



Head Start + Early Head Start

parent handbook

August 2018

Dear CEOGC Families,

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your child to our wonderful Head Start family. Our administrative and service team provides our program with the supports needed to deliver a quality experience to our students and families. Through our efforts, you and your child have access to an excellent teaching staff, a family service worker, and various academic, emotional, health, and medical screenings. These services help provide us with information that guides lesson and goal planning to shape each child's individual learning experiences. Our goal is to prepare each student to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. In addition, we intend to support parents in their decision making as new opportunities and challenges emerge. We are here for you! Our centers provide secure, developmentally appropriate environment. Rest assured that we not only care about your child's development, but also their safety. Thank you for trusting us with your most precious gift.

Once again, welcome.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Thea Wilson

Vice President of Children and Families

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement	3
Site Days & Hours of Operations (cont'd).....	3-6
Hours of Operation/ Calendar of School Closing/Accessing the Parent handbook / Agency Closing & E-mail Alerts.....	6-7
Daily Schedules.....	7-9
Ratio & Group Size/ Home Based Program.....	9
Partnerships/Admissions Policy/Eligibility Requirements.....	10-13
Ohio Electronic Child Care System	13-14
Guidance and Management / Discipline Policy.....	14-15
Suspension/Children with Special Needs/ Child Drop Off/Pick Up Policy.....	15-19
Drop off & Pick —Up Policy (cont'd)/Child Abuse Reporting.....	19
Confidentiality/Family & Community Engagement/Partnership/Digital	
Media Release/Child Advocate/Communication.....	20
No Tolerance /Education.....	20-28
Child Care Licenses/Emergencies & Incidents.....	28-29
Emergency Evacuation/ Evacuation Sites.....	29-32
Health Information.....	32-36
Food Program Information.....	36-39
Parent Family & Community Engagement.....	39-43
Additional Policies.....	43-46

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to propel educational attainment and economic self-sufficiency for multiple generations throughout Cuyahoga County.

We Invest in people, we nurture success, we transform lives

Step Forward

Early Head Start / Head Start Sites Days and Hours of Operation

Carl B. Stokes Early Learning Center

1883 Torbenson Drive

Cleveland, OH 44112

(216) 692-4010 (216) 692-4028 -fax

Site Administrator – Jill Psota-Vazquez

Email: jpvazquez@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday – Friday

Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Friendly Inn Early Learning Center

2386 Unwin Road

Cleveland, Ohio 44104

(216) 361-9799 (216) 361-9792 - fax

Site Administrator – Rukayatu Saka

Email: rsaka@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday – Friday

Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

George Forbes Early Learning Center

14209 Euclid Avenue

East Cleveland, OH 44112

(216) 541-7878 (216) 541-7383 - fax

Site Administrator – Inez Owens

Email: ipowens@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday – Friday

Early Head Start/Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Green Road Early Learning Center

4329 Green Road

Highland Heights, Ohio 44128

(216)751-1382 (216) 292-5922 - fax

Site Administrator – Arlene Porter

Email: aporter@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday — Friday

Early Head Start/Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Lakeview Terrace Early Learning Center

1290 West 25th Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44113

(216) 795-5255 (216) 795-5256 - fax

Site Administrator — Fatu Saleem

Email: fsaleem@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday — Friday

Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Louis Stokes Early Learning Center

4075 East 173rd Street

Cleveland, OH 44128

(216) 295-2700 (216) 752-1662 - fax

Site Administrator — Sonya Dean

Email: sdean@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday — Friday

Early Head Start/Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Union-Miles Early Learning Center

9250 Miles Park Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44105

(216) 341-0757 (216) 465-9098

Site Administrator- Ve'Ella Smoot-Mays

Email: vmays@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday-Friday

Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m

Villa Early Learning Center

5620 Broadway Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44105

(216) 441-9550 (216) 441-9575-Fax

Site Administrator- April Pettis

Email: apettis@stepforwardtoday.org

Monday-Friday

Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m.

Willard Early Learning Center

2220 West 95th Street
Cleveland, OH 44102
(216) 651-5154 (216) 651-0981 - fax
Site Administrator — Gloria Chambers
Email: gchambers@stepforwardtoday.org
Monday — Friday
Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

William Patrick Day Early Learning Center

2421 Community College Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216)736-2934 (216) 736-3393 - fax
Site Administrator — Nicole Hawthorne
Email: nhawthorne@stepforwardtoday.org.org
Monday — Friday
Early Head Start/Head Start Hours: 8:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

STEP FORWARD Transportation Department

1883 Torbenson Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44112
(216) 692-2136 (216) 692-2236 - fax
George Phillips, Director of Facilities and Support Services
Email: gpolivier@stepforwardtoday.org
Monday — Friday
8:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.

Hours of Operation

Early Head Start ages birth- three years of age is 8:00a.m- 4:00p.m Monday- Friday and will be in session from August – July.

Head Start ages three- five years of age is 8:00a.m-4:00p.m Monday-Friday and will be in session from September – June.

Calendar of School Closings

See parent Calendar

Accessing the parent handbook

Parents will be provided with an access card that informs the families of the website to review the parent handbook. Upon receiving the access card, the family member must sign off on the resource page to indicate

they have received the information provided. The parents will be notified if changes occur and must initial and date the resource page.

Agency Closing and Email Alerts

To sign up for phone, text and email alerts in regards to Step Forward Head Start school closings, meetings and events, please visit www.onecallnow.com.

Click the "Sign Up" button and fill out the registration form. You will receive an email from "One Call Now" in your personal email account once you have filled out the form. Please open the email and follow the directions to verify your information and activate the "One Call Now" notification system. Once you are in the system, please type in the name of your child's Head Start location (ex. Louis Stokes Head Start) to enroll yourself in that center's notification system.

You will also receive a text message on your phone from "One Call Now". Please respond to the text by typing "notify" to enroll yourself in the text notification system.

Daily Schedules

The children's daily schedules are flexible and will be adapted to meet the needs of individual children. We want children to view school as a safe and comfortable place. We also want children to know what to expect and when to expect it.

