

# Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium



## "MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

Strengthening our families through education, empowerment, and knowledge.

2021-2022

Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents,

As we begin the new school year I would like to welcome all of you to the Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium. For some, this is a new experience and, for others, it is a return to a positive and rewarding relationship. Our goal with you is one of partnerships, based on mutual respect and trust, and geared towards assisting you in meeting the needs of your child and strengthening the family.

Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium (The Consortium) program is a quality program designed to help your child become Kindergarten ready and help him/her on the road to a lifetime of learning. Your child is our future and we will do all we can to ensure that the children in our program receive the highest quality of services. Your involvement in Consortium's programs will enable us to continue to realize the possibilities of how we can best serve the children and families of Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties.

This handbook is intended to provide helpful information about the program, its operating policies and scheduled monthly events. We encourage you to keep it available for future use when questions arise about the Consortium's programs policies and to know some of the events already scheduled for your child and/or your family. The staff are readily available to answer any questions that you may have about the program.

The Consortium reserves the right to make any changes to this Parent Handbook when deemed appropriate.

**THIS HANDBOOK WAS CREATED IN ORDER TO BETTER PREPARE YOUR CHILD/FAMILY FOR THE CONSORTIUM'S EXPERIENCE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRING THIS HANDBOOK TO THE FIRST TWO SITE MEETINGS WHERE WE WILL DISCUSS AND LEARN ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE, GROW AND EVENTUALLY TAKE SOME OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THESE MEETINGS.**

Sincerely,

Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium  
Dr. Kathy L. Guajardo, Executive Director

# **Section III: Important Information**



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information contained in this book is important to its owner. If found please return to the person(s) listed below. You may return it to the Head Start Office at:

Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium  
245 North Lombardy Drive, Door 1  
South Bend, IN 46619

or at your local school, give to a Head Start employee or mail it directly to the person who has lost the book. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

**(Placing this information inside your book is optional and not required.)**

This book belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Our School System is: \_\_\_\_\_

Located at: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers' names: \_\_\_\_\_

Family and Community Specialist (FACS): \_\_\_\_\_

FACS telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A FAMILY DOCTOR OR DENTIST THAT WAS ASSIGNED TO YOU (BY MEDICAID) AND NEED ONE, CALL YOUR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SPECIALIST WHO WILL HELP YOU.

The Consortium emphasizes the importance of early identification of health problems. The goal of the health services is to improve and maintain the health of the child and his/her family. **Prior to the start of school** arrange for your child to receive a physical and dental exam by your family doctor/dentist. **All Exams must be completed and submitted by the child's home visit and prior to school entrance.**

If you are a Medicaid recipient, Medicaid will pay the bill. If your family is covered by other insurance (either medical or dental), please use that. If you do not have Medicaid or insurance, you must apply for Hoosier Healthwise. Your child should have his/her physical and dental exam completed **BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOM**: The Consortium's forms which the doctor and dentist sign at the time of the exam must be returned to the Consortium's Family and Community Specialist. **REMEMBER: All Exams must be current, up-to-date and completed prior to school entrance.**

**All children enrolled in the Consortium will need to have their routine physical/well-child exams completed at the following ages and prior to entry: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 36 months and then yearly. A dental exam needs to be completed between 18- 24 months of age and every six months or more frequently as recommended by dentist for follow-up.**

The Consortium requires that all children are up to date with state/federal immunization guidelines to attend Head Start. A copy of immunization records are required at time of application.

Due to federally mandated standards, every child is required to be tested for lead and hemoglobin, between 9-12 months, 24 months, and between ages 3 to 5 years old if not previously tested. Your doctor may perform these tests at the time of a well child exam. If they are not completed by your doctor, a Head Start Nurse will complete the lead and hemoglobin by age requirement deadlines. **Consent form for Head Start Nurses to complete these tests are signed by parents/guardians at the time of application.**

If you think your child is ill or suspect a possible communicable disease, please do not send your child to school. These signs and symptoms included by not limited to: **fever of 101 degrees or greater, unusual rash, vomiting, diarrhea (loose stool 2-3 times per hour), and unusual behavior (not acting themselves).**

## **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS (continued)**

If your child has a diagnosed health concern (asthma, seizure disorder, food allergy); a health care plan must be completed with a Head Start Nurse prior to the start of school

If medication is prescribed for the diagnosed health concern; a “parent permission to administer” form must be completed prior to your child attending school. The parent permission form must be signed by the parent/guardian and prescribing physician. The medication can only be accepted in its original box from the pharmacy. The box must contain the pharmacy label including child’s name and instructions.

**To help us maintain the health and safety of your child, please ensure the following requirements are completed before the first day of school:**

- √ **Health Care Plan with Head Start Nurse.**
- √ **Parent permission form signed by parent/guardian and physician.**
- √ **Medication received by Head Start Nurse in its original container/box**

If medication is required for school; an individual med bag may be required for emergency medications. Individual med bags must be transported daily to/from school and handed off from adult to adult.

# WHEN IS SICK TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL?



## Send me to school if...

I have a runny nose or just a little cough, but no other symptoms.

I haven't taken any fever reducing medicine for 24 hours, and I haven't had a fever during that time.

I haven't thrown up or had any diarrhea for 24 hours.



## Keep me at home if...

I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees even after taking medicine.

I'm throwing up or have diarrhea.

My eyes are pink and crusty.



## Call the doctor if...

I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees for more than two days.

I've been throwing up or have diarrhea for more than two days.

I've had the sniffles for more than a week, and they aren't getting better.

I still have asthma symptoms after using my asthma medicine (and call 911 if I'm having trouble breathing after using an inhaler).



Adapted with permission from Baltimore City Public Schools.



**Section IV:  
What is  
Early Head Start  
and Head Start?**

## **HEAD START CONSORTIUM'S MISSION:**

The mission of the Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium is to create seamless delivery system of education and child development for underserved infants, toddlers and preschool children, providing a nurturing, learning environment to prepare them for Head Start and/or kindergarten.

We recognize the holistic approach to the child's development is essential. Therefore, in addition to the interdisciplinary educational component, the program will have a comprehensive health component...strong family and community component. We believe that we must strengthen and empower our children and families to overcome these obstacles and create a solid, secure foundation upon which to build.

## **WHAT IS EARLY HEAD START / HEAD START?**

**Early Head Start/Early Head Start Community Program** is a federally funded comprehensive interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education program for infants and toddlers, serves 60 infants and toddlers, 20 pregnant women and 128 additional infants through Community Partnership.

**Head Start** is a federally funded, comprehensive interdisciplinary, preschool Child Development Program for eligible children and their family members. Currently, St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties are funded to serve 852 children in classrooms located in area schools. Additional funds allows us to provide services to children who qualify for On My Way PreK, CCDF, and Title 1.

## **THE CONSORTIUM'S GOALS**

- Allow opportunity for children and families to assimilate into the culture of school by establishing relationships through the transition process from Early Head Start to Head Start.
- A journey of life-long learning can begin in a child who begins at a school based Head Start program.
- Create a holistic approach by supporting the need of implementing health, social services, and/or special services as part of the educational process.
- Create a secure, solid foundation using available community systems of coordinated care.
- Allows children and families to develop rich relationships with teachers and staff and to be proactive in approaching educational development.
- Allow opportunity for children and families to assimilate into the culture of school by establishing relationships through the transition process from Head Start to Kindergarten.

