

PARENT HANDBOOK

2015 - 2016

*“Empowering families’ well-being
while nurturing and educating children for school and life.”*



<p>Your child's teacher is:</p>	<p>Your (circle one) Family Support Assistant/Home Based Visitor/ Family Development Specialist is:</p>
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All of our locations are NAEYC Accredited!

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
Head Start & Early Head Start
101 South 19th Street
Olean, NY 14760 - 3325
(716)373-2447 Fax(716)373-5192**

**Olean Head Start Center
210 East Elm Street
Olean, NY 14760 - 1325
(716)372-5959 Fax(716) 372-3825**

**Olean Head Start & Olean School District
Collaboration Center-UPK
East View Elementary School
690 East Spring Street
Olean, NY 14760 - 2907
(716)375-8920 Fax(716)375-8929**

**Olean Head Start & Olean School District
Collaboration Center-UPK
Washington West Elementary School
1626 Washington Street
Olean, NY 14760 - 1935
(716)375-8960 Fax(716)375-8970**

**Salamanca Head Start Center
79 River Street
Salamanca, NY 14779 - 1137
(716)945-5281 Fax(716)945-0588**

**Delevan Head Start Center
11713 Rt. 16 POB 515
Delevan, NY 14042 - 9782
(716)492-4720 Fax (716)492-3298**

**Franklinville Head Start Center
Collaboration Center-UPK
Franklinville Elementary School
32 North Main Street
Franklinville, NY 14737 - 1096
(716)676-8000 Fax(716)676-2797**

**Warsaw Head Start Center
Head Start & Early Head Start
22 South Main Street-PO Box 182
Warsaw, NY 14569 - 0205
(585)786-2770 Fax(585)786-5714**

We are connected! Visit our webpage! www.headstartnetwork.com

Our webpage is family friendly and has information specific to you and your child. Get information about programs and services, a resource directory, newsletters, calendars of events, partnering agencies and school district links, staff email and more! You can also access our brochure and child application on the web.

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WELCOME

Welcome to the family of Head Start! Each and every child, each and every family, and each and every employee is very important to us.

Here is some basic information about Head Start – service and activities, policies and procedures, and our mutual responsibilities. We can't put everything into this booklet but we'll answer any question at any time. Please get to know us as it helps us get to know your children better.

Please take advantage of all that Head Start offers: read our newsletter Head Start Highlights online; volunteer or be a substitute; participate in your parent committee; participate in Policy Council; participate in special parent activities; and apply for any job for which you are qualified.

Our basic purpose is to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children. We believe that parents are the child's first and primary teacher.

Early Head Start is a program designed as a home based program for pregnant women and children ages 0-3 years old. Contact us to learn more about Early Head Start and the exciting opportunities it might have for you or someone you know.

We look forward to a bright yet very challenging future. Research has clearly shown that Head Start works! All of our Head Start centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We are the only accredited centers in our area. We wish you and your child a successful and rewarding Head Start experience. We believe that great minds begin at Head Start and the best is yet to come.



MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering families' well-being while nurturing and educating children for school and life.



STANDARD OF QUALITY POLICY

To foster and promote dignity and respect, we must acknowledge that Project Head Start is recognized as much for its image as for its service. Staff, parents, and visitors at all program sites have responsibility for representing Project Head Start. Our conduct while on program sites as well as our communications and actions in the community reflects on Project Head Start. We must show consideration and respect for everyone with whom we have contact. To ensure a safe, healthy environment for Head Start children, families, and staff, appropriate behavior and/or language will be displayed at program sites, on vehicles, on home visits, or while participating in any Head Start activity.

Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties Project Head Start reserves the right to stop enrollment at any time for reasons that include, but are not limited to: parent/guardian behavior that is deemed threatening, belligerent, and the like; violation of confidentiality by parent/guardian; violation of program policies such as smoking on the premises or carrying a weapon; chronic absenteeism; an inability to contact the parent/guardian on a consistent basis, or a determination that the child's placement in Head Start is not developmentally appropriate, including when a child presents a threat to his/her safety or the safety of others. To the extent possible, we will work with parents/guardians in considering alternative means of serving the child and family, mobilizing services, and transitioning to another program.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Hours and days in session vary by location so check your Head Start calendar. Head Start first began in 1965.

The Head Start Center Based program(s) has centers located in Olean, Salamanca, Delevan, Franklinville and Warsaw. The Center Based teams consist of Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Program Aides, Family Support Assistants, Nutrition/Food Service Workers, Bus Drivers, Bus Monitors and Volunteers. Our Head Start Program offers a year round Home Based Program Option for three and four year olds.

Our Early Head Start Program is a Home Based Program Option, and serves pregnant women and children birth to 3 (before Head Start age). It is a year round program. Early Head Start provides weekly home visits that are 1½ hours each. Two socialization activities are provided each month.



All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are designed to provide children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. Ours is a family focused program which has the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. Our program provides a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, literacy, health and mental health; nutrition and parent involvement.

Head Start has partnerships with several school districts for NYS Universal Pre-Kindergarten (NYS UPK). Head Start is a Success by Six Agency.

FAMILY SERVICES

The wonderful and rewarding challenge of raising a family today demands more "know-how", thought, and patience than ever before. Head Start wants to help families grow stronger.

After the children are recruited and enrolled, your Family Support Assistant or Family Development Specialist and Teacher will arrange to visit your home. At this time, you can talk over your concerns about your family needs to plan to use your family's strengths to meet these needs.