Head Start Classroom Daily Schedule

Head Start— Classes are in session Monday through Friday from 8:00a.m. — 4:00p.m.

Arrival/Preparation/Choice Activities	8:00-8:20
Clean-up/ Prepare for Breakfast	8:20-8:30
Breakfast/Tooth brushing	8:30-9:00
Group Meeting	9:00-9:20
Choice Time	9:20-10:20
Small Group	10:30-10:50
Outdoor Choice Time	11:00-11:40
Read-Aloud	11:45-12:00
Lunch/Tooth brushing	12:00- 1:00
Rest	1:00-3:00
Snack	3:00-3:30

Early Head Start (Birth — three) Classes are in session Monday through Friday 8:00a.m. — 4:00p.m.

The Early Head Start Locations are: George Forbes Early Learning Center, William Patrick Day Early Learning Center, Green Road Early Learning Center, Louis Stokes Early Learning Center. Infants will receive an individualized daily schedule.

8:00-8:30

Planning/preparation time: Review the plans for the day. Conduct health and safety checks. Refill bathroom and diaper changing supplies. Set out materials for children to use as they arrive. Think about individual children and any special needs.

Hellos and good-byes: As children transition from home to school, greet each child and help them say good-bye to each other.

Dressings: Help children take off and store their outerwear.

Diapering and toileting: Check diapers and change as necessary. Take older children to the toilet as needed.

Eating and mealtimes: Help children wash hands and eat breakfast. Sit with children and enjoy breakfast together. Wash hands and brush teeth

8:30-10:15

Indoor play: Guide children in selecting what they want to play with and how. Observe and interact with children to extend play and learning. Read to children individually or in a very small group.

Diapering and toileting: Check diapers and change as necessary. Take older children to the toilet as needed.

Sleeping and naptime: Allow tired children to sleep according to their needs, even if they usually sleep at the same time as the rest of the group.

Dressings: Change children's wet or soiled clothing as necessary.

Cleanup: Help children put materials away.

10:15-11:30

Dressings: Help children put on outerwear before going outside.

Outdoor play: Supervise and interact with children as they explore the playground environment and equipment. Roll balls back and forth, blow bubbles, paint with water, and make natural discoveries, and so on.

Dressing: Help children take off and store their outerwear.

11:30-12:30

Diapering and toileting: Check diapers and change as necessary. Take older children to the toilet as needed.

Eating and mealtimes: Help children wash hands and eat lunch. Sit with children and encourage conversation about the day's events, the meal itself, and other things of interest to the children. Wash hands and faces; brush teeth.

12:30-2:30

Sleeping and naptime: Help children relax so they can fall asleep. Supervise napping children. Provide quiet activities for children who do not sleep. Adjust length of nap time to suit the group pattern and the needs of the individual children.

2:30-3:00

Diapering and toileting: Check diapers and change as necessary. Take older children to the toilet as needed.

Eating and mealtimes: Set up snack so children can eat snack when they wake up.

3:00-4:00

Indoor play: Guide children in selecting what they want to play with and how. Observe and interact with children to extend play and learning. Read and sing with children individually or in a very small group.

Dressing: Send home wet or soiled clothing.

Hellos and good-byes: Help children and families reconnect at the end of the day. Greet each parent and share something special about their child's day.

Ratios and Group Sizes

Step Forward Early Head Start and Head Start Classrooms maintain staff child ratios in accordance with Head Start Federal Regulations. These regulations exceed the requirement of ODJFS, and are as follows:

<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Max Class Size</u>
1:4	6 weeks — 18 months	9 children
1:4	18 months — 30 months	9 children
1:4	30 months — 36 months	9 children
1:10	3-5 years old (Full Day)	20 children

In order to maintain this ratio, each classroom will have at least two education staff present during all hours of operation. Per ODJFS regulations, all children will be supervised entirely throughout the day. If necessary to meet Head Start/Early Head Start requirements, appropriate Head Start/Early Head Start staff will be assigned to the classroom. The Early Head Start and Head Start Home Based program will maintain the above ratios during socialization experiences.

Early Head Start and Head Start Home Based Program

The Step Forward Early Head Start and Head Start Home-Based program offers in-home parent education programming to families with children ages birth to five. Services are delivered through the use of the Parents as Teachers curriculum, which focuses on child development, parent/child interaction, and family well-being. The home-based schedule includes weekly in-home sessions lasting a minimum of 90 minutes per family and twice monthly group socializations.

Families participating in this program option must meet all Head Start/Early Head Start eligibility requirements. During each 90-minute visit, parents in the Home-Based program option will work collaboratively with the Step Forward Head Start and Early Head Start Home Visitors to plan and provide school readiness activities for their children. Parents or primary care givers must be present and engaged during all scheduled Head Start and Early Head Start Home-Based visits.

While children are participating in socialization experiences, all Head Start Regulations set forth in this handbook must be followed.

Head Start families in this program option are encouraged to participate in the Step Forward Head Start Parent Committee and any volunteer opportunities that are available.

This program option is available to homeless families, as well as families living in transitional housing environments.

Specific questions pertaining to this program may be directed to the Home-Based Coordinator at 216-696-9077 ext.271.

Early Head Start Pregnant Moms Program

The Step Forward Pregnant Moms Program provides expectant mothers and their families with monthly in-home parent education. Services are delivered through the use of the Parents as Teachers Curriculum, which focuses on prenatal parent/child interaction, prenatal growth and development, and family-well-being. Each participant (pregnant mother) is paired with a Home Visitor that works one-on-one with the entire family in the comfort of their own home or agreed upon community space.

Pregnant mothers are also encouraged to participate in group socializations with families from the Home-Based program. Upon delivery, pregnant mothers are assisted with transitioning into the Early Head Start Home-Based program or Early Head Start Center-Based program.

Step Forward Head Start Partnerships

The Step Forward Head Start program partners with area child care providers to provide services to children and families within Cuyahoga County.

Area child care centers, school systems and non-profit organizations that serve children ages three- five partner with Step Forward Head Start so that Head Start enrichment services can be provided in the areas of education,

disabilities and mental health nutrition, health, social services and family engagement. Staff from the Step Forward Head Start program meet with those in the Step Forward Head Start partner network on a regular basis, providing training to ensure that Head Start performance standards are met.