## PARENTS' COMMITMENT TO THE CONSORTIUM

- Parents/guardians must make every effort to treat other parents, the Consortium guests, and staff with dignity and respect. This includes any **AUTHORIZED PERSON** who a parent/guardian designates to receive child.
- Parents/guardians must provide accurate up-to-date contact and health information throughout the school year.
- Parents must set aside time to meet with their assigned Family and Community Specialist to create a family partnership agreement.
- Parents must make every effort to follow attendance guidelines by sending their child to school every day he/she is not ill and call Head Start staff immediately or within the hour to let them know of their absence and give a reason. (see page 19 for further explanation )
- Parents will receive training about the leadership and community advisory opportunities through Policy Council and site meetings, as well as in healthy relationships (i.e., marital and parent/child relationships) through the Family Summit, Love and Logic series, and Fatherhood trainings.
- Parents are expected to enter the buildings of each school according to school policy's. Parents are expected to enter buildings respectfully, absence of drugs/alcohol, appropriate clothing free of offensive apparel and language.
- **Children must arrive and be picked up on time and stay for the entire session unless there's an emergency.**
- Parents are expected to attend, four times a year, scheduled home visits and parent/teacher conferences.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer and/or participate in their child's classroom or activities. Licensed facility volunteers must have finger print paperwork on file.
- Parents are encouraged to attend site meetings, parent trainings, and Family Summits as often as possible and assist in making decisions concerning improvements to the classroom and/or the overall Consortium's Programs.
- **The safety of children is our most important concern. We must restrict food prepared off site due to health considerations, including allergies, food sensitivities, choking concerns, and nutritional content, as well as religious food preferences. Therefore, we do not allow any outside food to be given to the children. Please do not bring any food or "treats" for birthday or holiday parties. If you would like to send in something to share with the class, some suggestions would be stickers, pencils, erasers, puzzles, etc. The only exception will be for Family Engagement Celebrations and notification will go home prior to the celebration.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Start Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## THE CONSORTIUM'S COMMITMENT TO PARENTS

- Parents/guardians are to be treated with dignity, respect, and culturally/logistically sensitive by all Consortium employees and consultants.
- Parents/guardians can expect that their child with a disability will receive services as indicated by testing, through case conference committee, and individual development of an education plan.
- The Consortium's Staff will meet with each family to form a family partnership agreement, setting personal and family goals and formulating plans to achieve those goals.
- Parents/guardians are always welcome in the classroom and encouraged to assist whenever and wherever possible, finger prints may be required.
- Parents/guardians are to be informed regularly about their child's progress in the Consortium's including access to his/her educational file.
- Parents/guardians can expect guidance for their child from The Consortium's teachers and other staff, which will help his/her total individual development.
- Parents/guardians can receive help to improve daily living for themselves, and their family in adult/education/life skills through community resources dealing with health, education and the improvement of life.
- Staff will be available to teach parents about the operation of the program, including the budget (in-kind) and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
- **Parents/guardians will receive training about the leadership and community service opportunities through Policy Council and site meetings, as well as in healthy relationships (i.e., marital and parent/child relationships) through the Family Summit, Love and Logic series, and Fatherhood trainings.**
- Parents/guardians will receive a minimum of two 60 minute home visits and two Parent/Teacher conferences.
- Parents/guardians will be offered all available site meetings and assist in making decisions concerning improvements to the classroom and/or the overall The Consortium's Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head Start Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **Section V: Policies and Procedures**

## THE CONSORTIUM'S TRANSPORTATION/PARENT TRANSPORT POLICIES

### **Name/Address/Phone Changes:**

- Once a change is requested the Consortium can no longer guarantee your services, session, site, or placement.
- Parents/guardians who request a transportation change will be responsible for transporting their child until notified by transportation or Head Start.
- At the bus stop, for safety purpose, no animals of any kind or size are to be within 50 feet of the bus stop.
- No smoking allowed within 50 feet of Head Start Facilities or bus stops.
- No cell phone usage or cursing allowed at the bus stop or buildings.
- **BUS RIDERS:** Parents/guardians and authorized person must use hand to hand contact when escort children to and from the bus.
- Parents/guardians and authorized person must use hand to hand contact with the bus monitor when children are boarding or being retrieve from the bus.
- **Any PARENTS/GUARDIANS AUTHORIZED PERSON who is responsible for either getting child off the bus or picking child up from a site will be expected to show their picture ID or have a clear copy of the ID saved on an electronic device, i.e. cell phone or tablet.**
- Children will only be released to the authorized person whose name has been listed on the child's emergency form. **To make changes or additions to this list you must make an appointment with the Family and Community Specialist to complete a COS form in person.**
- Head Start parents must ensure that their child is signed in and/or out by an authorized person when riding the bus. The custody of a child must be transferred with hand to hand contact to/from Head Start staff, by signing in/out, upon arrival/dismissal.
- Should a child have a medication(s) with a health care plan, the medication bag must be logged in on the transportation bus manifest form with the bus monitor/driver. No child may board the bus without their medication bag. If a child has a medication bag they must wear a red wristband the first 30 days of the program.
- Contact the transportation department and your child's classroom to report your child's absence.
- All Children must wear a wristband to enter the bus the first 30 days of the program. Anytime a child change site or classroom, they must wear a wrist band for 30 more days. No child will be permitted on the bus without a wristband during the 30-day period.
- Teen siblings to the enrolled Head Start child may walk children from the bus, provided the teen siblings name is on the contact release form and presents to the bus driver a picture identification card, or have a clear copy of the ID saved on an electronic device, i.e. cell phone or tablet.
- No adults are allowed onto a school bus without the permission from the driver. I understand if I do enter a bus without permission, I am trespassing, and it is a Federal offense subjected to fines and or jail time.
- **SELF TRANSPORT:** Parents/guardians must be on time for pick up and drop off. Parents/guardians must use hand to hand contact from the car to the classroom and from classroom to the car. No children are to be left in the car unattended.

### **Conduct and Misconduct on the Bus**

- Children are asked to leave all toys, candy, and any other snacks at home.
- Children are expected to respectfully follow bus rules and be respectful of adults and other students.
- Child Safety Seats and/or harnesses must be used by all children riding the bus. Seats are provided by the transportation department.
- Bus drivers/monitors will complete a Head Start Incident Report on the misbehavior and inform Head Start staff within 24 hours of the incident.
- Bus misconduct will be addressed according to Head Start policies and a SAT meeting will be held between parent/guardian, FACS and a Head Start Manager.

**THE CONSORTIUM'S TRANSPORTATION/PARENT TRANSPORT POLICIES (Continued)**

**Undeliverable or Late pick-up Children Policy**

- The FIRST event that a child is returned to the school on the bus or not picked up by transporting parents/guardians, Family and Community Specialist (FACS) will call parents/guardians with a reminder message about being present at home at the scheduled drop off time. If necessary, Contact Sheet will be updated.
- The SECOND event that a child is returned to the school, or not picked up by transporting parent/guardian, a Transportation SAT meeting is held with the FACS, parent and a Head Start Manager. An action plan will be created.
- For the THIRD event and each event thereafter a child is returned to the school, or not picked up by transporting parents/guardians, a Transportation SAT meeting will be held with the FACS, parent and a Head Start Manager. The action plan will be revised.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **HEAD START TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Transportation is provided for the families enrolled in the Head Start Program through the school corporation in which the child attends classes. If transportation is available in your school district, parents or guardians will be contacted shortly before school starts to inform them of the times for pick-up, drop-off, and specific locations where this will occur. Head Start Transportation department will contact parents regarding pick up and drop off points. Buses will pick-up and drop-off in front of the address or cluster stops that is supplied to The Consortium. Parents who are participating in transportation should be aware of the procedures that are established for the safety of your child noted below.

All parents/guardians that are transporting children must have valid driver's license and age appropriate car seat that meets federal standards along with valid car insurance.

### **Pick-up Procedures:**

Please have your child ready in the morning 15 minutes before the bus arrives in order for the child to quickly and safely board the bus. The bus monitor will assist the child(ren) on and off the bus. The bus will not wait longer than one (1) minute for the child(ren). If your child(ren) misses the bus, you may bring your child to the school. You must report to the front office to receive sign in information. Winter months parents must be standing in doorway with door open. Summer months parents must be outside 10-15 minutes prior.

