



Head Start Parent Handbook

2025-2026 Prenatal to 5 Program

Welcome to Head Start

A Message from the Director

Welcome to the Head Start program! We are excited to have you choose UCAP Head Start for your child(ren). As a parent in the program, you make a significant contribution to the success of your child, as well as the program. You are the single most important resource for the growth and development of your child(ren). You will find a variety of opportunities to contribute to the design and delivery of Head Start services, including Parent Committees, Advisory Committees, at-home activities, parent-teacher conferences, volunteer activities, and Policy Council. You will be involved in the decisions which affect your child(ren) and have opportunities to be active in the development of your child(ren). We look forward to collaborating with you and your child(ren) during the coming school year as we help to give your child(ren) a “Head Start.”

Dr. Mary Lockhart-Findling, Head Start Director



UNITED COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP

VISION • MISSION • CORE VALUES

VISION: WHERE WE ARE GOING AND WHAT WE ARE BECOMING

UCAP is a pioneering leader that empowers, inspires, and equips people to reach their own full potential.

MISSION: WHAT WE DO AND FOR WHOM

Eliminating poverty by empowering individuals and strengthening communities.

CORE VALUES: THE FOUNDATION OF HOW WE ACT AND MAKE DECISIONS

COMPASSION - We are aware of and sensitive to the financial and other challenges our neighbors face; we are motivated to take effective caring action.

ACCOUNTABILITY - We take pride and ownership of our work, and consistently deliver the expected outcomes in a financially responsible manner.

HUMAN DIGNITY - We welcome each person and all peoples and recognize their inherent worth and right to be treated respectfully.

TRUST - We build trust through empathy, credible actions, authentic relationships, and reliable and honest communication.

COMMITMENT - We are dedicated to our mission as we address the needs of families, volunteers, employees and neighbors.

INTEGRITY - We always strive to do what is right, honest and ethical.



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PROGRAM OPTIONS

CENTER BASED OPTION

- Four to Five classroom days per week.
- Full days: some options are full-year and some 9-months.
- Family engagement and support throughout the program year.
- Nutritional meals and snacks provided each day.
- Parents provide or arrange transportation (some locations have transportation provided).
- Family Service Workers and Teachers will assist parents in becoming their child's advocate as they transition from the Head Start classroom into kindergarten.
- Parent Aware 4-star rated, research-based curriculum to meet school readiness goals.

HOME BASED OPTION

- Two socializations (classroom sessions) per month for a total of 22 a year. Parents attend socializations with their child.
- One 1.5-hour home visit per week for a total of 46 visits is offered throughout the year.
- Meal or snack provided on socialization (classroom) days.
- Parents provide or arrange for transportation to socialization.
- Full year services
- Services to pregnant women will include a newborn visit with each mother and mother and baby.
- Home Visitors assist parents in becoming their child's advocate as they transition from the home into Head Start or another preschool setting.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

The United Community Action Partnership Head Start program is mandated by law to serve families at or below Federal income guidelines. At least ten percent of our total enrollment consists of children with diagnosed special needs. In addition to income guidelines, children are enrolled based on approved selection criteria. Ten percent of our total enrollment may be over the income guidelines. Within this group, our program shall provide enrollment to be eligible children regardless of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, or disability. Head Start does not endorse political, social, or religious beliefs.

Parents are the foundation of Head Start! Please be involved!

HEAD START: prenatal-five

HEAD START PRESCHOOL

All educational experiences are based on sound developmentally appropriate practices. Teaching staff and parents assess each child on an ongoing basis to plan individualized activities.

Activities for children are based on the Creative Curriculum and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, including:

- Approaches to Learning
- Cognition (Math and Science)
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy

A LOOK AT THE DAY

A typical day in a Head Start preschool center includes:

- Large group time (Read Aloud, Learning Games, Shared Writing).
- Mealtimes/ Brushing teeth.
- Small group times (children learn various concepts and skills with an adult in small groups).
- Child-directed play (children choose materials and areas for play).
- Outdoor time.
- Rest time.



EARLY HEAD START

All educational experiences are based on sound developmentally appropriate practices. Teaching staff and parents observe each child on an ongoing basis to plan individualized activities. The Home-Based option implements Partners for a Healthy Baby as its core curriculum and Center Based Early Head Start implements the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos as its core curriculum.