Additional information regarding the organizations that partner with the Step Forward Head Start program may be obtained via Step Forward Head Start website www.stepforwardtoday.org

Admissions Policy and Eligibility Requirements

A Family Service Worker or designated staff will interview all parents prior to admission. Parents will receive all necessary documents. All required documentation such as birth certificate, income verification, current voucher (if applicable) and for our Direct Operated Program immunization records must be submitted prior to the child's first day of attendance. For the collaborative sites, at enrollment Immunization records must be received and physicals will be received by thirty days after enrollment. If a parent chooses not to immunize their child, then an immunization exempt form must be completed.

There are no fees for Head Start services or program participation in ECE.

To be eligible for the Early Head Start Center Based program, children must be at least six weeks of age.

The Early Head Start program works with pregnant women and children, birth through age three. To be eligible for Step Forward Early Head Start services, families must meet Federal poverty income guidelines.

- Child must be 3 — 5 years old (a child must be at least three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community in which the Head Start program is located. A child that is not three by the school cut-off date can enter Head Start on their 3rd birthday.
- Family income must not exceed the Federal guidelines
- Head Start/Early Head Start is permitted to enroll 10% over income families. Over income families must not have a family income that exceeds 300% of the Federal guidelines.
- ECE requires the child must be four years of age by the kindergarten age eligibility cut-off date of the school district, which is September 30th. This date must apply consistently to all ECE funded children.
- Verification of age must be kept on file by the site. A birth certificate, baptismal or church certificate, or hospital record showing the birthdate is needed for age verification.

Automatic eligibility in Head Start/Early Head Start/Home Based Head Start regardless of income for the following:

- Family receives public assistance (TANF, SSI)

- Child is a foster child
- Homeless families and children

To document income-eligibility for Head Start, verification may include the examination of any of the following documents: Individual Income Tax, Form 1040, W-2 Forms, pay stubs, written statements from employers or documentation showing current status as recipients of public assistance. Staff will meet with those families identified to have "no income" to complete documentation and inquire further into the living situation of the family.

The date of a medical examination will be within the past twelve months prior to admission to the program. It will be on file for the child's first day of attendance. An updated examination is required each year of the child's enrollment in the program. The State Licensing Rules allow thirteen months between the initial examination and following year's examination. A completed Physical Exam/Assessment form will verify that the child has been examined and is in suitable condition to participate in group care. There will be a statement from Physician, PA, APRN, or CNP that the child has been immunized or is in the process of being immunized. The signature, business address and telephone number of the health provider will be noted on the form.

A dental form signed by a dentist is required for all children enrolled in the Head Start program. The dental form must verify a date of exam within the past twelve months. If a dental exam has not taken place prior to enrollment, Head Start staff will assist parent/caregiver in obtaining an exam within the first 90 days of a child's entry into the program.

Additional Requirements for Early Head Start Admission

For children enrolled in Early Head Start, well-child visits will be documented following the EPSDT and American Academy of Pediatric guidelines. The visit will occur at a minimum of the following time: 0-1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months and annually thereafter as entrance into Head Start. The visits will contain a review of health history, an undressed examination, assessment of physical growth, an observation of vision and hearing, developmental and behavioral assessment.

For children enrolled in Early Head Start, an oral examination is a part of every well child visit. Children can have a dental examination by a dental professional within six months after the first tooth has erupted or by one year of age.

Termination/Withdrawal Policy

Parents may withdraw their children from the Head Start/Early Head Start program at any time. Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start encourages all parents to give the Family Service Worker(s) at least one week notice when withdrawing a child. Parents will receive information on all program options before a child is withdrawn from the program.

Child Enrollment and Health Information

All Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start parents/guardians must complete a Child Enrollment and Health Information form prior to entry in the program. The information must include: date of birth, address, telephone number, (3) three emergency contacts, emergency transportation authorization and the child's general health information that includes the immunization record with parent/guardian's signature. Contact information for other parents and guardians with children attending the Head Start center may be requested via the Site Administrator. No section or spaces may be left blank on this form.

Changes in address or telephone numbers must be submitted to the Family Service Worker and/or Site Administrator or Home-Based Teacher immediately.

Ohio Electronic Child Care System (Ohio ECC)

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) implemented a system for families that are eligible to receive child care assistance. The Ohio Electronic Child Care System (Ohio ECC) requires families to use the TAP system to track the hours of child care a family receives and utilizes.

Families receiving Ohio ECC services are required to adhere to the following:

The Step Forward Head Start program is only able to provide services to children and families in this program option with the required documentation of eligibility provided by the Department of Jobs and Family Services. A Child Care Notice must be on file for all children participating in this program option.

- Families must use the TAP Tablet to register each time their child is dropped off and picked up from our Head Start sites. Swipes must occur on a daily basis.
- The Step Forward Head Start program is required to adhere to all ODJFS requirements pertaining to the Ohio ECC system. Head Start families that do not swipe their child in and out on a daily basis may be at risk for having their child removed from this program option.
- In the event that your child is shown to be not eligible for services in the TAP portal system, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact their ODJFS worker immediately to rectify the situation as quickly as possible.
- The Ohio ECC system is set up to allow parents to make "back punches" into the system for days and times when they may not have registered within a three week period of time. This process can only be used when there are problems with the portal or the tablet. This process does not take the place of the daily portal sign-ins which must occur.

- All Ohio ECC child care co-payments will need to be paid weekly in the form of a money order. Co-payments must be received at your child's Head Start site each Monday by the close of the business day. Failure to provide a co-payment in the full amount each week may result in your child being moved to a part day Head Start program option if space is available.
- A co-payment must be collected if a child attends their Head Start site for one or more days during the period of a week.
- After 3 weeks of non-payment of co-payments, Step Forward can contact ODJFS to report the failure of the parent/guardian in submitting their assigned co-payment to the Step Forward Head Start program.
- The Step Forward Head Start program is only able to provide services based on the number of hours specified on the Child Care Notice provided to each family by ODJFS.
- ODJFS will make all determinations pertaining to Ohio ECC and co-payment eligibility. Parents with questions or concerns about their child's participation in the Ohio ECC program need to contact their Employment & Family Services worker.
- Head Start services will be offered to children receiving subsidized child care from the hours of 8a.m.-11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday. The remaining daily hours of service will be charged to subsidized child care which begins at 11:31 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m.