You may access a list of community resources on our website located at <http://www.headstartnetwork.com> or by contacting your Family Support Assistant/Family Development Specialist. Your Family Support Assistant/Family Development Specialist will provide support, assistance and guidance throughout your Head Start program year.

A "Family Partnership Agreement" between the Head Start Program and each enrolled family will be formed to assist in achieving self-identified and realistic goals. The information you share in developing your "Family Partnership Agreement" is confidential and will never go outside the program without your permission.

If you find your community lacks the services your family needs, then Head Start will provide the support to get action on your family's behalf. Head Start staff is always ready, willing, and able to assist families. Do not hesitate to ask questions.

Your Family Support Assistant or Family Development Specialist is there to help you to connect to your Head Start family and many of the resources in our community. Your Family Support Assistant or Family Development Specialist shares your goals, wanting the very best for your child. They have a responsibility to work together with you and your family and to develop a relationship with you that only works if it is built on trust and respect. By developing a positive and respectful relationship with your Family Support Assistant, Family Development Specialist, teaching staff, bus staff, kitchen staff, etc., your child will have more success at school and in his or her own Head Start relationships.

Head Start strives to engage families in ongoing, goal-directed relationships that support what is best for children and families both individually and collectively. Staff and families share responsibility for the learning and development of children, the progress toward school readiness for children and families, and for parent participation in a variety of program activities that support child and adult development, including policy and program decision making.



Involved parents do make a difference. Your involvement in education increases your children's chances for success in school. Studies show that children whose parents are involved in education are more motivated in school. Motivated students are more likely to participate in school and more likely to achieve academically. In short, motivated children become students with good chances for bright futures.

Families are the  of Head Start

OUR PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Parent and family engagement in Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) is about building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a road map for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families. The PFCE Framework was developed in partnership with programs, families, experts, and the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. It is a research-based approach to program change that shows how an agency can work together as a whole—across systems and service areas—to promote parent and family engagement and children’s learning and development.

When parent and family engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, family engagement outcomes are achieved, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school.

A SYSTEMIC, INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

By systemic, we mean that parent, family and community engagement is anchored in leadership priorities, program management, continuous improvement systems, and staff development.

By integrated we mean that by carrying out PFCE activities through the entire organization, programs are much more likely to make the kind of family engagement progress that best supports child outcomes. For example, directors, teachers, assistant teachers, family support staff, home visitors, health and disabilities staff, and bus staff all play a role in engaging families and supporting school readiness.

By comprehensive, we mean that staff consider the strengths, interests and needs of each child and family, and connect families with services and resources to achieve their goals. Parent and family engagement activities are grounded in positive, ongoing, and goal-oriented relationships with families.

7 KEY ELEMENTS PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS & IMPACT AREAS	7 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES	CHILD OUTCOMES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program Leadership 2. Continuous Program Improvement 3. Professional Development 4. Program Environment 5. Family Partnerships 6. Teaching and Learning 7. Community Partnerships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Well-being 2. Parent-Child Relationships 3. Families as Lifelong Educators 4. Families as Learners 5. Family Engagement in Transitions 6. Family Connections to Peers and Community 7. Families as Advocates and Leaders 	<p>Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade.</p> <p>Refer to eleven (11) developmental areas (domains) for school readiness on Page 6</p>

Research shows that parent participation in a child’s preschool program positively impacts children socially, emotionally and academically.

OUR SCHOOL READINESS PLAN

Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning in life. The Head Start approach to School Readiness means that children are:

- ready for school,
- families are ready to support their children's learning, and
- schools are ready for children.

For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. As Head Start programs and schools work together to promote school readiness and to engage families as their children make the transition to kindergarten, schools will be ready for children. (Head Start Approach to School Readiness-Overview, HHS/ACF/OHS, 2011)

Cattaraugus & Wyoming Counties Project Head Start recognizes that parents are their child's first and most influential teacher. We work with families and community agencies to promote school readiness by strengthening families as primary teachers of their children, enhancing parent-child relationships, and enhancing children's growth and development. The child benefits most from a comprehensive program that involves their family and community. Families, early care and education providers, school staff, and community partners must work together to foster and support the developmental competence of children throughout their school years.

Cattaraugus & Wyoming Counties Project Head Start has established school readiness goals that align with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, New York State Early Learning Guidelines and the Requirement and expectations of the New York State Education Department Pre-Kindergarten Learning Standards, Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework, and the Conceptual Framework for Programs Serving Infants and Toddlers and their Families.

Head Start has established eleven (11) developmental areas (domains) for school readiness:

- Physical Development and Health
- Social and Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Creative Arts Expression
- Language Development
- Literacy Knowledge and Skills
- English Language Development
- Logic and Reasoning
- Mathematics Knowledge and Skills
- Science Knowledge and Skills
- Social Studies Knowledge and Skills

EDUCATION

The program invites your active participation in your child's Head Start experience. Together we will strive:



- a) To welcome each child and develop a sense of trust and belonging.
- b) To provide an environment where children may explore, examine, experiment and discover in their own interest and strength areas.
- c) To assure each child has experiences that will help develop a healthy self-image by encouraging participation, displaying work, observing progress, planning for each child, and getting to know each one as an individual.
- d) To encourage the child to ask questions and to talk about experiences and feelings by being patient listeners and by asking as well as answering questions.
- e) To help the child develop self-expression, self-direction and responsibility by offering choices, and a variety of materials to "act on".
- f) To work together to establish limits and routines.
- g) To allow the children to use their own strengths and curiosity to build upon their unique experiences.
- h) To encourage and develop healthy habits and self-help skills.
- i) To help the child become accustomed to time schedules, planning and organization of materials.

