



Tri-County Child and Family Development

Parent Handbook

2017–2018



Center Base

205 Adams Street
P. O. Box 1050
Waterloo, Iowa 50704
Phone: 319-235-0383
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www.tricountychildandfamily.org

Approved by Policy Council:

Mission Statement

The mission of Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc., in partnership with the community, is to prepare children and their families for health, school, and life success.

I,



_____,
have received and reviewed a copy
of the Tri-County Child and Family
Parent Handbook.

(Signature)

(Date)



2017-2018 Family Fun Events

A schedule for the themes of this year’s events will be available at the parent kickoff event. **Please see your Family Service Worker with questions.**



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Who's Who in Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc.

Central Office

Executive Director	Dr. John M. Berry
Deputy Director	Kriss Engstrom
Chief Financial Officer	Vacancy
Service Delivery Director	Jennifer Verhulst
Human Resource Director	Jamie Moore
Mental Health Specialist/ Family Services Coordinator	Lori Wilken
Health Services Coordinator	Pauline Jones
Program Manager	email _____
Early Access Service Coordinator	Chris Izer
Education Specialist	Angela Syhlman

All agency employees may be emailed by using their first initial and last name @tccfd.org

My Child's School

My child's Head Start school is located at _____

Phone Number _____

My child should be at school from _____ until _____.

(Watch for weather announcements) Our school will follow the _____ district for weather related closing.

My child's evacuation site is _____

My child's teacher _____

Email _____

My Family Worker _____

Family Worker Phone # _____

Email _____

Note to families and visitors: Use of tobacco products is not permitted on any school property, this includes parking lots. Alcohol, illegal drugs and weapons are also prohibited at all sites.

Making a Difference

Parents are key in helping children stay in school!

The federal government gives the school money. But did you know we have to make a certain amount of in-kind?

In-kind is like money. It is a form of money that you are giving back to the school for your child to have a good education.

In-kind is donated time, space or services that are provided by parents and the community.

Without enough in-kind, we get less money next year and this will happen each year until there is no more money and no more program!!

For every \$1.00 of federal money we get, we are required to get 20 cents match of in-kind.

Help Us Get the In-kind We Need

- Help staff plan Family Fun Events at your school
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Read to the children in your child's class room
- Complete take-home activities and return to the school
- Participate in parent-child activities
- Go on field trips with your child's classroom
- Transport your child to and from their dentist and/or doctor appointments
- Work on your child's goals at home
- Serve on Policy Council
- Serve on the Health Advisory Committee
- Join the Parent Involvement Planning Committee
- Join the PBIS Leadership Team

Your child's education depends on in-kind!

Please contact your Family Service Worker or child's teacher for more information on getting involved and making a difference!!



Child and Adult Care Food Program

Building for the Future

This child care receives
Federal cash assistance to
serve healthy meals to your children.

Good nutrition today means
a stronger tomorrow!

Meals served here must meet
nutrition requirements established by USDA's
Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Questions? Concerns?

Call USDA toll free: 1-866-USDA CND
(1-866-873-2263)

Visit USDA's website: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd

Education Services

Classroom Activities

We design and provide "developmentally appropriate" activities throughout the school day. Through discussions with you and classroom observations, these activities address each individual child by matching his/her interests and abilities. Because we plan for each child individually, we welcome children who have disabilities.



We want to make sure your child is ready for Kindergarten. We will provide you with information on their progress toward School Readiness Goals that have been aligned with our Assessment tools. This progress, along with activities you can use at home, will be discussed during Home Visits and conferences.

Early Access Service Coordinator (EASC)

Coordinates services for any child and family eligible for Early Access and Early Intervention services. The EASC also works directly with the home visitor and teacher in following through on the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).



Education Specialist

This person is responsible for making sure the curriculum is implemented in the classrooms and monitors the continuing education of the teaching staff. This ensures that high quality services are delivered to the children and families.

Screens and Assessments

Federal Head Start regulations require that every child in a Head Start program receive a developmental screen within the first 45 days of enrollment. This means that the teacher may sit down with your child and ask them some questions or ask them to do certain tasks or the home visitor may ask you about certain skills your child may have. The information is summarized and shared with the parent. It is also used to better plan the experiences that they will offer to your child.