Failure of any family to adhere to the policies of the Ohio ECC program may result in the termination of your child's enrollment in this program option.

The Step Forward Head Start tax ID number is available upon request.

Guidance and Management

Behavior Management Techniques

The guidance and management policy applies to all staff and parents while they are in any of the Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start centers. Our goal for your children is that they are able to accept responsibility for their own behavior and to be able to function with self-control. Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity, and setting clear limits.

Adults listen and respond to children with appropriate timing. Children's ideas and suggestions are valued. Teaching staff maintains developmentally appropriate consistent expectations of children. Children are not forced to answer questions. They offer children choices and do not force them to participate in activities that are not of interest to them. Teaching staff model expression of feelings and learning from mistakes. Classroom rules developed with children's input are represented pictorially.

Adults deal with problems effectively by reacting calmly and evaluating each situation including the effects of the environment on the children's behavior. Changes are made to prevent problems in the future.

Inappropriate behaviors that do not pose potential harm may be temporarily ignored. In the event harm to themselves or others emergency removal may be necessary with a plan to return the child to school. Children are encouraged to negotiate and solve problems themselves.

Teachers support children in expressing their emotions appropriately.

Staff will use a process of observing, anticipating and redirecting. If conflicts arise between children, staff will use the following six steps:

- Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions or language.
- Acknowledge feelings.
- Gather information from them.
- Restate the problem.
- Ask for ideas for the solutions and choose one together.
- Give follow up support as need

Step Forward Head Start Discipline Policy

Step Forward staff, as a condition of employment, are required to sign a Discipline Policy. This policy states as follows:

To discipline at Step Forward Head Start means to teach. Our goal is to help children develop their self-control and self-respect. We encourage children to use words to express their feelings and identify solutions to problems. When a child's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher evaluates the situation, helps the child to choose alternatives and redirects when appropriate. If the behavior continues there will be supervised time away from the group where staff will assist the child in identifying solutions. A conference will be arranged with the parent(s) to identify a consistent approach in working with the child when necessary.

Suspension Policy

When there is a serious safety threat to a child or a staff member that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable modifications, the program reserves the right to implement a temporary suspension and exclude the child from the classroom, for a length of time deemed appropriate. The Suspension policy and procedure must be used only as a last resort when a child becomes physically aggressive and unable to participate in classroom activities. All attempted strategies and interventions, as well as the child's responses to the interventions, must be documented. During pick-up parent/ guardian will receive technical assistance report with nature of incident and scheduled meeting date, observation notes of incident (s), incident report (if applicable), and copy of Policy and procedure 1302:17 Suspension and Expulsion- Re-Entry.

The Site Administrator, Family Service Worker or Teacher must inform the parent/guardian of the incident(s) and request that the child be picked up from the center. Staff will inform parent/guardian that a re-entry meeting will need to occur before the child can return to the classroom.

Staff members witnessing the incident must complete the ODJFS Incident Report for any child or adult that was injured. The incident must also be documented on the appropriate observation form (e.g. Staff Observation of Health/Nutrition/Behavior Issues form).

Children with Special Needs

By law, 10% of the children enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start program must be children with disabilities. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities, developmental, social and/or emotional delays, etc., should confer with the Family Service Worker at the center. The Family Service Worker will notify the Early Childhood Inclusion Coordinator(s). The designated Coordinator will meet with the family and a plan is developed specifically for the child to ensure a smooth transition occurs into the EHS/HS classroom or into kindergarten.

Once a child enters the classroom and there is a suspected disability, the following occurs with consent from the parent/guardian:

Step Forward must retain a copy of the IEP or IFSP for any child enrolled in Head Start for the time the child is in the program, consistent with the IDEA requirements in 34 CFR parts 300 and 303.

Children in Early Head Start (EI-ILS), birth — 3 years

A referral to Bright Beginnings (formerly Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County) occurs and a full evaluation is conducted. If a child qualifies for services, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed to assist the child and the family with their specific needs.

Children in Head Start 3 — 5 years

A referral to the Local Education Agency (school district of the child's residence) occurs, and a full evaluation is conducted. If a child qualifies for services, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed to help the child achieve goals specific to his/her educational needs.

Early Head Start / Head Start embrace a vision of mental wellness for the children and families served. Step Forward ensures that a mental health coordinator/professional conducts ongoing site visits, and provides consultation services to staff and parents on mental health issues, as needed. Special assistance is provided for children who show signs of atypical development, unhealthy attachment and/or social/emotional limitations. With consent from the parent/guardian, referrals to mental health agencies occur for children who are in need of specialized mental health services. In the event that parents/guardians wish to speak with the mental health coordinator/ professional, the Mental Health provider's monthly schedule is posted at each site for the parent and staffs convenience.

You have the right to:

- Be notified that your child has been recommended for a professional evaluation
- Be informed regarding the reason for and the nature of the evaluation
- Give signed consent for an evaluation (or) refuse to give signed consent for an evaluation
- Be informed regarding the results of the evaluation
- Give signed consent for special services, e.g. speech therapy, counseling, etc.
- Observe therapy, consult with therapists, receive and review all reports regarding your child
- Review your child's Head Start record at any time
- Give signed consent that your child is no longer in need of special services
- Participate in planning for the transition of your child to the next educational placement

Confidentiality: All records and professional information regarding your child will be kept in strict confidence and can only be made available for review to designated Head Start personnel and providers. Further, your child's records cannot be copied nor released to anyone without parent / guardian informed consent to release part or all of the records.