A DAY IN A HEAD START CLASSROOM Every day in every class is different as we customize our program to each child's individual needs. Classroom times will vary by site. A typical Head Start day includes:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Activities</u>
❖ Welcoming the children and volunteers	Health checks, toileting, washing, attendance; orient volunteers
❖ Breakfast	Set tables, eat, clean-up
❖ Work Time	Structured play including free choice of activities in all learning centers; brush teeth, indoor and outdoor play
❖ Large Motor	Indoor and outdoor play
❖ Transition Time	Planned transition for clean-up, Wash-up, lunch preparation
❖ Lunch	Eat, clean-up
❖ Quiet Time	Nap
❖ Small Group Time	Stories
❖ Transition Time	Games, outdoor play, exploring
❖ Snack	Washing, prepare snacks
❖ Recap-Departure	Get ready to board bus

Great minds begin at Head Start

CURRICULUM

EARLY HEAD START - PAT Curriculum The PAT Curriculum offers an approach to home visiting that is relationship-based and parent-focused and supports the promotion of school readiness and parent engagement. The PAT philosophy is

- a) parents are their children's first and most influential teachers;
- b) the early years of a child's life are critical for optimal development and provide the foundation for success in school and life;
- c) established and emerging research should be the foundation of parent education and family support curricula, training, materials, and services;
- d) all young children and their families deserve the same opportunities to succeed, regardless of any demographic, geographic, or economic considerations; and
- e) an understanding and appreciation of the history and traditions of diverse cultures is essential to serving families.

HEAD START – HighScope Curriculum HighScope is a developmentally appropriate curriculum that is based on scientifically valid research. HighScope is based on age appropriate child development principles. It can be tailored to meet the individual needs of children. HighScope is responsive to the interests, needs and diversity of our children and their families. HighScope's approach to on-going student observation and assessment easily provides opportunities to individualize instruction based on the needs and developmental rates of the children.

The *Plan-Do-Review* process is the foundation for the implementation of the HighScope curriculum, and permits children to pursue their own interests, make plans, follow through on those plans and then reflect on their work.

- a) *Planning* occurs in small groups of children with a classroom team member or trained volunteer to help with and guide each child's selection of an activity and the development of their plan to accomplish what they have decided to do. Children transition from planning time to work time which is the longest activity in the instructional day.
- b) During (*Do*) *work time* children will carry out and/or revise their plans working throughout the classroom with adults readily available to observe their efforts and supporting the development of their ideas.
- c) Last in the sequence, *review time*, will be critical to the learning process and is always highly reflective of positive adult-child interactions. Children will talk about what they did during work time and receive feedback and encouragement from classroom adults and their peers. Learning centers will include areas for blocks, dramatic play, toys, games, art, library, science and discovery, sand and water tables, music and movement, kitchen and technology.

HOME VISITS The Teachers plan to visit you at your home at least two or three times during the year to share information about your child and make plans with you. Two parent conferences will be scheduled at school during the year, as well.

CAVITY FREE KIDS PROGRAM We teach children and families the importance of good dental health. Children learn through fun hands on play-based activities. This is a result of a grant from the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York.

MEAL and SNACK TIME Breakfast, lunch and snack will be served to all children daily. Foods such as vegetables, fresh fruits, juice or milk, crackers and cheese are served daily to introduce the

child to the importance and enjoyment of eating nutritious and various foods. Snack time may also be used to introduce ethnic or cultural foods.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT During the first few weeks of your child's Head Start attendance, we strive to learn to know each child as well as we can. We have developed an assessment process and we encourage you to assist in this activity when you visit the classroom. The information we collect about each child from the assessment and from talking with parents, forms the basis for planning as partners for the children according to Early Childhood Development guidelines. Developmental Assessment is ongoing throughout the year.

REST TIME A short quiet time when the children rest encourages them to relax. A change of pace helps children move from one activity to another. Accommodation and flexible timing are important for preschool children. They are learning about "time".

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL Parents are expected to put their children on the bus at the scheduled time and take them off the bus when they arrive home. If you bring your child to school, be sure the Teacher knows he or she has arrived. If your child is to be picked up at the classroom by anyone other than you, or anyone you have not already granted written permission to, you must notify the Teacher in writing. A responsible adult must sign and date the Child Sign-Out Sheet located in the child's classroom when picking up a child from the center at any time. You are welcome to ride the bus to the center to volunteer or visit at any time.

In the event your child is not picked up by you as scheduled (self transported) or met by you at the bus when arriving home, Head Start will continue to supervise the child (on the bus, by the bus driver or by the staff at the center) until the contact people you have listed for emergencies or escort are able to assume care for your child. If we are unable to reach you or the contact people after a reasonable period, then Head Start will consult with the authorities to arrange for continued supervision.

When your child rides the bus, he/she is expected to remain in the seat. Head Start requires that all children 3 or 4 years old must be buckled in a Star Safety System seat at all times. It is important to have your child ready when the bus arrives at your home. The driver will try to keep on schedule as much as possible, but during bad weather times may vary. If you know your child will not be riding the bus, please call the bus driver or the center as soon as possible.

ACTIVE TIME and SPECIAL EVENTS Weather permitting, the children will spend some time each day outdoors. Fresh air and exercise help the children grow and stay healthy. On bad weather days, games, marching, dancing, or exercises are done indoors. Field trips, trips on the bus to interesting places like farms or fire stations are taken frequently. Parents are encouraged to come. You can also help plan special events in collaboration with the teacher.