Children's skills are also assessed by observing the child individually as they use them in the learning environment. How your child is using his/her skills is shared with you on a home visit. Results of these assessments are also used to plan the best possible learning experiences for your child.

Field Trips/Guest Speakers

Once a month, your child will have an opportunity to go on a field trip or have a visitor from the community come to the classroom. Field trips and speakers are great ways to give your child the opportunity to learn more about the community and the people within it. Please look for announcements of field trips or speakers in your child's monthly newsletter or a note from your child's teacher. You are welcome to come with your child's class on a field trip or visit the classroom to listen to the speaker.



Separation Challenges (cont'd)

Keep it simple!

Your routine could be as simple as helping your child hang up their coat, reading a book in the reading corner and then waving goodbye at the door. Or you might watch your child color a picture and take it with you when you leave. Routines can change over time and eventually you might not even need one.

A drop-off routine will not always keep your child from crying, especially at first. Some children cry for days or even weeks before they adjust. You may need the teacher's reassuring arms to help your child as you leave.

Helping children with separation is a large part of a preschool teacher's job. Often the teacher is very effective at calming down your child after the goodbye has passed. Believe your child's teacher when she/he says that your little one only cried for ten minutes or so.

Some simple steps for separation!

There are other simple steps that can help your child adjust to the separation. Leave a family picture in your child's cubby. Show your child that you trust and like his teacher with a happy "hello" in the morning. Provide your child with the chance to talk about his feelings, but then change the subject to something positive. Try to relax and believe that this problem will pass. Before you know it you will be hearing them say "but I said I wasn't ready to go home!"

Separation Challenges

Separation difficulties can happen with any child at *any* time during their preschool years. Whether this is your child's first preschool experience or a mid-year crisis, you have probably tried everything, including a few special treats, but he/she will not be convinced that preschool is the place where they should be. It is very important that you are ready for the separation, also. If you are anxious about your child starting preschool, they will pick up on that anxiety.

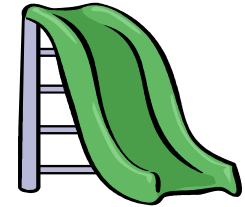
Drop-off routine to the rescue!

Whether this is your child's first school experience or a new phase, these meltdowns are difficult for everyone involved. What do you do when your child refuses to say goodbye and happily go into the classroom? What you need is a "drop off routine." Children like routines because they provide a sense of security. Just as a good bedtime routine helps in the evening hours, a good drop-off routine will help you at preschool.

Creating the drop-off routine should include your child's teacher. Decide on steps that you will take every day when you and your child arrive at preschool. The goal is to establish and follow a routine for saying goodbye. The more your child knows what to expect, the more likely he/she will remain calm as the "goodbye" approaches.

Physical Activity

Active play and exercise are part of healthy child development and our curriculum. While at Head Start, **children's shoes must allow safe participation in activities.** Tennis shoes with socks are the best choice to prevent injuries. During the *summer months*, flat sandals with a secure heel strap are okay, but sandals with heels, thin straps or flip flops do not promote safe active play. Snow boots are needed during the winter months to allow for outdoor play when snow is on the ground. Please notify your Family Worker if you need help getting safe shoes for your child.



Family Partnership Agreement (FPA)

We believe in building strong partnerships with our families. These partnerships are based on shared respect and trust. They are aimed at helping you reach goals for your family. Your Family Service Worker will be helping you identify a goal that you want to work on. Your Family Partnership Agreement goal will be a family goal, something that you want to achieve. Your FPA goal will be reviewed regularly with your Family Service Worker throughout the year. Once you have reached a goal, another goal will be developed. By working together, we can achieve great things!

If you have any questions, please ask your Family Service Worker or Home Visitor.



Nutrition Services

Head Start provides healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks to all children, served family style when appropriate.

Your child will enjoy healthy meals and snacks which meet at least 1/3 of the daily nutritional requirements and follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines.

Your child will participate in nutrition and physical activities to promote healthy life-long habits.

Your child will learn self-help skills such as hand washing, brushing teeth and making healthy food choices and good mealtime manners.

Please let staff know if your child must eat or avoid any foods for religious or other reasons (food allergy or intolerance). We will provide food substitutes if a completed diet modification request form is on file with a doctor's signature.