Activities for children are based on the curriculum and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Including:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development
- Language and Communication
- Cognition

EDUCATION



INDIVIDUALIZATION

- Every child is unique. Your child has interests, experiences, language, culture, and learning styles.
- The program utilizes a variety of strategies to help all children develop and learn.
- Children will receive individualized instruction related to strengths, needs, and goals.
- Families participate in at-home educational activities to support their child's individual learning.



PARENTS AS TEACHERS

- Parents are a child's first and most important teachers.
- There are opportunities for parents to learn about child development and enrich parenting skills.
- Parents of enrolled children are always welcome into classrooms during classroom time.
- Parents participate in their child's educational experiences.



CURRICULUM

- Home Based Early Head Start implements Partners for a Healthy Baby as its core curriculum; Center Based Early Head Start implements The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos; The Head Start program implements The Creative Curriculum Preschool System. The curricula that are used are research based.
- Supplemental curricula include an emphasis on literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, health, and nutrition.
- Center classroom days include large group, small group, choice time, mealtimes, rest, and outdoors.

EDUCATION

ASSESSMENTS

- Nine-month classrooms are formally assessed three times a year: November, February, and May. Full year classrooms and home based are assessed a fourth time in August.
- Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled three times a year (November, February, and May). There is an additional Parent-Teacher conference in August for those children who attend full year. At that time, your child's development and growth will be discussed. Parents and staff will work together to set goals for each child to work on during the year. Parents will also receive a conference report.

SCREENING

- Children will be screened for development and speech within the first 45 days of school.
- Behavioral screening occurs at the first home visit with the teacher or home visitor.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Children with suspected special needs are referred to the local school district or other specialist for an evaluation following parent permission and with full parent participation in the process. The program works together with parents and specialists to develop and implement Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to communicate the child's progress or needs, modifying goals as needed.

If you ever have any concerns about your child's development, please talk to your child's teacher or home visitor.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DRESS CODE

- Children will participate in messy activities. Dress your child accordingly.
- During cold weather, children will need warm coats, hats, mittens, boots, and snow pants.
- Wearing flip flops is strongly discouraged while playing outside.
- Remove hood and neck drawstrings from clothing.
- Reach out to the Family Service Worker or Home Visitor for any outdoor clothing needs.

PETS/ANIMALS

- Parents will be notified prior to the presence of any animals in the classroom.
- Parents/Visitors should not bring animals to the classroom without prior approval.

TOYS FROM HOME

- Please keep toys from home at home. Toys from home will not be allowed at school.

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS FROM HOME

- Personal care items will not be allowed at school without written instructions from your doctor and written permission from the parent. These items include lotion, lip balm, etc.

SUPPLIES

Head Start will provide all the necessary supplies, such as:

- Glue
- Paper
- Pencils and crayons
- Scissors (as is age appropriate)
- Paint
- Rest time blanket for toddlers and preschoolers
- A backpack is recommended. If assistance is needed in providing a backpack, please let your child's teacher or family service worker know.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INSURANCE

- Head Start provides liability insurance coverage should your child be injured while in the care of the program.
- Our liability insurance meets or exceeds requirements.

PERMISSION FORMS

- Parents must sign and return permission forms before a child can participate in field trips or any excursions away from the classroom.
- Parents must sign permission before each occasion of research, experimental procedure, or public relations activity involving their child.

AUTHORIZED/UNAUTHORIZED PERSON/PERSONS

- AUTHORIZED persons to whom a child may be released. These are the ONLY people to whom the child will be released.
- If an authorized person is not able to be reached within 30 minutes of classroom ending time and does not arrive to pick up the child in a reasonable length of time, social services and/or the local police department will be called.
- Head Start Staff will not permit a child to leave with anyone except authorized persons unless verbal AND written permission has been received from the parent/guardian to add additional authorized adults. Picture Identification will be required upon pick up.

HEALTHY SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HEALTHY SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Head Start provides opportunities and support for all children to grow and develop their social, emotional, and behavioral skills.

The accepted definition of mental health for young children is their growing ability to:

- experience, regulate, and express emotions.
- form close and secure interpersonal relationships
- explore the environment and learn, within the context of their family, community, and culture.
- Head Start provides a supportive learning environment that teaches children appropriate skills and behaviors, provides for children's individual needs, and offers resources and training for parents and staff, and access to additional services from consultants and community agents.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE SUMMARY

We all want our children to be self-confident, safe, happy, have good self-esteem, and to know how to make decisions. We want them to learn positive things to do when they are afraid, angry, or upset.