### **Drop-off Procedures:**

The transportation department expects that a parent or guardian will be at home at the designated time to receive the child. If no one is available, a phone call will be made to your home phone number, emergency contact name, and the child will be returned to the school. If no contact is made by all contacts listed in child's file, the local police will be called **AFTER 1 HOUR (from assigned drop-off time, if bus transported and AFTER 1 HOUR from dismissal time if self-transported)** and the child will be turned over to them as undeliverable. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that parents and guardians take seriously the responsibility of being home for their child.



## **HEAD START TRANSPORTATION POLICIES (continued)**

### **EARLY HEAD START Additional Policies, Merit and SAMP:**

Parents of infants participating in the Community Partnership portion of the Head Start program must provide their own transportation.

#### **Pick-up:**

- Parents must submit height and weight of their child to the EHS Manager or FACS prior to receiving transportation services.
- The parent and child must be present when the bus arrives.
- A parent must ride with the child on the bus.
- All children must be strapped into a child car seat before the bus move.

#### **Drop-off:**

- Infant/toddlers will only be transported by bus with the parent present and on the bus with the child.
- Parents and children will only be dropped off at the pick-up address.
- All children must be strapped into a child car seat before the bus can leave the school.

#### **Conduct and Misconduct on the Bus**

- Children are asked to leave all toys, candy, and any other snacks at home.
- Children are expected to respectfully follow bus rules and be respectful of adults and other students.
- Child Safety Seats and/or harnesses must be used by all children riding the bus. Seats are provided by the transportation department.
- Bus drivers/monitors will complete a Head Start Incident Report on the misbehavior and inform Head Start staff within 24 hours of the incident.
- Bus misconduct will be addressed according to Head Start policies and a SAT meeting will be held between parent/guardian, FACS and a Head Start Manager.

## **NON-BUS TRANSPORTED CHILDREN**

### **For those who drop their child off at school:**

- Parents must use hand to hand contact with your child from the parking lot to the classroom, from the classroom to the car.
- Cars are not to be left with engines running or illegally parked.
- Please do not drop your child off more than 5 minutes before school is designated to begin.
- If you arrive prior to this you must stay with your child until the class begins.
- You must sign your child in when arriving and sign your child out when departing.
- The sign in/out sheet will be available in your child's classroom.

Parents may not leave children in the car while bringing an Early Head Start/Head Start child into the building, if this happens CPS will be notified.

**Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium**  
Weather Delays Schedule  
2021-2022

**Be sure to check local news channels for school closings and delays**

Baugo	Head Start: 2-hour delay EHS CC: 2-hour delay
Concord	2-hour delay
Elkhart:	2-hour delay
Goshen	2-hour delay Merit runs as usual
John Glenn	2-hour delay
Middlebury	2-hour delay
Penn Harris	2-hour delay
Mishawaka	2-hour delay
South Bend	FULL DAY: 2-hour delay Lafayette EHS CC runs as usual Lafayette EHS/Head Start runs as usual
Union North	Runs at 10:00 am
Wa-Nee	AM: No AM Head Start PM: Runs as usual

## Consortium's Attendance Policy

Federal law requires Head Start employees to inquire on a child's well-being within the first hour of school.

If your child is not able to attend school for any reason, families are to contact the Head Start teachers or FACS **within the first hour of school**. For families who do not contact the staff, staff will be contacting families to find out reason for absence.

If a child is **absent for two consecutive days without communication from a parent/guardian, a Home Visit , by the FACS, will be conducted**. A Home Visit or a SAT with a child's parent/guardian will occur if a child has chronic absences to develop an action plan.

Head Start staff will use individual child data to determine if a SAT meeting should occur. This will be based on the amount of absences the child has incurred over the first 60 days. **Per Head Start Federal guidelines, a child with patterns of absences of 10% or higher put them at risk of missing critical learning and skill development.** This is based on program days. Head Start staff will meet with child's family to develop strategies to improve child's attendance and assist in eliminating barriers. If you foresee your child's attendance being impacted for a particular reason or circumstance, you should work with your FACS to create an action plan.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

The Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium program staff will guarantee confidentiality and privacy in regard to services, records and discussions of or about any person or child served by the program. All confidential information regarding an individual or family served by this organization must be kept confidential. Any disclosure of confidential information must be carried out within the guidelines specified in this policy. The practice of confidentiality must be maintained in all Head Start programs, departments, function and activities of the Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium.

Part of protecting the confidentiality of Head Start children and families requires that staff can only communicate with parents and/or legal guardians. Information to communicate with any third party requires the express written permission of the parent and/or guardian.

## **SMOKING POLICY**

### **Smoking Policy:**

Parents or volunteers who smoke must adhere to the following policy:

- Smoking will only be allowed off the school premises.

**Head Start Schools are SMOKE FREE:** There is no smoking allowed on the grounds at any of the Head Start facilities. This includes other tobacco products such as vaping or other electronic devices. Smoking is also not permitted while standing within 50 feet at the bus stops before or after the pick-up or drop-off times.

## **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

Parents/ Guardians should adhere to each individual school's safety protocol. Sites may require a show of ID or run a background check at the school office so you should always carry a picture ID. Please see your FACS if you have any questions about your child's site.

Parents are prohibited from bringing firearms, weapons (including tasers) or ammunition on the property of the Consortium or any other School Corporation, or possessing any firearm, weapon (including tasers) or ammunition while attending Consortium trainings.

All parents are expected to be free of alcohol and illegal drugs and not to sell, distribute, dispense, possess, or use or conspire to sell, distribute, dispense, possess, or use an illegal drug or alcohol on the Consortium's premises, or when engaged in the Consortium's business or an activity sponsored by the Consortium. In the event this should occur, the child will not be released to the adult and police will be notified.

**Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium**

**245 North Lombardy, Suite A ~ South Bend, IN 46619**

**Office Phone: (574) 393-5864 ~ Fax: (574) 283-8108**

**Web site: [www.headstartesj.com](http://www.headstartesj.com)**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider/Esta institución es un proveedor de igualdad de oportunidades*

<p align="center"><b>Transportation Policies and Procedures Checklist / Lista de verificación de información de contacto autorizada / padre 2021-2022</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Parent/Guardian Initial Firma de padre o guardiano</b></p>
<p>1. Parent/Guardian or Emergency contacts must show ID to the bus driver or have a clear copy of the ID saved on a electronic device, such as a phone or tablet./Si usted es padre, guardiano o contacto de emergencia, tiene que enseñar su identificación al conductor. Page 14 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>2. Parent/Guardian must have child ready 15 minutes before bus arrives. During the winter months Parents/Guardian must be standing in doorway with door open./Su hijo debe estar listo 15 minutos antes de que llegue el autobus. Page 16 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>3. Parent/Guardian must be home 15 minutes before the designated time to receive the child./Usted debe estar en casa 15 minutos antes de el momento designado para recibir el niño. Page 16 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>4. If a Parent/Guardian uses a child care service for pick up and drop off, then the authorized person name should read "the staff of (Daycare Center), service they have chosen"./Si un padre / guardián usa un servicio de cuidado de niños para recoger y dejar, entonces el nombre de la persona autorizada debe leer "el personal de (guardería), el servicio que han elegido".</p>	
<p>5. Children are expected to respectfully follow bus rules and be respectful of adults and other students. Bus misconduct will be addressed according to Head Start policies./Se espera que los niños respeten el conductor, las reglas de el autobus, y otros adultos y niños en este autobus. La mala conducta del autobús se tratará de acuerdo con las políticas de Head Start. Page 17 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>6. No adults are allowed onto a school bus without the permission from the driver./No se permiten adultos en el autobus sin el permiso de conductor.</p>	
<p>7. I understand if I do enter a bus without permission, I am trespassing and it is a Federal offense subjected to fines and or jail time./Entiendo como padre o guardián que si entro en el autobús sin permiso del conductor, estoy invadiendo y puedo estar sujeto a multas federales o tiempo de cárcel.</p>	
<p>8. Adults must have hand to hand contact with bus monitor, when given or receiving their child./ Adultos deben a tener contacto mano-a-mano con el conductor cuando dan o reciben a su hijo. Page 14 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>9. Parents/guardians and authorized person must use hand to hand contact when escort children to and from the bus./Adultos deben a tener contacto mano-a-mano con su hijo cuando estan llegando y dejando la clase. Page 14 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>10. Wristband must be worn for the first 30 days of school and 30 days ever time the child change school. Children without wristband will not be permitted to enter the bus./Las pulseras deben ser usadas durante los primeros 30 días de escuela. A los niños sin pulseras no se les permitira entrar el autobus. Page 14 in Parent Handbook</p>	
<p>11. If your child will not be riding the bus, please contact your transportation department or Driver/Monitor for South Bend./ Si su hijo va a estar ausente de la escuela, por favor comuníquese con su personal de Head Start.</p>	