CLOTHING Washable clothes, in which the children can freely play, are best. They should be designed so children can easily care for their own toilet needs. Because the children are encouraged to learn self-help skills, boots should be large enough to slip over shoes or sneakers easily and snowsuits or jackets should be large enough to go on easily. Please dress your child warmly in cold weather. Please send a change of clothes. Bus times will be announced. Please be ready. Generally, staff is available 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After hours, contact the administrative office if necessary.

*The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the more places you'll go. -- Dr. Seuss*

NUTRITION

Nutrition at Head Start includes the child's intake of food, education about food – how it helps the body grow and function – and nutrition assessment partly through completion of growth charts for each child.

For center based programs:

1. Children are provided with nutritious meals while at Head Start. Meals are served on a schedule which may vary from site to site. Children in full-day programs are served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Expenses for meals are reimbursed through the Child and Adult Care Food Program which is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture.
2. Six-week cycle menus are used. They are approved by a registered dietitian. Head Start makes every effort to serve heart healthy/nutritious foods, low in sugar, salt, and fat. Special diets are provided for children who need them. Documentation from a doctor is required.
3. Meals are prepared in center kitchens by Nutrition and Food Service Workers at four Head Start sites: Olean, Salamanca, Delevan and Warsaw. Classes which are held in public schools are served breakfast and lunch meals which are provided by the food service staff at the school. The afternoon snack is provided by Head Start. Children at all centers eat in the classrooms where meals are served family-style. Parents are always welcome to volunteer in the classroom and eat with the children.
4. Nutrition activities involving the children are completed in the classrooms on a regular basis. One of the activities is growth measure for each child, three times per year. The Head Start nurse then plots the information on growth charts. The charts are evaluated to assure that each child is growing at a healthy rate. Parents are informed of the results.

For home based programs:

1. Nutritious snacks are taken to the home on Home Visits.
2. Food is provided at Group Socializations.
3. Nutrition activities are completed during home visits. Growth charts are also completed. Nutrition at Head Start is educational and fun. We hope that each child will benefit from the heart healthy foods we serve.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN ANY FOOD. Due to various regulations, the **ONLY FOODS** we serve at our Head Start centers are foods which are purchased by Head Start and **PREPARED AT OUR HEAD START CENTERS.**

We are proud of our PARTNERSHIPS! These are just a few!



HEALTH AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Head Start provides a comprehensive health program to assist the child's physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. This includes many health screenings which are not only required by the program, but also provide valuable insight into your child's development and physical well being. Parents are asked to take an active part by accompanying your child on these health visits.

1. Before your child attends Head Start he/she must have a physical examination including blood pressure, blood test and lead test, to insure that he/she is in good health, free from communicable disease, and that all immunizations are up to date. Your Family Support Assistant will provide you with a schedule of required immunizations and a physical examination record form to take to your doctor on the health intake home visit before your child starts school. Your child will not be able to enter the classroom or attend a group activity until we have received the physical examination and immunization records, which have been brought up-to-date. All parents who plan to visit and volunteer in the classroom regularly must also have a recent tuberculin test.
2. The Family Support Assistant will also provide you with a dental health record form for you to take to your dentist so that your child's teeth can be examined, cleaned and appointments set up for any restorative treatment, if needed. Head Start encourages on-going dental care. The child will be provided his/her own toothbrush to use each day at Head Start and will be encouraged to use good personal care and proper diet along with professional care for good oral health. Set up an appointment with your dentist as soon as possible, if you have not yet done so.
3. No treatment to children, other than first aid in the event of accidents, can be given by Head Start staff. For this reason it is very important that we have all phone numbers where you can be reached so that your child can be returned home. We also need your physician's name and the name of someone to call in case you cannot be located in the event of illness or injuries. Also, no medication can be given to your child by us without written orders from a physician. If your child is taking medication, we need to know this, as it could explain a change in his/her performance while participating in Head Start activities.
4. Observe your child carefully on a daily basis before sending him/her to Head Start for any of the following symptoms:
 - a) Flushed face, chills, or other signs of abnormal temperature
 - b) Runny nose, cough, sneezing, nasal or chest congestion, inflamed eyes
 - c) Skin rashes, peeling sores
 - d) Sores around the mouth and nose
 - e) Sore throat or enlarged glands
 - f) Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - g) Fatigue or unusual paleness
 - h) Earache
 - i) Contagious disease (such as: measles, mumps, and chicken pox)
 - j) Parasitic disease (such as head lice)

If your child displays any of these symptoms, he/she should be kept home and away from other children. If any communicable disease is diagnosed by your doctor, please let Head Start know about it immediately as his precaution may avoid an epidemic. Also get a note from your child's doctor (or public health nurse) as required, stating that your child can return to school.



SCREENINGS PROVIDED BY HEAD START FOR ALL CHILDREN INCLUDE:

AUDIO The initial screening must take place within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not do well on the initial screening are referred for a complete audio evaluation, which can more accurately measure a child's hearing or be referred to a physician for evaluation.

BLOOD WORK/LEAD Each child also needs blood work and a lead test within 90 calendar days of enrollment.

DENTAL It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to schedule a dental exam within 90 calendar days of the child's enrollment with Head Start. Thanks to a recent grant from the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, we now have a partnership with the Gundlah Dental Clinic who will be providing dental services for Head Start children onsite at some of our locations.