Pedestrian/Bus Transportation Safety (cont'd)

Crossing the Street

Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks.

Stop at the curb or edge of the road.

Stop and look left, then right, then left again before you step into the street.

If you see a vehicle, wait until it goes by. Then look both ways before crossing.

Do not cross the street in-between cars.

Children should hold onto an adult's hand while crossing.

Busing Safety Tips

Important Safety Rules for Loading and Unloading

The bus driver cannot see you if you are closer than ten (10) feet to the bus.

Stay out of the Danger Zone.

If you have to cross the street to get to the bus, wait until the bus has stopped and the safety lights are flashing. Cross the street after the bus driver directs you. Look both ways before crossing the street.

If something is dropped at or near the bus, tell the driver before you retrieve it.

Source: National Association for Pupil Transportation

Busing Rules

Safety Rules for Riding on the Bus

There will always be at least one bus monitor on the bus. They are responsible for the children in our care.

School begins the moment a child enters the bus. Bus monitors will make the ride enjoyable for children.

Children will use inside voices on the bus so that the driver can hear sounds outside of the bus.

Children remain seated until the bus monitor allows them to get up. Children are never allowed to move while the bus is moving.

Loose objects and medication cannot be transported on the bus. No food or drink is allowed on the bus.

Pedestrian/Bus Transportation Safety

Pedestrian Safety

Tri-County Child and Family is committed to keeping your children safe. Please share the following information with your child. Classrooms will reinforce to children the importance of pedestrian safety.

Please take a moment to go over these tips provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. You can also visit their website at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/kids.

Pe-des-tri-an

n. A person traveling on foot; a walker

safe-ty

The condition of being safe; freedom from danger, risk or injury

Pedestrian Safety Facts

Children hit by cars can be hurt or killed, even when cars are moving slowly.

Toddlers (1 and 2 year olds) are most often hurt by a vehicle backing up.

Preschoolers (3 and 4 year olds) are most often hit when running across a street near home.

Young Children Are Not Small Adults

Children cannot judge speed or distance of vehicles.

Children move quickly and can run into the street without warning.

Children don't know safety rules and expect adults to watch out for them.

Children are small and hard for the driver to see.

Safety Tips for Walkers

Sidewalks

Always walk on the sidewalk.

If there is no sidewalk and you have to walk in the street, always walk facing traffic so you can see any vehicle that might go out of control.

Nutrition Services (cont'd)

USDA civil rights regulations and policies

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

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 responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information is available in languages other than English.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866)632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. **fax:** (202)690-7442; or **email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

"It is the policy of Tri-County not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code section 216.7 and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by Tri-County, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400E. 14th St., Des Moines, IA 50319-1004; phone number 515-281-4121, 800-457-4416; website: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html>

Wellness Policy

Our goal is to help children develop healthy habits. Your child learns to eat healthy at mealtimes and monthly snackivities. We provide 60 to 90 minutes of active play each day.

MyPlate is a good guide for eating healthy. It is important for children age 3 to 5 to eat around the following amounts from each food group:

- Grains: 4-5 ounces per day
- Vegetables: 1 ½-2 cups per day
- Fruits: 1-1 ½ cups per day
- Dairy: 2-2 ½ cups per day
- Protein Foods: 3-5 ounces per day



Your child should be actively moving 60 or more minutes a day. To raise an active child:

- Make active play fun for the whole family
- Focus on fun, not performance
- Limit TV and computer time to less than 2 hours a day



(See brochure in resource section.)

Tri-County 2017-2018 Calendar

Please see your family service worker for the calendar that applies to your family.

Helpful Resources

Helpful resource websites:

www.tricountychildandfamily.org
www.firstcallforhelpiowa.com
www.211.org

Programs operated by Operation Threshold can be accessed at www.operationthreshold.org
 Tri-County Child and Family Council, Inc. has a Facebook page. Check it out and “like” us to receive information about your child’s center/classroom.

The “What’s Where in Parenting” Directory is filled with resources available to families in the Black Hawk County area, and is available to all families regardless of race, income, educational, or socioeconomic level. All of the resources listed are free or low cost, and are offered at numerous locations. WWIP can be accessed at www.fccouncil.net.

Sign-up for Textcaster to receive texts from TriCounty Child and Family for weather related closings and reminders of activities going on in your child’s center.