<b>Transportation Polices and Procedures Checklist / Lista de verificación de información de contacto autorizada / padre 2021-2022</b>	<b>Parent/Guardian Initial Firma de padre o guardiano</b>
12. Parent/Guardian are required to keep address, emergency contact and/or phone numbers updated at all times. Any change , please contact your FACS (Family and Community Specialist) to complete a COS (Change of Status) form./Usted debe tener su direccion, contacto de emergencia y numero de telefono preciso en todo momento. Si usted tiene que cambiar el informacion, pregunta a su FAcS por una carta a cambio de estado. Page 11 in Parent Handbook	
13. Parent/Guardian are required to have their emergency contact person and all of their authorized person sign this form and return to their FACS or teacher within the first 30 days of starting school./Los padres o tutores deben tener hacer que las personas de contacto de emergencia y toda persona autorizada firme este formulario y lo regrese a su FACS o maestro dentro de los primeros 30 días de comenzar la escuela.	
14. For safety purpose, no animals of any kind or size are to be within 50 feet of the bus stop. Page 14 in Parent Handbook	
15. No cell phone usage or cursing allowed at the bus stop or buildings. Page 14 in Parent Handbook	
16. No smoking allowed within 50 feet of Head Start Facilities or bus stops. Page 14 in Parent Handbook	
<p><b>I have received the Parent Handbook and the Community Resource guide and I understand that it outlines: Parent Involvement, Health and Nutrition, Education, and Transportation information. He recibido el Guía de Padre, y el Guía de Recursos de la Comunidad, y entiendo que resume: La Participación del Padre, Salud y Nutrición, Educación e información de Transporte.</b></p>	
<p><b>As a parent/guardian you are responsible to review this with your emergency contacts and have it signed and returned to Head Start.</b></p> <p><b>Como padre / tutor, usted es responsable de revisar esto con sus contactos de emergencia y hacer que se firme y regrese a Head Start.</b></p>	

Child Name / Nombre de nino(a) : \_\_\_\_\_

Site and Room Number / Nombre de Sitio y Numero de Classe: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature / Firma del padre: \_\_\_\_\_ Date / Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Start Staff Signature / Firma: \_\_\_\_\_ Date / Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Section VI: Parents as Partners**

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN THE CONSORTIUM'S PROGRAMS

### Parent Involvement

Parents are an essential part of our program. We rely on parents for support in a number of areas. We welcome parents to take advantage of the opportunity to help plan and shape our Consortium Programs by participating in the classroom, on committees, Policy Council, Family Summit, Parent Trainings, and Parent Site meetings.

Parents will receive training about the leadership and community service opportunities through Policy Council and site meetings, as well as in healthy relationships (i.e., marital and parent/child relationships) through the Family Summit, Love and Logic series, Fatherhood trainings., and Financial literacy

By taking advantage of partnering, parents will join The Consortium's staff by forming a strong team to educate their child and enhance their family's opportunity to grow in parenting, relationship and leadership skills.

We will share information with you on a regular basis through parent meeting minutes, Consortium website, notes, text, newsletters and flyers. **Parent information will also be sent home with your child. Please check your child's backpack daily for mail and to see what she/he was working on that day at school.**

In the following pages you will learn how The Consortium's forms partnerships and depends upon the involvement of parents and other community organizations. The Consortium is unique in that it does not seek to simply teach children, but enhance families through learning and growing together.

You will find opportunities to interact with other families, The Consortium's staff and community leaders to gain knowledge, information and necessary services for your family as you partner with The Consortium. The Consortium needs you to plan for this involvement at many levels. The next few pages of this Handbook describe what is expected from both The Consortium and you as a family that benefit from its services.

If you have not already met with your Family and Community Specialist (FACS) you will soon have that opportunity. You will be asked to provide family information and set growth goals. This will require a partnership that depends upon The Consortium keeping its commitments. Each family will have to plan on keeping similar commitments as well.



## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Philosophy and Goals**

The Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium is family centered and is designed to build upon a parent's role as the principle influence on a child's development. Our Consortium Program works to engage in a process of collaborative partnership with individual families to develop a "Family Partnership Agreement". This partnership between The Consortium and parents is required by the Department of Health and Human Services to help parents in developing their individual strengths and successfully meet personal and family objectives. Through these agreements, parents are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of The Consortium, including direct involvement in policy and program decisions that respond to their interests and needs. A Family and Community Specialist will be assigned to your family to assist you.

#### **The general objective of Family Partnerships are...**

- To establish mutual trust, identify strengths or need of services for each family, and the necessary services or supports to meet those goals.
- To establish new or build upon pre-existing family plans and goals by obtaining information from the family, provide information and/or opportunities available from other community agencies to enhance or meet those goals.
- To establish the roles that staff and families will play in addressing and meeting each goal.
- To work collaboratively with participating parents to identify and access those community services and resources that are responsive to their interests and goals.
- To ensure that parents are provided opportunities to enhance their own parenting skills, as well as, gain knowledge and understanding of the educational, developmental needs and activities of their children.
- To provide opportunity to participate in medical, dental, nutritional, and mental health education programs.

#### **About Community Partnerships**

The Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium is a community organization that works to form collaborative partnerships with other child and family service organizations. The outcome is the forming of a "Community Partnership Agreement" with those community organizations that are responsive to the needs of children and families. These partnerships help to establish a wealth of information and opportunities that will enhance or improve the quality of service to The Consortium's Families.

Included in this binder are steps on how to contact 211 and a brief community resource guide. Please contact your Family and Community Specialist if you need assistance.

## **PARENTING SUPPORT**

For families that experience behavioral concerns with their child in their home may address these concerns with their assigned Family and Community Specialist. Family Specialist will introduce the Triple P program with families to build strategies to help alleviate concerns.

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) uses proven solutions that help solve current parenting problems and prevent future problems before they arise.

Triple P suggest simple routines and small changes that can make a big difference for families. It helps you understand the way your family works and uses the things you already say, think, feel and do in new ways that:

- Create a stable, supportive and harmonious family.
- Encourage positive behavior in your child.
- Build positive relationships with your children, so that conflict can be resolved.
- Plan ahead to avoid or manage potentially difficult situations.
- Take care of yourself as a parent.
- Love & Logic: Techniques from Love and Logic systems designed to improve a child's decision making skills.
- S.T.E.P.: (*Systematic Training for Effective Parenting*): is a multi-component parenting education curriculum. The three **S.T.E.P.** programs help parents learn effective ways to relate to their children from birth through adolescence by using parent education study groups. By identifying the purposes of children's behavior, **S.T.E.P.** also helps parents learn how to encourage cooperative behavior in their children and how not to reinforce unacceptable behaviors.