DEVELOPMENTAL/SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL This screening will take place within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not do well will be referred for further testing or to a physician for evaluation.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE – The initial speech/language screening coincides with the developmental screening – also within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not pass the initial screening are then referred for an evaluation after which speech and language therapy must be recommended.

VISION The vision screening will also take place within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not pass the screening satisfactorily are retested or referred to an eye doctor.

The purpose of these screenings is to identify any children with possible or suspected difficulties in the areas of speech (the ability to say specific sounds and combinations), language (concept formation, understanding and use of vocabulary), hearing, vision, social skills, and motor skills (fine motor and gross motor).

If your child can't or won't successfully complete a required screening, we may retest the child within a few months. If we still can't get a successful result, we will ask you to follow-up with your child's doctor. If the concern seems to be developmental, your Family Support Assistant or Home Visitor will meet with you to talk about a referral to the local Committee for Pre-School Special Education.

If you have any questions about what to expect, please contact Theresa Wells at 716-373-2447 ext.26 or ask your Family Support Assistant or Teacher.



CHILD ILLNESSES/WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME?

Please **keep children home** to rest and recuperate should they show any signs of contagious illness.

- Elevated temperature over 100.5, Do Not send your child if Tylenol/Advil is the only way the temperature is staying down.
- Runny nose, cough, sneezing, nasal or chest congestion indicating respiratory infection
- Undiagnosed Skin rashes, peeling oozing sores
- Sores around mouth, nose, eyes
- Sore throat, enlarged glands, difficulty swallowing
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea within the last 12 hours
- Unusual fatigue, lethargy
- Complaints of headache, earache, stiff neck
- Repeated scratching of head or body areas (potential head lice, or rectal area)
- If the child is given an antibiotic, he/she should not return to the program until 24 hours after medication was started.
- Itchy, watery eyes accompanied by redness/crusty yellow drainage.

- **Reminder:** Any Contagious Illness needs to have a Doctor's note to return to school. If your child is given an antibiotic, he/she should not return to the program until 24 hours after medication was started.

Head Start staff will notify parents/guardians immediately should a child develop any of the above symptoms at school.

Please remember to let Head Start staff know if your child is on any kind of medication – even if he or she only takes it at home. Should you have any questions, please contact Head Start staff at any time.



SUN SAFETY AND SUNSCREEN PROTECTION

You gave your children the gift of life, protect them from too much sun. With the warm weather comes the risk of children being over-exposed to the sun. A FEW SERIOUS SUNBURNS during childhood can cause skin cancers later in life. Head Start uses a sunscreen with a sun protecting factor (SPF) of 30 or greater. Head Start staff apply sunscreen as needed to the children prior to outside activities. Please notify your child's Teacher or Family Support Assistant if you wish to provide sunscreen for your child.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

"Mental health in simplest form is the capacities to love, work, and play. All people need to feel that they have:

- a) The ability to form meaningful relationships and have positive self-esteem.
- b) The ability to be and feel productive and know that they contribute to society.
- c) The ability to play, relax and use leisure time in a manner which renews energy.

“Mental health is the capacity to cope with all of life's circumstances, the highs and the lows, and the joys and the sorrows. We all experience good days and bad days; the difference is how we get through them and our ability to continue building successful life management skills.” These passages are taken from the book Mental Health in Head Start: A Wellness Approach.

The mental health needs of children, families and staff is impacted by our rural location, the inherent poverty levels, isolation, and need for expanded mental health services. Acknowledging this uniqueness, we at Head Start aim to provide a holistic range of mental health services to promote and sustain the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, occupational and spiritual wellness of children, families, and staff.

With the emphasis on prevention, through the cooperation and integration of all components and community resources, we will strive to enhance the self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and independence of each individual. Our aim is to provide a safe, caring, nurturing environment so that each individual may develop mental wellness skills, abilities, and strategies which will sustain him/her throughout life.

The goals of the Mental Health aspect of the Head Start Program are:

- a) Provide a comprehensive mental health services program for children, families and staff.
- b) Promote a program whose primary focus is on prevention.
- c) Provide the means for identification, referral, and treatment of mental health concerns.
- d) Provide families and staff with the necessary skills, insight and links to mental health services to ensure comprehensive care after leaving the Head Start program.
- e) Ensure that all aspects of Head Start are appropriately involved in the integration of the holistic approach to mental health.
- f) Your Family Support Assistant, Family Development Specialist will be available to explain the varied services available. Head Start will assist you in accessing them in a confidential, caring and timely manner.

TRANSPORTATION

We have a limited number of buses to work with and a timeframe we must follow. Once you're on the bus run it is very hard to change it. If you move or change babysitters we may not be able to provide transportation. We also cannot continue to change pick-ups and drop-offs on a daily basis. We need everyone to establish regular pick-up and drop-off points. If your child misses the bus, we will not be able to return to the stop.

Also our buses require regular maintenance so there will be some self transport days. We will work hard to keep this to a minimum, but as you know buses have moving parts and they do break down, when this happens someone will call you as soon as possible so that you can make other arrangements for that day. If you have any questions, please call your center and the staff there will know how to get a hold of the coordinator.



Parents are a child's lifelong educator.

Important Information Parents Should Know

- a) Every child is to be in a Star Safety System seat until the bus has completely stopped.
- b) Noise level should be at a minimum.
- c) Child will be informed they have reached their home.
- d) Everyone on the bus must know all emergency exits. Adults must know other safety procedures. i.e. Fire Extinguishers.
- e) No food or toys are allowed on the bus.
- f) Bus Driver will check all seats after children have departed from the bus both at school and on field trips.
- g) Parents will walk child to and from the bus – Monitor will help child on or off the bus.
- h) Monitor will cross all parents and children.