Transportation Services (cont'd)

Incidental Trips

Occasionally staff may have to transport children in agency vehicles without a parent present. (Example: transporting to dental clinic). Two staff will accompany children in such an event. An Incidental Trip Release will be signed in advance by parent.

Bus Evacuation Drills

Children will participate in bus evacuation drills throughout the year. They will practice exiting from the back of the bus and using the line ropes.

In case of an emergency:

1. Bus drivers will contact their bus garage.
2. The bus garage will notify Tri-County Child and Family administrators.
3. Parents will be contacted by our staff.

Safety Education for Parents offered throughout the Year

Safety information will be available during the year for families in the center newsletters. Please look over this information with your child. Transportation and pedestrian safety information is also reinforced in your child's classroom. Parents are encouraged to participate in bus evacuation drills with their child. Parents can also receive bus aide training. Please contact your family worker if you are interested in this training.

For more information regarding Tri-County Child and Family Development's transportation services please contact the Transportation Lead, Pauline Jones at 235-0383.

Information on transportation options in your community is available by calling 211.

Health Services

To be successful in school and life, it is important to stay as healthy as possible. Here at Head Start we have **health requirements** for your child:

1. **Health and Development Assessment Form (Filled out during your application)**
2. **A copy of your child's Immunization Record that is current and up to date for his/her age.**
3. **Well Child/Physical Exam Form with all necessary blood work, according to your child's age. This must be signed by a health care provider and remain current during the year. Regular age-appropriate well-child exams must be completed throughout the year.**
4. **Dental exams for all children must be signed and dated within 90 days of program start date, if applicable. Fluoride varnish will be administered three times per year with parent permission.**

Health Screens are provided for all children with parent permission. The screens include vision, hearing, and dental screening which includes Fluoride Varnish.

If you do not have private insurance, Title XIX or Hawk I insurance, we will help you with the application process.

Pre-Natal Services

Full year, full day sites can offer enrolled families a slot for newborns with a pre-natal application. Family Services Workers will meet with the parent to offer information regarding pregnancy and post-pregnancy healthcare, fetal development, breast feeding and how to prepare for the birth of the baby. Please see your Family Service Worker if you are expecting and interested.

Incident Reports

Children involved in an incident while in our care will have the appropriate first aid given. Staff will complete an incident report to share with caregiver explaining what took place. Staff will ask for caregiver's signature on the report at the time of pick-up. Phone calls are made to caregivers when children are involved in a head injury or other serious injury. Staff also contact our contracted registered nurses when needed. When a head injury occurs caregivers will also receive a Head Injury form that talks about what signs to watch for when the child is injured.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services are provided by Tri-

County's licensed mental health professional.

These services include coaching, classroom observations, staff consultations, family consultations, home visits, various trainings and individual observations as requested. The mental health professional assists staff with developing strategies to build social emotional skills, strong attachments and healthy environments. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a process used to teach children the necessary social and emotional skills to replace challenging behaviors. A PBIS/Positive Solutions for Families parent education series is available.



Ask your Family Service Worker for more information.

Transition Services

What is a transition? Transition is any kind of change in routine for children or families. A definition from the dictionary is . . .

tran-si-tion: passing from one state, stage, subject or place to another.

Example: We want to have a smooth transition for the family and child when the child begins in the Head Start classroom.

Transition is the process of moving from one place to another.

Teachers, Home Visitors and Family Service Workers will be working with your family to help you and your child plan for program changes.

Let's think about times when your child makes a transition. . . For example, they may move from the baby room to the toddler room. He/she may be getting home base services but then enter the center base program. They may move from one school or center to another.

And don't forget, just dropping your child off at the school is a transition!

Transportation Services

Tri-County Child and Family does not provide transportation to and from school. If you need assistance with transportation call 211 or talk to your family worker for alternatives.

Our agency provides transportation from centers to enrichment opportunities throughout our community. It is important that all parents, children, bus drivers and staff follow the rules set forth by the Head Start Performance Standards and State of Iowa Transportation.

Please take time to read through this material and sit down with your child and go over the information.

Field Trips For Classrooms

During the year, classrooms will have enhanced learning experiences and will be transported on a bus. All children, 3 to 5 years old, will wear the safety harnesses.