Finally, the Consortium partners with families using a SAT (Student Assistance Team) meeting to address a variety of concerns. A SAT can be initiated by a parent/guardian or Head Start staff. The Consortium will use these meetings to identify concerns and work as a team towards a positive referral and/or resolution and develop an action plan, as needed.

If a parent refuses to follow through with the recommendations of the referral /behavioral plan, after two weeks, the Head Start Mental Health Coordinator and Executive Director will evaluate such action plan. This may include the possible recommendation to place the child on the waitlist, in certain situations. Other options might include the following:

- Modified schedule
- Temporary exclusion per license Mental Health Manager
- Short-Term Home-based option

The goal would be to bring the child back to classroom setting as they successfully work through the referral/behavior plan

### **Family Summits** (Powerful information seminars)

These seminars are designed specifically to provide parental support in key areas of family life. They are offered at least two times a year and in convenient locations to attend. At these seminars, parents will receive support from experts on various family issues through informational training sessions. Some of the subjects include:

- Relationship Training: How to improve relationship skills in the family, improving a child's environment and enhancing their educational and social development.
- Fatherhood: The value of a father's involvement in a child's life, how that relationship is different from a mother's and why it is necessary into a child's educational and social growth.
- Kindergarten Readiness: How to help your child succeed within their Early Childhood growth to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond.
- Family Financial Planning: How to improve your budgeting skills within your family.
- Children's Literacy: Encouraging parents/families to develop literacy skills to advance their growth.
- Nutrition: Parent education on healthy eating tools to prevent and address childhood and family obesity.

## Parent Site Meetings

Every parent or guardian of a child enrolled in The Consortium is a member of the Parent Site Meeting for that site. You should take the opportunity to attend and become active at your site meetings. At Site Meetings parents have the very important task of helping plan and conduct the Site Meetings and activities. You will also give input in program planning (example: giving input to teachers on ideas for the classroom.) Early in the school year, parents will be elected by parents to serve as officers and representatives for the parent site meeting and the Policy Council. The newly elected leaders will help plan and conduct the meetings for the rest of the year. Each site will be able to set project goals and parent engagement activities to help improve the Site Meetings, families, classrooms and The Consortium in general. Parent engagement activities will happen monthly, weather permitting.

A binder will be provided to those elected as a representative from each Site. It will contain the Head Start Performance Standards, Rules of Operation, and other parent information available for your review. All helpful information to help you fulfill your new role as a Consortium's parent/leader

### **List of All Areas of Parent Involvement: Especially to generate in-kind services**

- In the classroom;
- Attend Parent Site Meetings;
- As a member of an Advisory Committee;
- As a member of the Policy Council;
- As a regular volunteer, volunteer their talents/skills to the program;
- Do work at home to support the staff's classroom needs;
- Assist your child by completing homework packets;
- Family Summit; Love and Logic;
- Healthy Family Relationships;
- Fatherhood Initiatives;
- Family Parent Agreement; and
- Work at home to support school readiness goals
- Parent-Teacher Conferences and Home Visits
- SAT (Student Assistance Team) Meeting



## Definition of In-Kind, Parent Responsibilities

### In-Kind and Parent's Role

Parents play a critical role when volunteering in their child's Head Start program. During the school year as parents participate in various activities and document the time, it converts toward an in-kind match like money, it tells the government we have taken our grant seriously and through the support of parents are able to meet the government's challenge.

Here's an easy example of how it works:

If you bought a house for \$10,000, the bank is willing to help you get started by giving you a loan for 80% of the houses value and the bank expects you to bring in a down payment of 20%.

So the figures will be:

House costs	\$10,000.00	(100% of the house costs)
Bank loan	<u>\$ 8,000.00</u>	(80% of the loan)
Your down payment	\$ 2,000.00	(20% of your match to buy the home)

In-kind is the same concept. We need to match 20% of our grant funds from the Federal Government to be supported by parents through in-kind by taking the hourly wage of our Teacher Assistant and multiple your hours of volunteerism to document your work toward meeting the match.

**What is in-kind?** In-kind is services (volunteers) or goods (items or supplies) that would normally be hired or purchased through grant dollars that are given for free.

#### **Examples of In-kind:**

1. Attending Home Visits and Parent/Teacher Conferences and generating child plans with your child's teacher.
2. Classroom volunteer or prepare classroom materials, clean the room, or a lunchroom assistant.
3. Doing the homework packets and assignments sent home to you from your child's teacher and documenting your time, signature, and send back to your child's teacher.
4. Doing other activities as a family that would relate to similar school activities and writing it on the in-kind form. Those activities include:
  - Sorting silverware for meals, laundry, buttons, vegetables, fruits.
  - Cutting out pictures or coupons from advertisement or junk mail.
  - Making homemade play dough and creating letters, numbers, or sculpture.
  - Helping parents make simple meals and discussing with parents the value of good foods.
  - Taking objects from home such as dry lima beans and grouping them into small sets like 3 white beans and 2 red beans equals 5 total beans. Making simple projects like that to reinforce math skills.
  - Read a story book every day to your child for about 15 mins.
  - Completing the homework packets.

If you have any questions regarding if your activities qualify for in-kind, please feel free to do the activity and fill out the form, we will determine if it counts. Mainly, get involved with your child is the most important message we can send here today. And, FILL OUT THE FORM WITH YOUR SIGNATURE.

## Specific Partner Opportunities and Guidelines

Additional parent partner opportunities that are available have specific responsibilities that encourages professional development. There are several opportunities and guidelines listed in the next few pages. In each case your child's Teacher or Consortium's Staff can help you receive training and education to fulfill your duties.

You may find yourself serving in only one area, but many parents find joy in serving in several areas of The Consortium at the same time.

### **A Regular Volunteer**

A REGULAR volunteer is defined as a volunteer who has applied for a specific volunteer position that requires direct contact with any Consortium's children and a written agreement, **or** is in the classroom 8 or more hours per month, **or** those on a set schedule that have direct contact with children, **or** those identified as a regular volunteer by the Executive Director, Parent Engagement Manager, Family and Community Specialist, **or** Teacher due to the nature of the specific volunteer role.

Many community volunteers participate in our classrooms as well, however **all regular volunteers** must provide background information and proof of a Negative TB test and for Early Head Start a TDap immunization is required and sent to the Head Start Office. All regular volunteers will be required to complete a Criminal background check and receive training regarding volunteer expectations. License facility volunteers working eight hours or more must have finger print paperwork on file.

Any Volunteer will need to read and sign a copy of the Volunteer Head Start Performance Standards Code of Conduct 5.1 form on page 30 of this Handbook.



**5.1****HEAD START PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

As a recipient of federal Head Start funds, the Consortium must at all times comply with federal Head Start performance standards. The Consortium must ensure all employees, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the Head Start standards of conduct that:

- Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children’s well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior;
- Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not: (A) use corporal punishment; (B) use isolation to discipline a child; (C) bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child’s mouth shut; (D) use or withhold food as a punishment or reward; (E) use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child; (F) use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child; (G) physically abuse a child; (H) use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child’s family; or (I) use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward.
- Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition.
- Require staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with Section 3.17.
- Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care.

*Adopted July 19, 2006  
Revised June 2017*

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

Your Family and Community Specialist will give you a better explanation and training on what happens at Site Meetings, but the following is a brief overview of what elected leaders can expect.