Bus Safety Rules for Children Almost all children today ride a school bus at one time or another. Some ride back and forth to school each day. Some ride only occasionally on field trips. It is important, therefore, that all children learn about safe school bus behaviors.

- **Please be ready 10 – 15 minutes prior to your child’s Pick and Drop off times.**
- **Wait for the bus 15 feet back from the curb.**
- **Always be on time.**
- Do not play around at the bus stop.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- Stay in your seat at all times.
- Talk quietly.
- Do not distract the driver. Get on the bus in single file.
- Use the handrail.
- Never put your head, arms or anything else out the window
- Do not open the window without permission.
- Cross the street safely in front of the bus with bus monitor
- Always stay where the driver can see you.

All rules must be observed and followed by anyone transported on Head Start vehicles. If your child does not comply with the bus rules, parents will be notified of the problem and bus privileges (riding) may be suspended for a few days. Should a child’s behavior on the bus become a problem or a safety concern the following steps will be taken.

1. Parent will be notified.
2. If behavior persists, parent will be responsible for having an adult accompany the child on the bus.
3. As a last resort, bus privileges may be suspended for a few days or longer if necessary.

Please remember not all vehicles stop for the flashing lights of the school bus so caution should be taken at all times.

In the Case of a Bus Emergency

If main EXIT door cannot be used then use either;

- a) The middle exit for those seated from driver to middle exit.
- b) Emergency door at rear for those seated from middle exit to rear of bus.
- c) If these exits cannot be used, then the roof and window exits will be used.

Bus Drills

There will be monthly bus drills and parents help will be appreciated with this.

WHAT IS IN-KIND AND WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

When you become part of our program, one of the words you begin to hear is in-kind. What is it? Head Start and Early Head Start programs are funded by the federal government but only to a certain point.

We must raise 20% of our funds through community support-that support is known as in-kind. In-kind can be actual cash, donated goods or donated services. The 20% requirement is mandatory. If we don't raise it, federal funds decrease as well. When you volunteer, it is considered in-kind.

The time you spend helping Head Start not only benefits you and your children but the over all program since it is considered in-kind. You'll have fun, make new friends, expand on your skills, and most of all show your child that you care about her/his education and well being.

PARENTS' ROLES IN HEAD START

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and 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, accepting Head Start as an opportunity through which our lives can be improved.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom at any time as a planner, observer, volunteer worker or paid employee, and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program. There is no need to inform anyone beforehand.
4. To choose whether or not I participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start as well as make regular inquiries.
6. To be always treated with respect, dignity, and as an individual.
7. To expect guidance for my child from Head Start employees which will help his/her development.
8. To be able to learn about the operation and administration 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 skills in areas of possible employment. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
10. To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of family life.
11. To provide parent leadership by taking part in Head Start elections, to explain the program to other parents and encourage their full participation.
12. To welcome Head Start employees into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home in relation to Head Start experience.
13. To work and plan with the Head Start employees and other parents in a cooperative way.
14. To guide my children with firmness. This is both loving and protective.
15. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and to share in evaluating it.
16. To make a good faith effort to inform Head Start if I am unable to keep an appointment or attend. Head Start will make a good faith effort to notify me of any center cancellations.

NOTES ABOUT PARENT PARTICIPATION

PARENT COMMITTEE Please attend parent committee meetings at your center. Every parent is a member of a parent committee. Monthly meetings for center based, or Home Based may be held independently or jointly. The meetings may be held in Parent Rooms at Head Start centers. More information will be provided when your child begins Head Start. You'll have a chance to make new friends and share ideas with other parents. Parent committees decide what they'd like to do together during the year. Plan to attend! Your good ideas are needed to make the year exciting, fun and worthwhile for all.

Coffee Klatch. Consider joining or starting a weekly time for conversation with other parents at your center.

Dashboards. Your input is essential in order for our program to be successful. Ask how you can assist us with our center bulletin boards.

POLICY COUNCIL The Policy Council meets regularly in the evening to help give the program direction, make decisions and evaluate how things are going. The Policy Council is made up of persons from the community who represent agencies serving children and families or who are past parents, and current Head Start parents and from each Program Option. You will learn more about becoming a Policy Council representative during October Parent Committee Meetings.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS Head Start will be offering programs such as First Aid, Smoking Cessation, Nurturing, GED classes, Internet, Parenting Workshops, and basic skills.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER Current and past Head Start parents who have volunteered regularly are eligible to become paid substitute staff. Details will be discussed as the year progresses.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER The time you spend in the classroom is very important. It shows your child that you care and this makes him/her want to learn. Suggestions to help volunteers are included in this booklet.

HEAD START WORKSHOPS When finances allow and as may be appropriate, parents may be invited to attend out of town Head Start workshops. Care should be taken to dress comfortably and appropriately on these occasions. Confidentiality and discretion must always be practiced when parents express opinions and exchange ideas between programs at these workshops. Transportation may be provided for Policy Council, Policy Council Committees, parent meetings and training events.

ACCEPTANCE Our biggest responsibility is to help children learn and feel good about themselves and learning. We do this by accepting each child and respecting him/her for what he/she is. We set examples through words and actions. When we are consistent, the children are secure and happy.