Children currently enrolled in the Early Head Start program will not participate in field trips.

Adults will wear a seat belt on the bus.

Parents that attend a field trip with their child may ride the bus if space is available. Siblings will not be permitted to ride on the bus.

Arrival at Center during field trip time

If you arrive at the center after the bus has left your child will be taken to another class until their class room returns from the field trip. A parent may transport the child to the fieldtrip location and the child will return to the center with the classroom.

Problem Solving Procedures (cont'd)

May we skip steps? You may always skip Step One. Other steps may be skipped **only** if everyone in the steps being skipped agrees.

For example, if the parent, the staff person, and the Program Manager all agree the situation should be handled by the Service Delivery Director, Step One and Step Two could be skipped and the Service Delivery Director would immediately assist in working on the issue.

Why not just quit the program if I have a problem? Your family is important to us. We want to work with you to help our program be what you need. We need your feedback to make our programs work.

Will my child be treated badly because I complained?

No. We encourage our families to let us know when they are not happy with our programs. It helps us make our programs better.

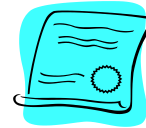
Transition (Cont'd)

Head Start staff will work with you during transition times. Together we will make a Transition Plan to help you and your child prepare for change and be successful.



Staff Qualifications

Tri-County Head Start is committed to the professional development of all our staff. We know that a quality program is the result of well-trained, qualified and dedicated staff. As a result, all of our Teachers have an AAS in Child Development or BA in Early Childhood Education. All Family Workers have a BA. All staff are trained and certified in the following: CPR, First Aid, Blood Borne Pathogens, Safety Emergency Procedures and Child Abuse Reporting. There are several professional development days set aside during the school year for these trainings. Refer to your calendar.



Confidentiality

At Head Start we respect your privacy. Your child's file is kept in a locked cabinet that can only be accessed by staff involved with your child's program. We carefully follow our policies and procedures for data management to protect the privacy of your child and your family's records following all federal, state, local and tribal laws, rules, and regulations. You will be provided with the Program Data Management Policy booklet that details the rules and procedures about disclosure of personally identifiable information in your child's records and your Family Partnerships Agreement. We will only allow access to your child's information and your family's information as is required by those laws and procedures after following the established procedures. As a parent, you personally have the right to inspect your child's records.



Arrivals and Departures

Parents/caregivers who bring their child directly to the school are asked to deliver their child in person to a classroom teacher when arriving. This is for your child's safety and helps in the transition from home to school. As an illness precaution, please make sure that both you and your child wash your hands upon arrival to the center.



Anyone picking up a child from school must be prepared to show picture identification and either be on the child's "release to" list or (in special situations) have other written permission from the parent.

Please update this information as needed. A non-custodial parent may have access to their child **unless there is a court order in our files prohibiting such contact.**

Parents/caregivers are asked to sign their child in when dropping off and sign them out when picking up each day.

Change of Address and/or Phone Number

For your child's safety, it is **very important that you notify the school immediately if your address, phone number or emergency numbers change.** We must have a current number where you or the emergency contact person may be reached. Please notify the classroom of any phone number or address changes.



Personal Belongings

We encourage you to leave any toys or valuables at home rather than sending them with your child to prevent loss or damage. **The agency is not responsible for stolen or damaged items.** Please mark any clothing items with your child's name. Weapon-like toys are prohibited.

Step Four- Policy Council

If you still have a concern after working with **Service Delivery Director**, request the **Executive Director** to refer the issue to the Policy Council. The Policy Council will establish a special committee to talk to you and the other persons you have been working with to try to come up with a solution to the issue you raised. That Committee will make a recommendation to the Policy Council for action as a whole.

If you or the Executive Director do not agree with the decision of the Policy Council, the Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. Board of Directors may be asked to review the decision of the Policy Council as Step Five.

Step Five - Board of Directors

If requested by either you or the Executive Director, the Policy Council Decision will be reviewed by the Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. Board of Directors. The Board may appoint a special committee to make a recommendation to the Board.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why talk to the staff person if they are the problem?

Most problems come from lack of understanding. Talking about it usually fixes the problem.

Do I have to talk to the staff person? I am not comfortable doing that!

