each specific field trip. Parents are encouraged to attend the field trips as chaperones. Siblings attending field trips (via personal parental transportation) are the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian for supervision. Private vehicles of Head Start families can be used only to transport their own children. No other Head Start children may ride in that private vehicle either to or from a field trip. Head Start children will either walk, take a chartered bus or public bus transportation with the staff members following the program transportation policies **to include use of written attendance checklists indicating both the children by name and sight getting on and off transportation at each stop as well as a staff member sweep of transportation vehicle to ascertain no child is left on the vehicle.**

Field trips that include a swimming experience will **only** take place at a **public wading pool or as organized swim lessons** being given by certified life guards (National Pool and Water Park Life Guard Training Program Certification; Red Cross, Boy Scouts or Young Men's Christian Association lifesaving certificate) and the following rules will apply:

- One certified lifeguard as specified above shall be on duty for each 25 children in the water
- Staff to child ratios of 1:4 for children 3 years of age and 1:6 for children 4 and 5 years of age will be maintained by staff who can swim while children are in the water (when there is a mixed age group, the staff-to-child ratio shall be adjusted on a prorated basis, according to age)
- Regular staff to child ratios will be maintained by staff while children are near the pool area or in related pool areas (locker/changing rooms, bathrooms, etc)

MY RIGHTS AS A HEAD START PARENT:

1. To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.
2. To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for me and my family.
3. To be welcomed in my child's classroom.
4. To choose whether or not I participate without fear of endangering my child's rights to be in the program.
5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start and about program opportunities such as special projects and events, parent meetings and workshops.
6. To always be treated with respect and dignity.
7. To expect guidance for my child from Head Start teachers and staff, which will help my child's total individual development.
8. To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
9. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skill in areas of possible employment.
10. To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of family life.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A HEAD START PARENT:

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
2. To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives.
3. To take part in the classroom as an observer, a volunteer worker, or a paid employee, and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program.
4. To provide parent leadership by taking part in Parent Center Committees or Policy Council, to explain the program to other parents and encourage their full participation.
5. To welcome teachers and staff into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home in relation to school experiences.
6. To work with the teachers, staff and other parents in a respectful and cooperative way.
7. To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
8. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and to share in evaluating it.
9. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education and recreation for all.