DAY CARE REGULATIONS The Head Start Director, Mr. Ira Katzenstein (716-373-2447), is responsible for the administration and overall operation of Head Start. He may be reached by contacting the administrative office. The Buffalo Regional Office of the New York State Department of Social Services, 545 Ellicott Square Building, Buffalo, NY 14203, (716-847-3828) may be contacted about violations of statutory and regulatory day care center requirements. Day care regulations are available at each center and on line. Our day care license is posted.

VOLUNTEERING

Parents are very much needed as volunteers. The Head Start program could not operate without them. We look forward to this partnership with parents to help us to know the children better.

We invite you, as parents, to take part in all areas of Head Start. It's a great learning experience for you and your presence will make your child very happy. Here are some ways you can volunteer:

At the Head Start center:

a) Classroom:

- Help with all classroom activities
- Help at meal and snack time; also plan/prepare cultural ethnic foods
- Help in the kitchen; help plan menus
- Go on field trips

b) Outside the Classroom:

- Workshops and discussion groups (e.g. discipline, self esteem)
- Parenting sessions
- Adult classes -be a participant or share a talent with the group (music, craft, hobby)
- Monthly parent committee meetings
- Help in the office when asked
- Help monitor children while on the bus
- Be an active member of your center parent committee
- Policy Council
- Newsletter Committee -writing and/or collecting news items
- Component Advisory Committee

d) In your home:

- Actively participate in home visits
- Make homemade games and read with your child
- Repair toys/materials
- Collect "beautiful junk" for use by children or parent crafts
- Sew doll clothes

We welcome your input and help in all areas of Head Start as well as with activities that come up during the year. Just let us know what you like to do and we'll find a place to use your skills. Child care for siblings may be provided at the center during parent activities.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

<p>If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn. If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight. If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to feel shy. If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty. If a child lives with tolerance he learns to be patient. If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.</p>	<p>If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate. If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice. If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith. If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself. If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.</p>
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PROGRAM POLICIES ... JUST A FEW KEY ONES



ATTENDANCE

We are a federal program and governed by many rules. Head Start Performance Standards and N. Y. Department of Social Services, requires the program to establish regular attendance within the program. We encourage you as parents to maintain regular attendance in Head Start activities. Attendance is recorded daily. Please notify your home visitor or classroom staff if your child is going to be absent or miss a home visit. Also call or send an excuse for each day that your child cannot attend class and explain the reasons for the absence. If we do not hear from you, a contact will be made by your Family Support Assistant or teacher to follow-up on the absence. Please keep us informed of illnesses or emergencies that will prevent your child from attending school. Keep in mind that consistent unexplained absences could affect your child's enrollment.

If regular attendance cannot be established, another child on the waiting list must be given the opportunity to enroll in the program. Families will be given every opportunity to establish regular attendance, and will be withdrawn from the program only when they are unwilling or unable to participate. Please keep in mind that consistent attendance is essential to your child's success, and when your child misses school or home visits, he/she is missing out on valuable experiences and services. Please make a commitment to send your child to school every day.

Did you know? If your child misses school, he or she misses out on exciting adventures of learning! Preschool children need

- ❖ Opportunities to be comfortable away from home and make friendships.
- ❖ Opportunities to learn to control their feelings and be able to express them.
- ❖ Opportunities to be leaders and to follow others.
- ❖ Opportunities to learn, play and work with other children.
- ❖ Opportunities to explore, be creative and express their own ideas.



CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT

Under the law, we must report any case of suspected or actual child abuse, maltreatment and neglect. At the time of enrollment you signed a statement which explained the law regarding our responsibilities. If you have questions regarding this policy, please discuss it with your Family Support Assistant. At the time of admission, copies of "Personal Safety for Children: A Guide for Parents" and "Say No! Protecting Children Against Sexual Abuse," are available at the center or by asking Head Start staff. If you believe that your child has been abused or maltreated, call the New York State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment at: 1-800-342-3720. Calls are received at this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Project Head Start is required by the New York State Social Services Law Section 413 to report situations of suspected child abuse and maltreatment to the Child Protective Services Register in Albany.

Definition of Child Abuse. An "abused child" is a child less than sixteen years of age whose parents or other person legally responsible for his/her care:

1. inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child serious physical injury, or
2. creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or
3. commits or allows to be committed, against the child an act of sexual abuse as defined in the penal law.

* See N.Y. Family Court Act 1012(a)

Definition of Child Maltreatment. A "maltreated child" is a child under eighteen years of age who has had serious physical injury inflicted upon him/her by other than accidental means.

A "maltreated child" is a child under eighteen years of age impaired as a result of the failure of his parent or other person legally responsible for his care to exercise a minimum degree of care:

1. in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so, or
2. in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship, or
3. by unreasonably inflicting, or allowing to be inflicted, harm or a substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment, or
4. by using a drug or drugs, or
5. by using alcoholic beverages to the extent that he loses self-control of his actions, or
6. by any other acts of a similarly serious nature requiring the aid of Family Court.

A "maltreated child" is also a child under eighteen years of age who has been abandoned by his parents or other person legally responsible for his care. * See N.Y. Family Court Act 1012(f)



SEX OFFENDERS It is the policy of Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties Project Head Start to not allow any level 1, 2 or 3 sex offenders contained on the NYS Office of Sex Offender Management Sex Offender Registry into the Head Start centers and/or at any Head Start or Early Head Start or any other program activity that may be held outside of the Head Start centers.

We may notify law enforcement and request that persons be removed from the site who violate this policy. Parents or legal guardians who are sex offenders may be allowed into the Head Start or Early Head Start activity , but must have a staff escort at all times and only for extenuating circumstances such as child illness or injury or as required by day care regulations. These regulations state that “the parent of a child receiving care must have: unlimited and on demand access to such child; the right to inspect all parts of the building used for child day care or which could present a hazard to the health or safety of the child whenever the parent requests at any time during the hours of operation of the child day care center.”