Due Process: If you have questions or concerns regarding the services Head Start is providing for your child, first, contact the child's teacher or Site Administrator. If satisfaction is not reached, contact the Early Childhood Inclusion Coordinator and then the Senior Education Coordinator. Every attempt will be made to provide reasonable accommodations for your child or to assist you in finding the least restrictive alternative placement for your child.

Child's Rights:

- A child with a diagnosed disability has the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment
- All rights of the parent/guardian shall pass to the child upon reaching the age of majority except in cases where the child is legally determined under State statute to be incompetent
- When your child reaches the age of compulsory school attendance, ask the school to furnish you with a copy of the Due Process procedures of that state. Know your rights and the rights of your child

Confidentiality

Access to records is limited to authorized staff and contracted providers. Official records will be kept confidential in locked file cabinets at the center. Should parents/guardians wish to review their child's record, the request must be made in writing in advance to Family Service Workers.

Attendance

If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the center within one hour of program start time the parent must be contacted to ensure the child's well-being. If the parent cannot be contacted by

telephone and the child has been absent for two consecutive days, the Family Service Worker is expected to make a home visit. If the family cannot be reached through a home visit, a letter will be sent in the mail to the family pertaining to the child's continued enrollment in the program. Children who are absent and late excessively may be moved to another program option to fit the family needs.

Child Drop Off/Pick-Up Policy

Children are expected to arrive alert, awake, and ready to start their day at the center at the designated time the session begins and are to be picked up at the designated time the session ends. Full day children should arrive at the center no later than 8:10 a.m. it is important for children to arrive on time so they can benefit from the entire Head Start curriculum.

Breakfast/lunch is part of the daily routine. Parents bringing children into the site after breakfast/lunch time is over will be asked to stay with their child while the child eats breakfast.

Each child must be signed in and out by the parent/guardian. A staff person must check each child upon arrival before the parent/guardian leaves the site. Parents / guardian must give all special messages, authorized medication, pick up notes, etc. to the teaching staff during this time. If the child was sick during the night, the teaching staff should be made aware of the illness. Dropping children off in the hallway, parking lot, or playground is not permitted. Staff are not responsible for children not properly signed in and out. If a child is scheduled to arrive from another program or activity and does not arrive by the designated time. A staff person will contact the family and the reason documented in his/her case notes located in Child Plus and COPA.

Upon enrollment in the Head Start program, staff will explain the Child Pick—Up/Departure policy. Parents must complete the Child Emergency Information form and Child Health and Enrollment Information form. These forms identify persons authorized to pick up the child. All forms are entered in Child Plus/COPA during the intake process by the center assigned Family Service Worker.

All children must be picked up from their Head Start center on time. The pick-up schedule for Early Head Start/Head Start children is as follows:

Children enrolled in Early Head Start must be picked-up by 4:00 p.m.

Children enrolled in full day must be picked up by 4:00 p.m.

All Early Head Start/Head Start centers close promptly at 4:00 p.m.

If a child is not picked up at the designated time and no contact has been made by the parent/guardian, the staff will do the following:

- Attempt to contact the parent(s) care giver(s) and/or designee(s).
- Attempt to contact persons identified on the Child Pick-Up Slip or the Child Health and Enrollment Information Form.
- Attempt to contact individuals listed as Emergency Contacts.

If no contact has been made with the center by the parents / guardians by 4: 15 p.m., staff will contact the local police department. If the police do not respond to pick up the child, a call to 696-KIDS will be made. A note will be posted at the center informing the parent of the child's location. This is a very undesirable and unfortunate situation. Parents/guardians must make arrangements to ensure that their children are picked up on time.

Release of a Child

The children's safety is Step Forward's priority. Staff will release children only to the persons on the Child Pick-Up Slip or the Child Health Enrollment Information form. Any person picking up a child must be at least 16 years of age and must have a valid driver's license or other valid picture ID.

In case of an emergency, a parent/guardian must provide written or verbal (in person) permission to the appropriate site staff to have the child released to anyone who is not listed on the Child Pick-Up Slip or Child Health Enrollment Form. A photo copy of the driver's license or other valid photo ID will be made of any person who is not listed on the Child Emergency Information form or Child Health and Enrollment Information form but has been granted verbally (in person) or written permission by the parent to pick up the child.

Staff will not release children to anyone including parents / guardians who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up the child. The local police department will be notified, if necessary.

Custody Agreements

If there are custody issues involving a child enrolled in one of the Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start Centers, the parent / guardian must provide the center with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. The center may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

Child Abuse Reporting

According to Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421, Step Forward staff are mandated to report any suspected child abuse and neglect cases or observed cases of child abuse and neglect. Report must be called to Child Protective Services 696-KIDS (5437). Immediate supervisor must be notified of all suspected child abuse and neglect cases.

Reporting Procedure:

The observing staff member will immediately contact the Site Supervisor or Administrator within one hour after the call is made to notify, report and discuss the incident. If the on-site supervisor/or administrator is unavailable, the Social Service Coordinator or designee will be contacted. The ODJFS Incident/Injury Report Form will be completed and submitted to ODJFS within 24 hours. A verbal contact with ODJFS will also occur within 24 hours.

Confidentiality

Due to the strict nature of this subject matter, confidentiality must and will be observed.

Digital Media Release Form

During the time of enrollment into the Head Start program, parents will be asked to read and sign a Digital Media Release Form. This form will permit STEP FORWARD to use photos and/or digital images of the parent or child in a multitude of media, including, but not limited to newsletters, annual reports, websites, flyers, etc. Questions regarding the Digital Media Release Form should be directed to the Site Administrator or Family Service Worker.

Child Advocate

In the Early Head Start/Head Start program, parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to become the primary advocates for their children. Staff assists parents/guardians with issues related to children's rights and safety. As a whole, the STEP FORWARD Head Start/ Early Head Start program ensures that all children's rights and their safety is protected during their time spent in the program.

The center will maintain enrollment, health, attendance, and child history and parent/teacher conference information on each child. Records are confidential and are in a locked file.

Communication

The center will maintain enrollment, health, attendance, child history and parent/teacher conference information on each child. The child's enrollment, attendance and illness history will be shared with the Cuyahoga County Board of Public Health if requested. Records are confidential and are in a locked file, but upon written request are available for parents/guardians to review.