- We use the curriculum, Pyramid Model, & resources to teach children to name their feelings, manage their emotions, and get along with others.
- We acknowledge and respect children's feelings, and work with children to appropriately respond to strong feelings.
- We teach social problem-solving skills to solve problems instead of pushing, shoving, or hitting.
- We encourage children's positive behaviors and give less attention to negative behaviors.
- When we gently redirect children to more acceptable activities, we give them a limited number of choices. This helps teach them to make their own decisions.
- In the case of persistent unacceptable behavior, parents and staff work together to develop an individual behavior guidance plan.
- No child will be subjected to physical discipline, isolation, or harsh language.

If you have questions about helpful behavior guidance techniques to use at home, feel free to talk to your child's teacher or home visitor.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In times of emergency, it is important that we are as prepared as we can be to help our children and families.

How we respond to an emergency will depend on the type of incident:

- We may need to dismiss early or start late.
- We may need to evacuate children to a safe site.
- We may have a security lockdown, where children will be kept in the building.

Emergencies rarely happen, but if they do Head Start needs current information to contact you and know where to take your child.

- As an extra measure of safety, if a person unknown to us will be picking up your child, they will need to present a photo ID before we release the child to their care. Children will only be released to individuals on the emergency contact form.
- While we always hope that nothing will happen, the program has an Emergency Preparedness Plan in place, so we are always ready to keep your child safe.
- Your center team will let you know about any other individual emergency plans for their center.
- Please call us if you have any other questions about our Emergency Preparedness Plan

Note: Please make sure your emergency form is always updated with current addresses, names and phone numbers for those individuals authorized to pick up your child. Your child's teacher will contact you regularly to update this information

FIRST AID: CLASSROOM/SOCIALIZATIONS

Head Start staff are certified in first aid and CPR. All classrooms and buses are equipped with first aid supplies.

IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY OR INJURY, STAFF WILL:

- Administer First Aid.
- Call 911 or contact the nearest medical center as appropriate.
- Notify parents.

If you would like more information on First Aid or CPR training, talk to your Family Service Worker or Home Visitor.

CHILD HEALTH INFORMATION

REQUIRED HEALTH DOCUMENTS

Part of being ready to learn includes being healthy. To assure the health of your child, Head Start requires the following:

- Current and complete physical examination
- Up-to-date immunization record
- A complete dental exam (for Early Head Start children, a dental exam is not necessary until 1 year of age).

MN Rule 3 requires that licensed classrooms have a current physical exam on file for each child within 30 days of the start of the program year: 90 days for all others. After 30 days, children will be excluded from attending a licensed classroom until the exam is completed and documentation is received. Dental exams must be completed within 90 days. If your child has had a recent physical, please provide us with the documentation from your child's health records.

IMMUNIZATIONS

THE STATE OF MINNESOTA REQUIRES THAT YOUR CHILD HAVE THEIR IMMUNIZATION RECORD DOCUMENTED BY THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS OR FIRST HOME VISIT OR YOUR CHILD WILL BE UNABLE TO RECEIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FROM OUR HEAD START PROGRAM UNTIL RECEIVED.

TOOTH BRUSHING

- Your child's oral health is important to us.
- To keep your child's teeth healthy, Head Start serves nutritious foods, limits sweets, and models the importance of tooth care by brushing teeth daily in the classroom.
- School oral health practices will carry over into a lifetime of healthy dental care, so we make brushing teeth a fun part of the daily classroom routine.

MEALTIMES

- All meals and/or snacks are provided by the program and are served Family Style. Children and adults sit together for meals. Children are encouraged to serve themselves.
- Head Start follows USDA guidelines and Head Start Standards by serving nutritious meals low in fat and sugar.
- During mealtime adults engage children in conversations.
- Mealtimes are not rushed.
- Because of strict regulations, Head Start is unable to allow parents to bring food into the classroom or take food out.