CHILD IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURE/RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Release of Children/Emergency Consents. All individuals picking up children from Head Start, regardless of where, will be asked to present proper photo identification to staff prior to having the child released to them. The individual picking up the child will also be required to sign their name on a form designated for this purpose which will be provided by staff at the time of the child’s release.

Parents or guardians legally responsible for a child or children in Head Start must provide the name, address, telephone numbers and places(s) at which the parents or other persons responsible for the child can be reached in case of an emergency; and the names and addresses of persons authorized to take the child(ren) from the child day care center. A blue NYS Day Care Registration card (OCFS-LDSS-0792) will be used for this purpose. A copy of this card is kept on file at the center and on any or all buses which provide transportation for your child/children. Persons listed on the Day Care Registration card will be asked to present proper photo identification prior to having a child or children released into their care.

Other individuals not listed on Emergency Consent. On occasion, parents or guardians may wish to have their child released to an individual whose name is not listed on the NYS Day Care Registration

card. Parents or guardians must then call the center bus staff and provide the name to of the person they wish to have their children/children released to.

Emergency consents should be updated regularly. Parents and guardians legally responsible for a child or children in Head Start are asked to please notify staff regularly of any changes that should be made to the NYS Day Care Registration card. This information should be reviewed at least once every six months.



CONFIDENTIALITY *What you hear here, let it stay here.* The Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties Project Head Start Policy ensures the privacy of your family and child during and after his/her enrollment in the Head Start Program. All information received whether financial, medical, or personal will be held in the strictest confidence. Release forms must be signed by a parent before information is given to or requested from agencies other than that which occurs within the agency or organization. Records are private and staff is bound to uphold this privacy as stated in the Head Start Personnel Policies. Parents and Guardians are expected to respect and uphold the privacy of other Head Start children and their families as well.

You may have a time when you feel that your personal affairs need to be discussed with your child's Teacher, or your family support assistant. We are under strict rules that nothing you tell us can be discussed with anyone outside the agency unless we ask your permission. We expect that parents will also respect rights of others in this manner.



DISCIPLINE Head Start staff is trained in how to work with children. We guide behavior of children for their protection and growth, and to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the age and development of each child. Among the techniques used are redirecting a child to alternate activity, rewarding acceptable behavior, encouraging children to talk about their feelings, providing an example for children by speaking and interacting with children in a positive manner, and 1-2-3 Magic.



PARTIES/INVITATIONS In the past, some parents have requested that we send home birthday party invitations in their child's classmates' backpacks. Please keep in mind that this does not mean that Head Start is affiliated in any way with the particular celebration or birthday or is in any way encouraging you to send your child to the party, etc. Only you know what is in the best interest of your child. If you do not wish invitations to be sent home with your child in this manner, please inform your child's teacher.



PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS/AUDIOS In order that we may protect the privacy of Head Start children and their families, parents/visitors are asked to obtain permission from a Head Start teacher prior to taking photos of their child or other children either in the center, on the bus or during field trips and other outings. Photos are usually permitted for special occasions or group celebrations. However, in certain situations parents may be asked to refrain from obtaining photos/videos/audios during these ceremonies. Should this become necessary, staff will provide families with a separate location designated specifically for photo taking opportunities.



FIELD TRIPS The children can learn a lot about the community we live in by visiting places of interest in our area. Parents are needed to help plan and carry out these special experiences. Be sure to let your child's Teacher know if you'd like to help on field trips or have a good idea about places to visit.

When planning field trips, parent groups shall consider the health and safety of the children at all times. Field trips should be opportunities for children to expand their immediate experiences. They should be meaningful and developmentally appropriate. Trips shall be subject to the approval of the Education Coordinator. Plans for trips shall comply with the following criteria:

1. The length of travel time needs to follow appropriate guidelines for ages of children.
2. Trips shall not start before 8:00 a.m. and shall end no later than 4:00 p.m.
3. Members of the staff shall be designated to carry out assigned duties and to see that all children are accounted for.
4. A Refreshment Committee shall be established. Food service plans should insure at least one nutritious meal and snack.
5. Availability of eating facilities must be checked in advance.
6. A Comfort Committee shall be established to check available toilet facilities and first aid items in advance. Also provide extra clothing (for accidents), wet and dry cloths for face and hands.
7. Groups shall be responsible for leaving the trip site in a clean condition.
8. No trip will be approved unless there is ample parent participation to ensure adequate supervision of the children.



SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT There is to be no smoking in any building, on any grounds, or in any vehicle, used by Head Start or Early Head Start.



UNATTENDED CHILDREN IN VEHICLES Never Leave Children Unattended In or Around Vehicles! **NOT EVEN FOR A MINUTE**

Many of our parents graciously drive their children to and from our centers each day. This is greatly appreciated by Head Start because it affords us the opportunity to reach more children and families. Many times, though, siblings are left unattended in vehicles while parents are in the center dropping off or picking up their children. It is important for you to know that leaving a child unattended in a vehicle is considered maltreatment.

Each year, hundreds of children are left unattended in motor vehicles. About 75 percent of child deaths in parked cars are due to adults leaving children unattended, either intentionally or unintentionally. Many caring and responsible adults are not aware of or underestimate the risks involved when leaving their child alone in a vehicle. (See page 25 for more information.)