### **What are Site Meetings?**

#### **What types of things happen at a site meeting?**

- Goals are set for group partnership with The Consortium to improve programs
- Discussion of personal concerns for The Consortium
- Parents meet parents with common goals and experiences
- Discuss and plan parent activities that improve family and educational experiences for the children
- Opportunities for parent involvement in community

#### **How does a meeting work?**

- Parents are elected to leadership positions
- Each meeting is run by parents starting in October/November
- Each meeting follows a prepared agenda (help from FACS personnel)
- Each meeting has a record of what was discussed (minutes)
- Sign in sheets record attendance

#### **What positions are available?**

- Representative to Policy Council **What kind of responsibility does a parent/leader have?**
  - Faithful attendance
  - Available time to fulfill duties
  - Learn Roberts Rules of Order (Training will be provided)
  - Learn/Understand leadership principles (Training will be provided)

### **Policy Council**

**There are many leadership opportunities Council. (Complete training is provided for parents who are elected from the site meetings. It is not necessary for someone to understand all of the duties to fill this position; You just need a willingness to serve and learn.)**





The Policy Council is a parent committee established from among the families whose children are participating in the current year's Head Start. This committee provides opportunity for parents to share in decisions to be made about the program and its vision. Besides parents a portion of the Policy Council is made up of members that are representatives from the community. The Community Representatives are selected from among qualified people from both Elkhart and St. Joseph counties and serve one year terms until fulfilling the lifetime term limit of five (5) years.

Parent members are elected from their local sites as leaders and join together forming the Policy Council. The council meets regularly to learn about and conduct business on behalf of the parents and the program. There are lots of opportunities to grow in personal leaderships skills, to learn more about the Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium processes and procedures and to share in the overall Improvement of the program with their input and oversight.

Parents are elected at the site meetings early in the year and serve for a term of one (1) year. Qualified parents may serve as many as five (5) one year terms if they are elected.

Parents and Community Representatives do not need any prior experience to be elected or selected. If someone is elected/selected for a position on the Policy Council according to the Rules of Operation established by the Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium, they will receive all of the training necessary to be able to successfully serve. Just need to be a Parent and get involved.





# **Section VII:**

# **Community Comment**

## COMMUNITY COMMENT/CONCERN POLICY

It is the intent of the Head Start Consortium to be proactive in soliciting constructive suggestions for quality improvement of the agency and the programs it administers. In order to accomplish this goal, the agency will utilize the following procedure to advise the community of the availability of the agency's procedure to receive and respond to community concerns, comments and constructive suggestions. If you have a suggestion or problem, this will help you get the best service possible from a valuable team member of the Head Start Consortium.

Each step must be taken in the correct order to ensure a timely and effective response to your concerns.

Advancing to an inappropriate step or person in charge will only slow the process as it must be documented that each step was appropriately followed. This form will help you complete the process and insure that you have a record of who has been spoken to and what has been accomplished. Please feel free to attach additional appropriate documents that help explain what has been accomplished.

*Staff persons receiving a complaint should sign all complaints as having been made aware of the problem. A signature does not mean that you agree or disagree with the complaint. After recording the suggested solution, action or recommendation given make a copy and place it in the family file.*

Any complaint should be presented to your Family and Community Specialist (FACS) or your child's teacher. The complaint should be in writing using the Comment/ Concern Tracking Form and contain sufficient detail to identify the nature of the concern or complaint. The complaint should be submitted within (10) ten working days of knowledge of the incident or circumstances involved. Any anonymous complaints, concerns or phone call concerns will not be investigated. **(You must fill out a written concern on a Comment/ Concern Tracking Form.)**

### **STEP 1— Take the concern to the Head Start staff person directly responsible**

Should you have a concern or a complaint, please feel free to speak with your FACS or your child's teacher. Using the Comment Tracking Form, please describe your concern(s). Your child's teacher or your FACS can assist in transcribing an oral complaint for you if necessary.

Please provide a brief description of what your concern is. Be sure to fill in the date of the incident or date when your concern first arose. Provide a current phone number and address where you may be reached. Be sure to sign the form and attach any additional documents about the incident.

If your concern is resolved with this informal conversation you need not take any further action. Two copies of the Concern/Comment Tracking Form will be made. The original will be placed in your family file, a copy will be forwarded to their supervisor and you will receive the other copy. This will ensure that we each have a record of your concern and the resolution.

### **STEP 2— Your concern will be taken to the Program Manager**

Should your concern not be able to be resolved in a meeting with your Teacher or FACS, the Comment/Concern Tracking Form will be forwarded on to the staff person's Program Manager. It will go along with a request for them to attempt to resolve your concern. Unless the nature of the concern is an emergency, the Program Manager will have **3 business** days to respond to your concern by phone or in writing. Should a face-to-face appointment be needed, the Program Manager will have **5 business** days from the time of making their first contact with you to schedule a meeting.

**Emergency is defined:** Any situation that implies that your child(ren) or yourself are in danger of physical harm or abuse. Any situation that would create a physical or mental risk of additional harm by not responding.

REVISED: 2-2018

**STEP 3— Your concern will be taken to the Head Start Executive Director**

Should your program manager determine that your concern cannot be resolved through their authority, they will speak with the Head Start Executive Director about how to resolve it. Again, unless your concern is an emergency, defined under STEP 2, the Executive Director will have **5 business** days from the time the Program Manager has made contact with you and had all necessary discussions about possible resolutions. This means that from the time that your concern was presented to the Program Manager and they have had a face-to-face meeting with you, that the Executive Director may not contact you for as much as **13 business** days or just more than two full weeks.

Some problems require additional time to investigate details. Call to speak with the management staff including the Executive Director during the resolution process will not be helpful. The Executive Director will not be able to provide progress reports or comment on concerns during the time of the investigation.

When all the information has been reviewed, the Executive Director or her Administrative Assistant will provide verbal or written explanation to all parties.

**STEP 4— Your concern will be taken to the Governing Board**

Should the Executive Director determine that your concern is a violation of a Consortium policy or requires a change in policy to be resolved, she will make appropriate recommendations to the Governing Board for appropriate action. You will be notified of any such action or recommendations. Notifying you of any results may take several weeks to months dependent upon the time of the next planned or emergency meeting of the Governing Board. You will be made aware of the date and time of such board meeting should you desire to be present to hear from board members concerning your issue. All of these actions still assume that your concern is not or does not create an **emergency**.

# Community Comment Tracking Form

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Site/Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to leave a number to be contacted for further information? Yes \_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Each step must be taken in the correct order to ensure a timely and effective response to your concerns. Advancing to an Inappropriate step or person in charge will only slow the process as it must be documented that each step was appropriately followed. This form will help you to complete the process and insure that you have a record of who has been spoken to and what has been accomplished. Please feel free to attach additional appropriate documents that help to explain what has been accomplished.

*Staff person receiving the comment or complaint must sign. A signature does not mean that you agree or disagree with the complaint. After recording the suggested solution, action or recommendation given, make a copy and place it in the family file.*

All concerns should be presented to your Family And Community Specialist (FACS) or your child's Teacher. The concern must be in writing using this form. You may attach any other information needed to explain your concerns.

## Step 1 Take concern to Head Start person directly responsible

Date incident or problem occurred: \_\_\_\_\_ (Within the last 10 days)

Are there any documents attached with this tracking form? Yes No

Describe the nature of your comment, concern or complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Suggested solution, action, or recommendation given: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Person submitting comment or complaint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print (Name/Relationship to child/Signature/Today's Date)

Staff Person receiving the comment or complaint. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature Position Date action taken)

Attach a written explanation of action taken. \_\_\_\_\_  
(number of pages if they are attached)

## Step 2 (If Necessary) Concern forwarded to a Program Manager:

If your concern has not been resolved in the meeting with your Teacher or FACS, this form will be forwarded on to the staff person's Program Manager along with a request for them to attempt to resolve your concern. Unless the nature of the concern is an emergency, the Program Manager will have **3 business** days to respond to your concern by phone or in writing. Should a face-to-face appointment be needed, the Program Manager will have **5 business** days from the time of making their first contact with you to schedule a meeting.