CHILD HEALTH INFORMATION

MEDICATIONS

Head Start strongly recommends that any medication a child needs be given to your child at home. However, children may be given medicine prescribed by a physician in the center **ONLY** when the following requirements are met:

- Written permission from parent
- Written instructions by doctor
- Medication is in its original container with:
 - Prescription number
 - Name of the drug
 - Strength and quantity of the drug
 - Expiration date if a time-dated drug
 - Directions for use
 - Child's name
 - Physician's name
 - Date of issue
 - Name and address of pharmacy.

Please notify your child's teacher/home visitor of any medications your child is receiving at home. This includes long-term medications, i.e., Ritalin, etc. or short-term medications, such as antibiotics, acetaminophen, cold medications, etc. Since medications can affect your child's behavior and/or can have side effects, it is important for staff to be aware of any medications your child is taking.

ATTENDANCE

CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE

- It is important your child attend class every day to receive the greatest benefit.
- Notify your teacher if your child will not be in class.
- Please do not drop off your child any earlier than 10 minutes prior to class beginning.
- In circumstances when a child ceases to attend, the program will make efforts to reengage the family to resume attendance. If the child's attendance does not resume, then the program will consider that slot vacant. (Head Start Performance Standards 1302.16 (3).
- Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent
- Every day your child misses, they lose a chance to learn! Attendance matters! Help your child develop good attendance habits!
- Work with family service workers or home visitor if you are experiencing barriers to good attendance.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Follow a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpack the night before.
- Make sure your child has the required immunizations before school starts.
- Do not let your child stay home unless they are truly sick, or has an infectious illness.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

HOME BASED ATTENDANCE

- The home visitor will work with parents to establish a regular home visit schedule that is convenient for the family.
- When possible, appointments should be scheduled at a time that will not interfere with home visits.
- If you are unable to make your home visit, please contact your home visitor to reschedule.
- Socializations are an important part of home visiting. Make every effort to attend, and if unable to attend, please let your home visitor know.

WEATHER RELATED

If the public schools in your area cancel, have a late start, or get out early, Head Start will do the same. Please listen to your local radio station for the public-school announcements, check the district website, or check the UCAP Facebook page. When in question, contact your child's teacher or home visitor. If the public school(s) in your city closes school due to inclement weather, the Head Start Center will be closed.

For any other reasons for cancellations, parents will be notified by your child's teacher or home visitor.

ILLNESS

If your child is sick with an infectious illness:

- Keep your child home.
- Call your child's teacher.

Please do not send your child to school if they have the following:

- A fever of 100-degree Fahrenheit axillary (underarm) or higher of unknown origin before fever reducing medication is given.
- Diarrhea within 24 hours. (Diarrhea is abnormally loose, water stools (bowel movements) three or more times within 24 hours.)
- Vomiting (2 or more episodes in the past 24 hours).
- Rashes with fever, and any rash that spreads quickly, has open, weeping wounds and or is not healing.
- Impetigo (24 hours after medical treatment)
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye): Completion of 24-hour treatment prescribed by health care provider or discharge from the eye and other symptoms cleared.
- Your child may be excluded from the center if reportable illness or conditions that the commissioner of health determines to be contagious, and physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk of others.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS, WITHOUT THE USE OF MEDICATION, BEFORE RETURNING TO CLASS.

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

- Elevated temperature of 100.3 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Vomiting
- 3 or more abnormally loose stools (without known cause) since admission that day.
- When your child does not feel well enough to comfortably participate in normal activities.

IF A CHILD BECOMES SICK DURING THE DAY A PARENT WILL BE CALLED IMMEDIATELY. A COT AND BLANKET WILL BE PROVIDED IF APPLICABLE, AND THE CHILD MAY BE KEPT IN SPACE AWAY FROM OTHER CHILDREN WHILE UNDER WATCH OF ONE STAFF PERSON WHILE WAITING FOR PARENT /GUARDIAN TO PICK UP CHILD.

ILLNESS

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

If your child has any of the following contagious diseases, your child's teacher must be informed. Please follow the directions shown for when your child can return to class.