If at any time parents/guardians have questions, they are encouraged to share their concerns with the teaching staff, the Family Service Worker(s), or the Site Administrator.

No Tolerance Policy

Early Head Start/Head Start parents and visitors are expected to conduct themselves as responsible individuals, consistent with the philosophy and visions of Step Forward. Disorderly conduct, physical or verbal abuse, profanity, or violence in any form will not be tolerated and may result in a restriction of parent/visitor involvement within the Early Head Start/Head Start program. (Also see Rights and Responsibilities of Head Start Parents in the Parent Participation section of this handbook).

At Step Forward, children and families are our primary focus. In order to ensure that staff and parents have the opportunity to converse and share information, we ask that those dropping off and picking up children refrain from cell phone use. This is an important time for children to have the undivided attention of parents and teachers, in order to successfully make the transition from home to school and school to home.

To respect the children and families it is against Step Forward policy to video tape, take pictures and record audio conversations of children, families, and staff members is prohibited.

Education

Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start recognizes the value of active learning experiences and developmentally appropriate activities to help children achieve their full potential. The Creative Curriculum best exemplifies this philosophy and is implemented in all Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start classrooms. The schedule and activity plans are posted in the classroom for parents / guardians to view. In the

Home-Based program, activity plans are completed by the home visitor and the parent. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to participate in planning activities/experiences for their child. In the Head Start program, family traditions and seasonal activities replace the celebration of traditional holidays. Step Forward direct operated sites use the Creative Curriculum, partner locations use a research-based curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD for the ongoing assessment tool agency wide. Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is the cognitive screening and The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) is the social and emotional screening tool that is completed for each child. Both screenings are complete with 45 days of enrollment and is completed by both parents and education staff. If there are any concerns screenings are completed within 60 days from initial screening date. The post screening of DECA is then completed in the spring. Child level data will be made available to ODJFS upon request.

The Head Start Path to School Readiness

Step Forward Head Start uses the Creative curriculum to guide the instruction and provide a structure and methods for classroom implementation leading children toward school readiness. The goals for children's learning incorporate the 38 Objectives for Development and Learning, which are aligned with the Ohio Learning Developmental Standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework to provide meaningful early childhood experiences.

Home Visits

The Early Head Start/Head Start staff will make two home visits per program year. Home visits are opportunities to get acquainted with the family on an individual basis. Parents/guardians have an opportunity to discuss their child's development, express any concerns and set goals for the child using the Family Goal Setting Sheet.

Parent and Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are conducted twice a program year or more, as needed using Teaching Strategies GOLD, which is the ongoing assessment tool. Parents and staff will also review the child's education goals and establish new ones. Child level DATA will be made available to ODJFS upon request. This is an opportunity for parents to enhance their understanding and knowledge of their child's educational development, and progress towards school readiness goals. Parents/guardians will become familiar with their child's classroom experiences and academic milestones.

Parents/guardians are an essential part of the Early Head Start/Head Start experience and are welcomed to participate in all aspects of the program. Head Start recognizes that parents/guardians are their child's first teachers. Head Start is committed to helping parents/guardians with the important job of parenting and becoming self-sufficient to provide for the family. Our staff are trained to assist families — our goal is to help identify needs, set goals and take steps to meet those goals, which will be documented on the Family Goal Setting Sheet. Parents/guardians are encouraged to ask staff about health / disability concerns, job training, education goals, etc.

Supervision of Children

The Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start staff has a major responsibility to ensure the health and safety of each child in their care. Staff persons are attentive to the needs of the children. Staff takes appropriate precautionary and preventive measures to ensure that children are safe. At no time will a child be left unattended. Attendance is documented at all times throughout the day and throughout the building.

Supervision means the staff members have knowledge of a child's needs and accountability for his or her care at all times. Supervision includes awareness of and responsibility for the activity of each child and being near enough to respond and reached immediately including responding to child's basic needs and protecting them from harm. Staff must be in sight and hearing of children at all times.

Supervision of Infants Toddlers — Early Head Start Program

The Early Head Start program assigns one child care staff member to have primary responsibility for each group of four infants or toddlers in their care to ensure continuity of care. Parents/guardians are informed of the primary caregiver assigned to their child. Any necessary information regarding their child's care is exchanged between the primary caregiver and parent/guardian. Information is recorded on a daily basis for parents/guardians about their child's activity throughout the day.

Step Forward Head Start Parent's & Child's Rights

The following rights are assured to you as a parent/guardian when an evaluation of your child's abilities is to be conducted by appropriate professionals. It is necessary to have professionals evaluate and document your child's abilities to see if your child needs special services and/or materials so that he/she will have a successful Head Start experience.

Step Forward Head Start Transitioning

In Early Head Start and Head Start, children will encounter many different transitions. Transitions happen from home to child care, from infant/toddler classes to preschool, from preschool to kindergarten, and many times in between. Any of these transitions can be challenging and exciting for children, staff and families. The Early Head Start/Head Start program is dedicated to assisting families through these transitions in a variety of ways.

Transition into Our Program

- Families will receive two home visits a year. The first visit will take place within 30 days of the enrollment or when school begins in the fall for returning children. The second visit happens in the Spring.
- A Group orientation will be held for families to learn more details about the program, visit the classroom and talk with teachers. They will learn how the Creative Curriculum prepares children for school,

screening and assessments, an overview of service areas (health, dental, social service, nutrition, and mental health/disabilities).