No, if you are not comfortable talking to the staff person by yourself, you can go directly to **Step Two** and contact their supervisor, the Program Manager.

Problem Solving Procedures

Step One - Staff

If you have a complaint or concern about the school or our services, we ask you to first discuss the issues with the staff you work with (teacher, family work, home visitor) and try to work out a solution.

Most issues get worked out with a simple conversation. If that does not work, go to Step Two.

Step Two-Program Manager

If you are not comfortable talking directly to the staff person OR you do not work out an acceptable solution in Step One, contact the staff person's Program Manager. Call the EMA School at 235-0383 to get the Program Manager's name and contact information. The Program Manager will help resolve the situation and may help facilitate a conversation between you and the staff person.

A few issues need more people involved in the problem solving. If working with the Program Manager does not resolve the issue, go to Step Three.

Step Three-Service Delivery Director

If the Program Manager is not able to resolve the problem, contact the Service Delivery Director at EMA at 235-0383. The Service Delivery Director will try to resolve the issue and may request a group meeting with others who could help. That might include parents, staff persons, the Executive Director or the Policy Council chairperson.



*Occasionally problems need to be looked at by the agency policy makers. If the **Service Delivery Director** is not able to help work out a solution, go to Step Four.*

Child's Schedule

Please pick your child up promptly. Children build trust by knowing you arrive on time. If your child is not picked up by the closing time of the school, the Teacher will contact people on your child's emergency cards.

If the Teacher has not reached any contacts by 15 minutes after the school closes, the local police department and DHS will be notified.



Bad Weather/Emergency Closings and Cancellations



In order to insure the safety of your child, it is likely that there may be times when we have to cancel school or close school early if the weather is bad. Part year classrooms follow the closing/delay policies of the school district that the classroom location is in. If you have any questions about the policy for your school district please speak with your family worker. Sign-up for Textcaster to receive weather related information for school closings. You can also watch for closing on KWVL.

Gifts

Staff members are not allowed to accept gifts from our families. We appreciate the trust you show in us, and the opportunity to be a part of your child's life.



Child's File Information



Mothers and fathers have the right to inspect the child's records. Certain others who legally stand in the place of parents will also have the right to inspect the child's records or portions of the child's records. Persons who qualify are described in the program Data Management Policy booklet. Please respect our need to verify your status as a parent or other qualifying individual before allowing inspection.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

All Head Start staff are mandatory reporters for child abuse.

The Head Start program complies with the State of Iowa law requiring all mandatory reporters working in licensed child care to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Human Services. This is in the best interest of your child.

The law tries to protect children from abuse and helps others find ways to handle the stress of raising children. If you would like help in coping with any area of your child's behavior, please call your child's teacher, family worker or the mental health specialist. We will try to help you find solutions to your concerns.

Children's safety and best interests are always our goal. We will notify authorities should we have concerns regarding any child's safety. If you would like training in the reporting of child abuse please contact your child's teacher.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

The Teacher's goal is to create a positive, supportive environment and offer activities that encourage a fun, learning and safe classroom. To do this, all staff provide a nurturing atmosphere, activities that are developmentally appropriate, a consistent schedule, as well as clear and reasonable rules and expectations. Tri-County's expectations are to *Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be a Team Player*.

A Teacher's response to behavior depends on the individual child's age, development and personality. Some of the responses may include:

Re-direction: Staff will re-direct a child to a more appropriate activity.

"Be by Myself Place": The teacher encourages the child to go to a quiet place (e.g. tent or calm corner) to help him/her gain some self-control.

Relaxation Techniques: The Teacher helps the child take 3 deep breaths to help him/her relax.

Visual Cues: Staff will show a picture to a child to remind them about what his/her job is.

If a child hits, bites or hurts other children or staff, the parent or guardian may be asked to meet with the teachers to discuss the problem and agree on a plan of action.

Biting Policy

Biting can come from different emotional feelings at different ages. Biting is a common behavior in the infant or toddler who is expressing a feeling.

When an incident of biting occurs, the child/children involved and the classroom teacher will use age appropriate problem solving techniques and positive behavior supports that care for the victim and avoid rewarding the biter with attention. The classroom staff will also use classroom strategies to identify acceptable alternatives for expressing emotions.