- Measles (Rubella): The child may return to classes 4 days after the appearance of the rash.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) with white or yellow drainage. The eyelids often are matted after sleep. Sometimes eye pain, swelling, or redness of the eyelids may occur: The child may return to classes with a note from your health care provider.
- Ringworm (of scalp, skin, and/or body): The child may return to classes with a note from your health care provider or proof of medication for 24 hours. Cover sores with clothing or a dry bandage.
- Impetigo: The child may return to classes with a note from your health care provider and 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Strep throat, scarlet fever, or other strep infection: The child may return to classes 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head Lice: The child may return to classes after effective treatment.
- Scabies: The child may return 24 hours after treatment.
- Mumps: Keep your child home from school until 5 days after swelling begins.
- Chickenpox: Keep your child home from childcare and school until all blisters have dried into scabs.
- COVID-19: The child may return when fever free for 24 hours and symptoms have improved.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS CONTRACTED ANY ILLNESSES NOT LISTED ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE HEAD START HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGER, TEACHER, OR HOME VISITOR.

HOW CAN PARENTS BE INVOLVED?

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents are their children's first teachers. Your involvement is an important part of the Head Start program. There are many ways you can participate in making your family's experience successful.

Here are just a few:

- Attending parent committee meetings and family events.
- Become a Policy Council member.
- Participate fully in-home visits and parent-teacher conferences.
- Complete at-home learning activities provided by teachers and home visitors.
- Set goals and check in on progress made with your child's teacher, family service worker, or home visitor.
- Keep informed by reading the information and newsletters provided by the program.
- Follow up with your child on activities planned with the teacher.
- Ensure your child has good attendance.
- Serve on the Head Start Health Services Advisory Committee or School Readiness Committee.



VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers can provide the extra attention that helps children thrive as learners and grow into healthy individuals. As a volunteer you will meet other people with similar interests. You will learn from teachers, children, and other parents, gaining skills that can be used at home or in the community, and others will learn from you. Volunteers should be at least 16 years of age. Volunteering can be considered work experience and is a nice addition to your resume.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM

- Read to children.
- Share a talent or special activity with the children.
- General cleaning
- Assist with food preparation (we train)
- Arrange bulletin board.

- Help with outdoor activities or special events.
- Play!

VOLUNTEERING AT HOME

- Preparing materials for the classroom.
- Washing blankets and/or dress-up clothes.
- At home learning activities.

HOW CAN PARENTS BE INVOLVED?

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Our teachers and family service workers make home visits to each family. Teachers will be making two educational visits, and family service workers will make visits as needed or requested. We believe that a partnership between parents and staff best supports children in their Head Start experience.

All parents/guardians of children enrolled in Head Start are automatically members of their site's Parent Committee. The Parent Committee is responsible for electing a parent to represent the group at Policy Council, have a process for communicating with the Policy Council, and advise staff. Policy Council is an opportunity for parents to take part in decisions about the program. Policy Council meetings are held monthly.

Parents are encouraged to be a part of the Health Service Advisory Committee. The Health Service Advisory Committee helps to support children's healthy development. The Health Service Advisory Committee has local health providers who represent a wide variety of local social services agencies. Working together is key to the success of this approach. Health Service Advisory Committees help programs to make decisions about health services and strengthen the communities where Head Start families live.

TRAININGS

Various training opportunities are also available to parents, such as:

- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- CPR/first aid
- Budgeting and saving
- Job seeking and resume.
- Parent/child activities
- Screen time for children.
- Home safety
- Good nutrition for children
- Parenting classes
- Preventing parenting stress and burnout
- What to do when your child gets sick
- Child development
- Bus monitoring or driving
- Food service

IN-KIND

WHAT IS IN-KIND?

Head Start and all its services are provided at no cost to participating families, although we are required to document donated time or materials that help to support the program. Those donations are called “in-kind” or non-federal match. Parents and family members can provide matched funding to Head Start programs in the following ways:

- With your child, work on the monthly at-home activities provided by teachers.
- Volunteer in the classroom, special events, or bus monitoring
- Attend Parent Committee Meetings
- Represent your site at Policy Council
- Prepare materials for the classroom.
- Assemble or fix toys or playground equipment.
- Help with food service (training provided)
- The options are limitless!

“LET’S DO THE MATH.”

Head Start must match 20% of the grant each year.

- 58% of this amount comes from classroom space.
- 15% comes from professional services.
- 1% comes from professional training.
- 1% comes from parent participation in Policy Council
- 10% comes from participation in the Home-Based program.
- 15% comes from parents volunteering in the classroom, picking up lunches, helping at meetings or family events, and working on “Monthly at Home Activities.”

What does this all mean?

Parent participation in the program is not only beneficial to your child but also to the ability to meet the in-kind requirements.