Outcome notes from either a phone call or face-to-face meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Program Manager resolving the comment or concern: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature Position Date action taken)

Attach a copy of written response and explanation of action taken. \_\_\_\_\_  
(number of pages attached)

**Step 3 – Take the concern to the Head Start Executive Director**

Individual Parent Concern-If the concern remains unresolved following the meeting outlines in Step 2, the individual may, within 3 business days, make a written request to meet with the Head Start Executive Director.

The Head Start Executive Director will meet with all parties involved within **3 business** days of the written request. If a resolution to the concern is agreed upon, no further action is necessary. Within **5 business** days following the meeting, the Head Start Executive Director will provide the individual with a written summary of the action proposed to resolve the concern.

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location or name of Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any changed or unresolved portion of the problem: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Head Start Director received the complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach response \_\_\_\_\_  
(number of pages)

**Step 4 – Take the concern to the Governing Board and Policy Council**

If the concern remains unresolved following the meeting outlined in Step 4, the concern should be taken to the Policy Council. The concern should be presented in writing to the Policy Council Chairperson with a request to have the concern placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting. You will be made aware of the date and time of the next meeting, should you wish to attend. All of these actions still assume that your concern is not or does not create an **emergency**.

Describe any change or unresolved portion of the problem. \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson receiving documentation from parent and/or Head Start Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature Date)

Attach description of action or resolution passed to correct the problem or submit to the Governing Board \_\_\_\_\_  
(number of pages)

# **Section VIII: Nutrition and Wellness Information**

## NUTRITION

All children attending a full day program, he/she will receive two-thirds of his/her daily nutritional needs in Head Start. The program provides breakfast, lunch, and a snack.

Children in the half day Head Start program will receive one-third of his/her daily nutritional needs at Head Start. The program provides breakfast and a hot lunch for AM classes and a hot lunch and nutritious afternoon snack for PM classes each day.

**The safety of children is our most important concern. We must restrict food prepared off site due to health considerations, including allergies, food sensitivities, choking concerns, and nutritional content, as well as religious food preferences. Therefore, we do not allow any outside food to be given to the children. Please do not bring any food or “treats” for birthday or holiday parties. If you would like to send in something to share with the class, some suggestions would be stickers, pencils, erasers, puzzles, etc. The only exception will be for Family Engagement Celebrations and notification will go home prior to the celebration.**

If your child needs a specific diet for religious or medical reasons or has any food allergies, forms must be completed to request changes. These forms must be returned to Head Start FACS person so that the Head Start Nutrition Consultant may review and make necessary recommendations. Changes or substitutions because of food allergies for medical reasons must be documented by the child's physician. The Head Start Nutrition Consultant will arrange for all necessary meals or food substitutions by working with your family and the school kitchens.

The Nutrition Consultant also plans nutrition education opportunities for you and your child. Weekly food projects and nutrition activities are done in the classroom; by involving the children in nutrition activities they learn about new foods and enjoy eating them. From time to time a variety of nutrition topics may be offered to parents at site meetings. Health and safety information, as well as fun healthy recipes will be sent home for your enjoyment.

Head Start ensures that each child is nutritionally assessed while in the program. This is accomplished through:

- The Nutrition Assessment and Health History forms that you will complete before your child enters the program
- Height and weight measurements at least two times a year
- Dental reports (a dental exam)
- Blood hemoglobin levels
- Food eating habits/behaviors

The Dietician will evaluate the results and work with the staff and parents of any children with specific problems such as:

- Anemia
- Overweight
- Allergies
- Underweight

## **DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

All children will receive sensory and behavioral developmental screenings within 10 to 15 calendar days of attendance to identify areas of concern. The screenings are brief checks, which help identify children who may need educational interventions. Parents will be informed of the results of the screenings and will have the opportunity to work with Head Start personnel in planning educational experiences for their child.

Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium works closely with the child's home school district and other agencies to provide a full range of services including a free and appropriate education to meet the individual special needs of the child.

Parents are an important part of this process, and a vital link in the decision making process and educational experiences for their child. The strengths and needs of the child and family will provide the basis for making decisions regarding services in the least restrictive and most appropriate environment for their child.

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

The promotion of positive social and emotional health is a major goal of the Head Start program, for all members of the Head Start Community, children, their families and Head Start staff, both in the classroom environment and in the home. Head Start strives to provide a nurturing program which promotes feelings of competence, success, problem-solving skills, making new friends, a positive self-concept and respect for individual differences.



## **STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM**

The purpose of the Student Assistance Team (SAT) is to identify and provide individualized services to children who are experiencing persistent behavioral/or learning difficulties within the classroom environment. A SAT may also be held to address Transportation, Health concerns, and parent skills and education.

Families are very important members of the SAT, and are encouraged to participate anytime throughout the process. If you need further information, or have concerns regarding your child, please contact your child's teacher.



## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Our goal at Head Start is to help your child cope with little difficulties and small emotional upsets before they become big problems that are more difficult to manage. We know that behavioral and emotional challenges can interfere with your child's learning and development. We believe that learning to manage emotions and behavior is simply another type of education we can provide, giving your child greater opportunity to be ready to learn when he or she reaches school age. A Mental Health Coordinator, under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional will visit each Head Start classroom upon request of staff. The Coordinator can assist children who have difficulty managing their emotions or behaviors. The Coordinator will consult with teachers and parents at a Student Assistant Team (SAT) meeting and review with a licensed mental health professional to address each child's social/emotional needs. As a parent, you may have questions or concerns about your child's behavioral health. In extreme situations where a child endangers self or others, the Mental Health Coordinator will 1.) intervene, 2.) make immediate recommendations, and 3.) a SAT meeting will be generated.

## **REFERRALS**

Mental Health referrals may be generated during SAT meetings with parents written consent. Mental Health referrals are facilitated and monitored by Mental Health Manager.

## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

Serving children with disabilities is a very important piece of Head Start's work with children and their families. At least ten percent of enrollment opportunities in the program are made available for children with disabilities.

If a child qualifies for services, an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed with family and staff input. The IFSP/IEP must be developed before special services are provided. Many of our children come with an IFSP/IEP and are first served by the Consortium after the screening and assessment process.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

When there is evidence of a suspected disability, with parent written consent, a request for consultation is made to the local school district to determine if there is a need for a multi-disciplinary evaluation and if special services are indicated.

The child's educational program will be designed to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences based on the child's needs. If further diagnostic testing is indicated, families will provide written consent. If test and assessment results indicate the need for an IFSP or IEP, the family is an active participant in this process and will receive a copy of the IFSP/IEP at a case conference. Together we will provide a quality educational experience for your child.

Those children entering the program with a diagnosed disability that have a current IFSP/IEP would be ready to begin special services following program entrance.

## **THE CONSORTIUM'S TRANSITION**

The goal of Transition Services is to help all The Consortium's families move successfully into their next educational environment. Most Early Head Start families transition into Head Start, while some may choose other pre-school programs. Head Start families transition into Kindergarten. We also work with agencies providing early intervention services to assist families in transitioning from early intervention to Head Start. Our program will be working with the parent and the local schools and agencies to help the parent and their child with this transition. This process will continue throughout the program year.

Children with an IFSP/IEP will have an individual transition plan developed with the involvement of parents and staff or in some cases a preschool program other than Head Start or the child's home school district.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Indiana law requires that any Head Start personnel who knows or suspects child abuse or neglect will be responsible for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect and in accordance with the Governing Board Policy. As employees of the Elkhart and St. Joseph Head Start Consortium, we are not here to make judgments as to whether a child is abused or neglected. We are legally mandated to report a suspicion of abuse or neglect. Our reporting is to help protect a child if the need exists and to help a family access any needed services. The care and well being of a child is of the utmost importance.