An incident report will be written for the child that was bitten as well as the child that did the biting. The names of the children will be protected to assure confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Parents/guardians are required to sign all accident/incident reports.

- All bites will be given proper first aid or medical attention.
- If biting becomes a recurring issue, caregiver supervision techniques and/or appropriateness of classroom activities will be reviewed by classroom staff and their supervisor. If biting still continues a conference may be set with center staff and the family to discuss possible solutions.

Source: [Caring For Our Children Standards 2.039 and 8.010]

Volunteer Policy/Access and Visitation

Head Start encourages parents/guardians to be involved in classroom and center activities. We encourage your active participation with your child. We want to assure the safety of your child. One way to ensure safety is to limit the people who have access to your child.

Regular volunteers, people being in the center more than 10 hours per week, including all students from universities or community colleges, must complete a Criminal Background Check and FBI Fingerprinting before they can participate in our programs. If you would like to be a regular volunteer for the agency, you too will have to complete a background check and fingerprinting prior to you volunteering with this agency.

Please see your Family Worker or child's teacher for more information on becoming a regular volunteer in our agency.

Many of our centers are secured buildings; entry is gained by being "buzzed in" or admitted after identifying yourself. Please know we may ask for picture identification at anytime.

Persons who exhibit inappropriate behavior will be asked to leave or denied entrance to the center.

Staff members are responsible for supervising parents/guardians and other volunteers.

Again, we encourage your participation, but want to assure the safety of all of the children in our care.

Access denial of those on Sex Offender registry

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor who is required to register with the Iowa Sex Offender Registry (from Iowa Code 692A):

Shall not be on the property of the child care center without the written permission of the center director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child or ward to and from the center.

Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at a child care center.

The center director is not OBLIGATED to provide written permission.

Before giving written permission, the center director shall consult with the DHS licensing consultant.

Parent Involvement

At Head Start, we believe that parents are the most important teachers their children will ever have. We also want you to become involved in the program. Parents are welcome to visit **your child's** classroom at any time, so you always have access to your child. There are many ways for parents to get involved in Head Start.

Home Visits

Your child's Teacher will meet with you and will do two home visits and two conferences with you per year. Your Family Worker will also visit you at your convenience.

Purpose of home visits:

- To allow **you** to tell us about **your** child and what **you** want for him/her and your family.
- To give you a chance to learn more about your child's day and progress at school.
- To provide a time for you to ask questions.
- To give you information and resources to meet your goals for your family.

Family Fun Events

These events are held monthly at a variety of locations in the community. During these events, parents, Home Visitors and Family Workers have the opportunity to discuss things that are going on in the classrooms and/or in the home. These events promote education and offer a variety of activities for children and families to do together.

Policy Council

Policy Council is made up of Early Head Start and Head Start parents, as well as community people. Center Base parents elect members of the Policy Council. Policy Council meets the 2nd Thursday of each month to discuss agency-wide issues, act on these issues, and discuss any community concerns that may impact their family's lives.

Healthy Ways to Celebrate Special Days

Birthday treats

Children are allowed to bring treats once a year on their birthday (or another day if their birthday is not on a school day).

Agency policy does not allow us to serve food from home or homemade treats. If food is brought in that is not in its original store packaging, we cannot serve it to children.

Here are some healthy treat ideas:

- Stickers
- Magnets
- Homemade crafts
- Simple puzzles or games
- Graham crackers
- Pretzels
- Fresh fruit

Holidays

Treats are not allowed at Head Start for holidays, including Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day. If they are sent to school they will not be distributed to the classroom. Each classroom will have healthy ways to celebrate special days. You can show your appreciation by volunteering, donating a book or sending cards to the classroom for special occasions.

Please do not bring in any other additional food or drink into the center or school your child attends.



Unless the child has a note from a physician specifying otherwise, infants shall be placed in a supine (back position) for sleeping to lower the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

The note from the physician needs to include why the baby requires an alternate sleep position, how long they can be kept in this position while sleeping, and when the alternate sleep position expires. This note is to be kept in the child's file and documentation kept with the allergies/medications postings in the classroom.

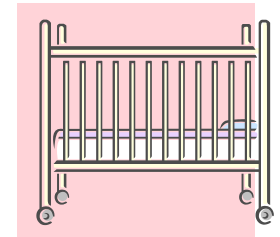
A note stating "I require an alternate sleep position as requested by my doctor" shall be placed on that child's crib so that those that enter the classroom are aware of the infant's needs.