MY RIGHTS AS A HEAD START PARENT

- To always be treated with respect and dignity.
- To be welcomed in the classroom.
- To be informed routinely about my child's progress.
- To expect guidance for my child from Head Start staff that will help my child's growth and development.
- 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.
- To take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.
- To help develop adult programs that will improve daily living for me and my family.
- To be informed about community resources concerned with health, education, social connections, and improvement of family life.
- To take part in planning and conducting programs designed to increase my skills in areas of potential employment.
- To expect that any information collected and maintained that pertains to my child or family will be handled in a confidential manner.

Parent/Community Concerns Policy

Head Start invites parents to give their input and provide support for their child and the program. If at any time a parent has a concern about the Head Start program, a staff member, or any service provided, the following steps should be followed:

- First, talk to a staff member about the concern. Give your input and offer suggestions to solve the problem.
- If it is not resolved, bring the concern to the staff member's supervisor.
- If it is not resolved, complete the Parent/Community Concerns form; this goes to the Head Start Director.
- Head Start Director: Dr. Mary Lockhart Findling marylf@unitedcapmn.org or 320-235-0850 x621
- If the Head Start Director cannot resolve the problem, you can refer the issue to the Executive Director.
- The Executive Director will gather all the information and decide within ten working days of receiving the notification. If the Executive Director cannot decide within ten working days, he/she will send a written response of when to expect a decision.
- The decision can be appealed to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.
- *All these steps should take place within 10 working days at each step.

HEAD START'S CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Head Start staff will not talk about your family with anyone outside of Head Start without prior written approval unless the law requires us to do so. Child and family information is always kept in a locked file, or is password protected, and is accessible only to authorized Head Start staff. Each family has a right to their privacy. If you feel that your right to confidentiality has been violated, contact the Head Start Director immediately.

We also ask for your help in respecting the privacy of all Head Start families, children, and staff. Examples of confidential information might include:

- Identity of a child who bites your child.
- Identity of a child with an infectious illness.
- Personal information about a staff member.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Under Minnesota law, Head Start staff are required to call Child Protective Services if they have any reason to suspect that a child shows signs of being abused or neglected. It is important that parents understand this requirement, which helps ensure that all children receive protective services when needed.

We ask you to join us as “child advocates.” If you suspect that any child is being abused or neglected, please call Child Protective Services in your county. You may be the only voice that child has.

CUSTODY OR RESTRAINING ORDERS

If there is a custody order or restraining order that involves your child, Head Start must have a copy in your child's records. Although staff cannot physically prevent an authorized person from picking up a child, they may contact law enforcement to intervene if needed.

OTHER SERVICES IN HEAD START

Your Head Start experience will include several different services that will help your child and family as a whole. The following list includes some of the direct services you will receive while your child is enrolled in our program:

CHILD SERVICES

- A developmentally appropriate education program.
- Hearing and vision screenings, height, and weight checks.
- Developmental, speech, and behavioral screenings.
- Referrals to health practitioners including physicians, dentists, and mental health service providers, as needed.
- Assistance with your child's transition into their next educational experience.



ADDITIONAL HEALTH NOTES

Healthy habits are established with an emphasis on brushing teeth, hand washing, and health education activities. You are involved in your child's health by preparing them for screenings and exams, making sure their immunizations are up to date, scheduling and going with them to medical/dental appointments, and by participating in training opportunities.

Head Start will provide sensory screenings (vision and hearing). Parents and Head Start staff will work together as a team to make appointments and provide any follow-up needed to maintain your child's health. We appreciate your cooperation in reaching these goals.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SERVICES

Head Start contracts with several mental health organizations to assist staff and families in working on children's social and emotional skills. When needed, Head Start staff, in partnership with parents, can refer children for an evaluation. At this time parents have the option of providers which are listed at the bottom of the page or choosing another provider with whom they may be familiar. Together, a follow-up plan can be established to meet the individual needs of your child and develop goals for an Individual Guidance Plan.

Greater MN Family Services: 1-320-214-9692

Western Mental Health Center: 1-507-532-2362

Southwestern Mental Health Center (Jackson): 1-507-847-2432

Southwestern Mental Health Center (Windom): 1-507-831-2090

Woodland Centers (Kandiyohi): 1-320-235-4613

Nystroms (McLeod): 1-320-587-2326

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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