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH SERVICES EDUCATION**

Head Start is designed to meet the needs of each individual child. Children are introduced to learning experiences in a one-on-one interaction with teachers and small/large group situations. The activities of the classroom promote the children's intellectual, social, emotional, language and physical growth.

Emphasis is placed on building the child's positive self-concept and making their Head Start experience a pleasant one. Head Start gives your child lots of love, attention and guidance. Much effort is given to direct your child toward activities that will lead to success at completion.

Developmental appropriate practices are used in all classrooms. To support these practices the teaching staff will:

- Promote a positive climate for learning.
- Will know each child well and design activities based on their knowledge of each individual child's differing abilities, developmental levels, and approaches to learning.
- Plan and prepare a learning environment that fosters children's initiative, active exploration of materials, and sustained engagement with other children, adults, and activities.
- Provide a variety of concrete learning materials relevant to children's own life experiences that promote their interest, engagement in learning, and conceptual development.
- Encourage children's developing language and communication skills by talking with them throughout the day, speaking clearly and listening to their responses, and providing opportunities for them to talk to each other. Staff will also incorporate WIDA (for dual-language learners) into their daily lesson plans.
- Observe and interact with children in all situations to maximize their knowledge.
- Draw children's curiosity and desire to make sense of their world to motivate them to become involved in interesting learning activities.
- Ensure that curriculum goals address learning in all developmental areas: physical, social, emotional, language, aesthetic, and intellectual.
- Use the HighScope Child Observational Record to assess children's progress, examine children's work samples, and document their developmental or learning needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and community regularly to build mutual understanding and ensure that children's learning and developmental needs are met.
- Engage in ongoing professional development activities.

# **Section IX:**

# **HighScope**

## HighScope Curriculum

### How HighScope Guides Teachers/Children in Learning

The HighScope Preschool Curriculum advances students along a course of development as they gain essential knowledge and skills. The essence of this “course” is the dynamic interaction of an educational philosophy, a body of research, a series of teaching practices, and a set of meaningful learning goals for children. The HighScope Preschool Wheel of Learning illustrates the curriculum principles that guide HighScope preschool teachers in their daily work with children. Through Active Learning- having direct experiences and meaning from children through reflection-young children construct knowledge that helps them make sense of their world.

### HighScope in Action

#### Adult-Child Interaction

Active learning depends on positive adult child interactions. Teachers using the HighScope preschool approach strive to be supportive as they interact with children. Throughout the day teachers guided by the understanding of how preschool children think and reason, they practice positive interactions strategies. Teachers share control with children, focusing on children’s strengths, forming authentic relationships with children, supporting children’s play, and adopting a problem-solving approach to social conflict.

#### Learning Environment

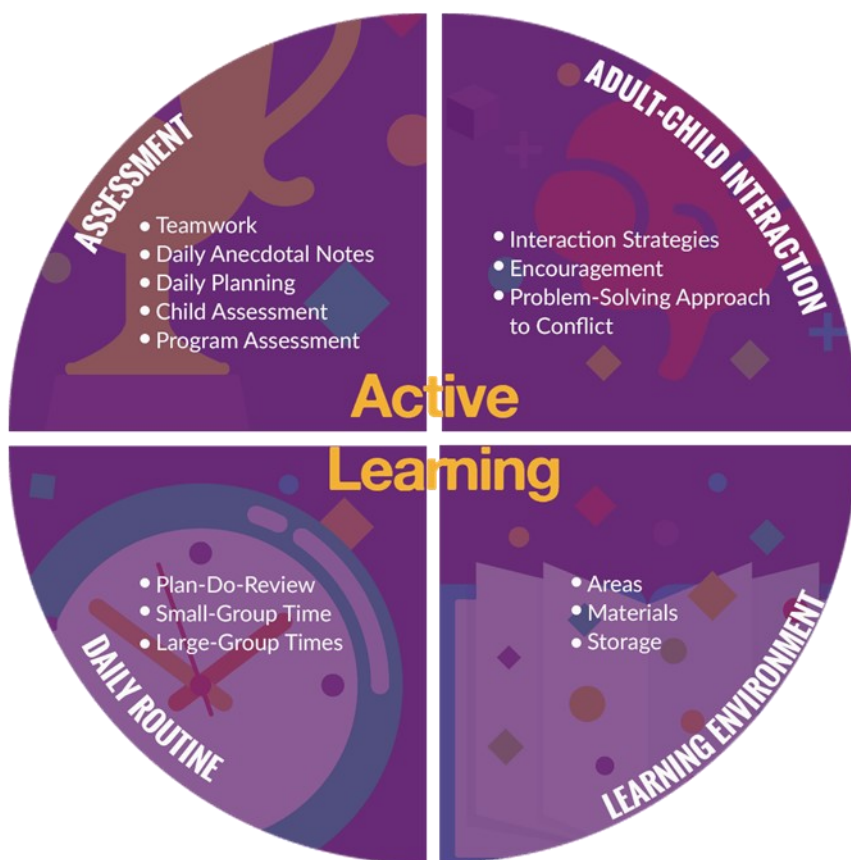
When you arrive in a Head Start HighScope classroom you will notice active learning environments that provide children with ongoing opportunities to make choices and decisions. Teachers organize the play spaces into specific interest areas to support preschools children’s abiding interest in such activities as sand and water play, building, solving puzzles, pretend play, drawing and painting, reading and writing, signing and moving. The different areas contain a wide and plentiful assortment of easily accessible materials children can use to carry out their play.

#### Daily Routine

Teachers and children are guided by the daily routine that’s supports active learning. The routine enables your children to anticipate what happens next and gives them a great deal of control over what they do during each part of the day. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom and engage in active learning with their child to help support learning.

#### Assessment

Head Start teachers are partners in the classroom providing collaborative teamwork built on supportive adult relationship which forms a solid base for them to work together. Each day teachers gather accurate information by observing and interacting with the children in their classroom, taking daily anecdotal notes based on what they see and hear the children doing. Teachers will engage in daily planning to help develop lesson planning of children’s needs and interest based on prior daily anecdotal notes. Teachers will use the anecdotal notes/ observations and record them daily to complete the child’s assessment with COR Advantage. Anecdotal notes will be shared with parents during Parent Teacher Conferences and Home Visits.



# **Section X: Human Resources**

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Employment**

The Consortium's parents are given priority for becoming paid employees of the program, i.e., positions such as:

- Administrative Staff
- Paraprofessionals (appropriate degree required)
- Day to day substitutes (appropriate degree required)
- Teachers or Teacher Assistants (appropriate degree required)
- FACS (appropriate degree required)
- Other positions as they become available

Parents interested in employment may complete an application at the Head Start office or visit our website, [www.headstartesj.com](http://www.headstartesj.com) to print an application and it can be emailed to the [HR@headstartesj.com](mailto:HR@headstartesj.com):

Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties Head Start Consortium  
245 North Lombardy Drive, Door 1  
South Bend, IN 46619

Parents are encouraged to apply for positions.

### **Career Development**

Most jobs in Head Start require higher education (college degrees). The South Bend and Elkhart communities offer adult courses that lead to a high school diploma, or GED. Information about these courses may be obtained by calling the South Bend Community School Corporation at 574-393-6000 or Elkhart School Corporation at 574-262-5833.

Post high school classes are available at several local institutions, for example:

- Ivy Tech, Bethel, Indiana University (IUSB), and Goshen Colleges.

The Consortium will strive toward the betterment of its employees and parents. Training is offered to enhance parent and employee marketable skills. Career development strategies include job enhancement, professional training, educational opportunities, and a sincere desire to maximize potential.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) program provides training for parents in child development and early childhood education to explore related areas with the objective of up-grading their skills and competencies in career development.

For information regarding career development, contact the Head Start office at 574-393-5864 or go to the website, [www.headstartesj.com](http://www.headstartesj.com).

## **NOTES:**