When infants can easily turn over from the supine to the prone position, they shall be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer to sleep.

Unless a doctor specifies the need for a positioning device that restricts movement within the crib, such devices shall not be used. (Caring for Our Children, Standard HP006) See attached exception form.

Strings and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck shall not be accessible to children while in child care. (Caring for Our Children, Standard 5.160)

Cribs must be kept away from window coverings. Pacifier strings shall not be attached to infants' clothing.



Safe Sleep Policy

Infants under 12 months of age shall be placed on their backs on a **firm tight-fitting mattress** for sleep in a **crib only**.

Infant car seats, bouncers and swings are not safe places for infants to sleep. SIDS risks such as re-breathing and overheating can be caused by these devices.



Only one baby will sleep in each crib.

Sleeping babies shall be monitored by sight and touch periodically while they are napping.

The first symptom of SIDS is death. Sight alone will not tell you if something is wrong.

Baby's core temperature should be checked for comfort.

Pillows and other soft surfaces shall be prohibited as infant sleeping surfaces.

All pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft products shall be removed from the crib.

Sleep clothing, such as sleepers or sleep sacks will be used as alternatives to blankets.

All children's heads shall remain uncovered during sleep. (Caring for Our Children, Standard FA 190A)

Attendance Policy

In order for your child to get the most out of the child development program, it is **federally mandated that they come to school when scheduled and maintain an 85% attendance rate**.

Because of the need for Head Start services, and frequent absences interrupt the learning process, **we cannot hold a spot for a child who has frequent absences** unless there are certain emergency situations, such as illness or significant family problems.

If your child is not at school and we don't hear from you, we will call you 1 hour past the scheduled arrival time to make sure everything is okay.

Please contact your child's Teacher or Family Worker at your child's school whenever your child will be absent or late.



Illness Policy



We want to protect children against the spread of illness. Hand washing with soap and water is the best source of protection against illness.

In order to keep all of our children as healthy as possible, we cannot allow children who are sick to stay at school. Children should be able to participate in daily activities. Please remember that if your child is too sick to go outside they are too sick to be at the center. If we are not sure what illness your child has or how contagious they are, we may ask for a note from your child's doctor before they can return to school.

Do not send your child to school if:

- She/he has a fever above 100 ° F orally (by mouth) or 99°F axillary (under the arm) within 24 hours.
- A child needs to be fever free without medication for 24 hours.
- She/he complains of not feeling well and unable to participate in daily activities
- She/he has diarrhea or is vomiting
- She/he shows signs of a contagious disease such as but not limited to:

Strep throat	Pink eye	Impetigo
Staph infections	Chicken pox	Pertussis
Pinworms	Rotavirus	RSV
Scarlet Fever	Scabies	Fifth Disease
E. Coli	Ringworm	Croup
Diphtheria	Measles	Mumps
Enterovirus	Influenza	

A medical provider will determine length of absence once treatment has been initiated. Children need to be seen by a doctor for any contagious disease or if they have 3 or more absences for an illness. A doctor's excuse is needed to return to school.

Your child may be sent home if:

- **She/he has a fever of 100 or higher**
- **She/he has flu-like symptoms (diarrhea, vomiting, etc.)**
- **She/he has open, bleeding or oozing sores**
- **She/he may be contagious (see list above)**

Agency contracted nurses are notified when necessary to help determine if a child should be sent home.

Medication

If your child needs to take medicine at school, our staff can give your child medication **only if it is prescribed by a doctor.**

The medicine you bring in must be in the original pharmacy container. It must be clearly labeled with:

Child's first and last name
Physician's name
Date the prescription was filled
Name and strength of the medication
Instructions from manufacturer, pharmacy or doctor

We are not able to give your child any over-the-counter medication such as cold medicine, Tylenol, and diaper cream without a doctor's prescription. Over-the-counter medications prescribed by your doctor must be in the original manufacturer's container, labeled by the parent, with the child's first and last name and specific instructions given by the child's doctor.

You will also need to fill out a **Medical Authorization form** that gives our staff permission to give medicine to your child. The authorization is good for 30 days.