- Families will be provided with activities from teachers they can complete at home to provide a smooth transition into care.
- During the intake process, the Family Service Worker explains the Phase-In period and process to the parent(s). The process is discussed again at the parent orientation meeting at which time any questions or concerns parents still have are addressed.
- The teaching staff and the assigned Family Service Worker in conjunction with the child's parent develop a plan for phasing the child into the Early Head Start/ Head Start Program.
- During this Phase-In transition period, parents/extended family member/legal guardian are encouraged to spend at least three hours (9:00 AM- 12:00 PM) on their first day of entry, (or as their schedules permit) with children observing and participating in the daily routine. This supports the acclimation of the parents and the children to Early Head Start/ Head Start. We will support all family goals and needs if additional days/times are needed for a successful transition.
- Teaching staff make early childhood books on separation available in the classroom for reading to an individual child or to a group of children to support the home to school transition.
- Teaching staff and other center staff acknowledge parents' feelings of anxiety in leaving their children especially if the child is also anxious or apprehensive. When parents leave their children, teachers communicate openly with children about their parents coming and going.
- If a child is inconsolable when a parent leaves, the teacher remains calm, describes the child's feelings and stays with the child, as needed to provide comfort until the child regains composure.
- Teachers support anxious parents by remaining calm, acknowledging their feelings, and encouraging them to remain at the center as long as they are able to do so.
- When planning for individualized Phase-In, consider the information included on the Family Information Sheet (JFS 01511).

Transitions within Our Program

- For families participating in Early Head Start, the transition process begins six months prior to a child turning 3 years old. Families will work with the family service worker to discuss options for preschool

care. If families choose to transition within our program, a meeting is scheduled prior to the child's third birthday to identify phase in and phase out activities.

Additional transitions that your child may encounter within the Early Head Start program include:

- Move child from crib to cot
- Move child from high chair to chair
- Move child from bottle to cup
- Move child from diaper to toileting independently
- Adjustments from napping to feeding

Your child's teacher will work with you to decide upon the correct timing for your child and to develop a plan for consistency between home and school.

The following are some sample activities your child may participate in the transition from Early Head Start Classroom into a Head Start Classroom.

- Visiting the preschool classroom
- Reading books on preschool
- Visiting the new classroom and teacher with the security of the current primary caregiver
- Create a book with the child on their new daily routine and read it at home.
- Take the child's scrapbook to the new classroom

Preschool to Kindergarten Sample Activities

- Visit a Kindergarten classroom
- Read books about kindergarten
- Help children learn about transportation and pedestrian safety
- Allowing children to have a time to practice cafeteria style eating with trays
- Kindergarten teachers visit our program to talk to the children
- Kindergarteners come back to share their experience
- Children receive a backpack with school supplies and activities
- End of the year activities-family fun day and time to say goodbye to friends

From One Program Option to Another

Individualized plans are written according to the needs of the child and family to support them as they move from home base to center base or full day to double session or vice versa.

Transition Out of Our Program

When a family chooses a location out of the Step Forward Network, specific children's records will be copied for the parent upon request. When the transition is to the public school system, the Kindergarten Transition Packet will follow the child to the new setting by way of the parent.

Transition Meeting Process

Transition plans are written by the teacher, with the input of the parent. Meetings are scheduled in advance, at a mutually agreed upon time. Whenever possible, the teacher from both classrooms will be invited to the plan meeting. The plan may include setting an appointment for re-enrollment process into Head Start from Early Head Start, as well as the chosen time frames and activities.

Strategies for Supporting Transitions In, Within, and Out of the Program for Children and Families

Upon entry into Early Head Start or Head Start program, you and your child will be offered many opportunities to feel comfortable in the setting. During enrollment, a tour of the facilities and classrooms will take place. Teachers will greet children and families during tours. You will have an opportunity to participate in an orientation session, which will assist you in getting to know goals and philosophies of the program. At this time we will highlight how children learn and grow. As school starts, you will have the opportunity to spend short amounts of time in the classroom along with your child to assist with his transitions. Another opportunity to get to know each other is provided through the home visit when the teacher visits your home. After school has started, an open house will allow another opportunity to see the many concepts being learned and the relationships developed. Step Forward has an open door policy and a strong parent involvement committee. We invite all family members 16 years of age and older to complete the needed documentation to volunteer in the classrooms as often as possible.

As children and families transition out of the program, many opportunities are provided to bring closure to the Early Head Start and Head Start experience. Another home visit will take place to begin the process and the child will participate in activities that allow them to say good-bye to teachers and friends, including a family fun day of activities.

Toilet Training

Head Start will work to enable children to independently use toilet facilities when it is developmentally appropriate and when parents/guardians support efforts to encourage toilet training. To help children use toilet facilities independently, staff will work with parent / guardians to understand the biological, physical, and emotional stages of toilet training. Head Start teaching staff will support children to independently use toilet facilities when it is developmentally appropriate. If parents, choose to use "Pull-ups" style training pants for toilet training they are responsible for providing them.

In the Early Head Start Program, diapers are to be changed immediately when soiled and/or minimally every 2 hours. Parents will complete and sign off on the **Child Enrollment and Health Information Form (JFS 01234) Diapering Statement** upon enrollment to inform staff when to check/change the child's diaper.

Infants and toddlers in the Early Head Start program that are not developmentally ready to be toilet trained will be provided with diapers. "Pull-ups" style training pants for toilet training are discouraged and will not be provided. If parents choose to use "Pull-ups" style training pants for toilet training they are responsible for providing them.

Rest Time

Early Head Start / Head Start will ensure that all children in a classroom for five or more hours will be provided rest time during the day. The rest time should last no longer than 2 hours. The amount of time each child spends resting quietly or sleeping varies with the individual child. For Head Start Children, they may be provided with stuffed animals, books, etc. to assist them in resting. The lights are adjusted to help children feel comforted during rest time and the classroom is illuminated enough so that teachers can maneuver around the room as necessary. NO outside bedding, blankets, and pillows are allowed.

Staff will create a warm, relaxing atmosphere for the children. Staff will be aware of children's fears, acknowledge them and reassure them.

For the Early Head Start program, Infants shall be placed in their cribs for sleeping, and shall not be allowed to sleep in a bassinet, swing, car seat or other equipment. They will **NOT** be placed in cribs with bibs or any other items which could pose a strangulation or suffocation risk. All infants under 12 months old will be placed on their backs sleep. Parents may alter this practice with written authorization on the JFS 01235 Sleep position Waiver Statement for Child Care (rev 12/2016) signed by child's physician. This form will be maintained on file for review. If a medical condition exists where a child needs to sleep in equipment other than a crib, written permission must be obtained from the physician and remain on file. No blankets are permitted in cribs. A one-piece sleeper or wearable blanket is permitted. Only children who are not yet able to roll-over are permitted to be swaddled using a wearable swaddling blanket. Infants who are able to roll from back to front and front to back shall be placed initially on their back for sleeping but allowed to remain in a position they prefer.

Transition to a cot will occur when the transition plan is completed. The following are circumstance for this process: when the child is able to climb out of the crib; reaches the height of thirty-five (35) inches; an infant over 12 months may use a cot with written permission from the parent; if the use of a crib is considered hazardous for a child, regardless of age, the infant may use a cot with written permission from the parent.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy: Step Forward will adhere to the infant safe sleep standards as endorsed by American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in their Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome's report, "SIDS and other Sleep-Related Infant Death: Expansion of Recommendation for Safe Infant Sleeping Environment, released in October 2016.

Appropriate Dress

Clothes should be comfortable and manageable for children. Clothing can get rough treatment as children learn through play. Simple, easy to wash clothing is best for preschool.

Please help your child make appropriate clothing choices and make certain that your child's footwear is comfortable and safe for play. Sandals make running and outdoor play unsafe and are not to be worn in our Head Start sites. Children are required to wear closed toed shoes, such as tennis shoes, while in attendance. During the winter months, if boots are worn to school, a pair of closed toed shoes should be brought to the center to be worn indoors.

Each child must have a change of clothes including undergarments kept at the center. Clothing should be appropriate for the season. When extra clothes have been used, they should be replaced the following day. Please put your child's name on all clothing. The center cannot be responsible for lost or stolen clothes.

Due to safety concerns, parents are strongly urged not to place beads in their child's hair. Hair beads can be easily swallowed, lodged into a child's ear or nose and can cause other bodily harm. Should you allow your child to wear beads in their hair, you may be held responsible for any injuries to your child and liable for any injuries to other children or adults caused by misuse of the hair beads.

Transportation and Field Trips

The Step Forward Head Start program will utilize buses to provide transportation for all routine field trips. Staff will notify parents/guardians of field trip plans and obtain their permission or refusal for their child to participate. Before each field trip, the First Aid kit supplies will be checked. Current Child Enrollment and Health Information forms will accompany the children on the field trip. For children with any special medical conditions, all documentation pertaining to the condition must accompany the child. Children receiving medication administered by the Head Start staff must have an ODJFS Administration of Medication form as part of their field trip packet. Head Start staff will take the Health Care Plan and if applicable, the medication and administration of medication form any time a child attends a field trip. Each child on the field trip will wear identification of the center including address and telephone numbers for emergency contacts in the event the child becomes separated from the group. Children's names are not included on the ID tag. Teachers conduct a head count each time children enter or exit the bus. A specified number of children will be assigned to each staff member. Children arriving to the center after the children have left for the field trip will NOT be permitted to stay. Once, the children arrive back at the center from the field trip the child may come back to the center to be in his/her classroom.

A staff person trained in First Aid, Communicable Disease and Adult/Child CPR is present on the bus and at the destination.

Children are supervised during neighborhood walks and the staff/child ratio is maintained during the trips. Teachers conduct a head count of all children attending the walking trip before leaving and upon returning to the center.

Step Forward Early Head Start/Head Start does not provide opportunities for water play at the center.

Media Viewing in Head Start Classrooms

Media viewing (television and movie) will be limited to once a month for each Head Start classroom. All media presented will be rated G only. All media watched by children will be limited to a 20 minute viewing time per month. Any child not interested or unable to sit still will be offered an active substitution to the media viewing.

Parents/guardians are asked not to bring media from home for their child's Head Start classroom. All media viewed in the Head Start classroom will be approved by Head Start education staff.

Cell Phone Use during "Drop Off and Pick Up" Times

At Step Forward, children and families are our primary focus. In order to ensure that staff and parents have the opportunity to converse and share information, we ask that those dropping off and picking up children refrain from cell phone use. This is an important time for children to have the undivided attention of parents and teachers, in order to successfully make the transition from home to school and school to home.

Outdoor Play Policy

There will always be a minimum of two staff on the playground during outdoor play. The ratio will never fall below (2) two Head Start staff per (20) twenty children or (3) three Early Head Start staff per (9) nine children

A staff person must always take a First Aid kit, Children's Enrollment and Health Information forms and classroom attendance when going outside on the playground.

Under ODJFS regulations, outdoor play will not occur when temperatures fall below 25 degrees Fahrenheit or rise above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Weather conditions will be assessed by classroom staff before children participate in any outdoor activities. Staff will postpone outdoor activities during inclement weather. If caught outside during a thunderstorm, staff will move children to shelter. In the event of a field trip, children will be moved to the school bus and windows will be kept closed. Staff and children must go inside immediately if there are conditions of lightning.

Prior to outdoor activities, staff will complete a daily playground safety checklist. If hazardous or unsafe conditions are found, children will stay indoors and staff will provide gross motor activities in the classroom or a designated area in the building with adult supervision.

Child Care Licenses

All Head Start centers must post the child care license in a conspicuous location within the center that will be accessible to parents and center employees.

All Head Start centers will display all written reports of inspections that have taken place.

EMERGENCIES AND INCIDENTS

There is always one staff member present that has received training in First Aid/Communicable Disease and CPR during hours of site operation. In the case of a minor incident/injury, staff will administer basic First Aid. If the injury is of a more serious nature or life threatening, First Aid will be administered, EMS will be contacted and the parents/guardians will be notified immediately. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff MAY NOT transport children in their vehicles. Only parents/guardians or EMS will transport. If a parent/guardian chooses not to authorize the Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start staff to contact EMS to have a sick child transported, then the child will remain at the center until the parent/guardian arrives.

Incident/ Injury Report Procedure

An incident / injury report will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the incident / injury. Incident reports are written when an injury requires First Aid, a bump or blow to the head, a child being transported by emergency squad, and or an unusual incident/injury.

First Aid Supplies and Procedures

Early Head Start / Head Start will comply with the ODJFS rules for First Aid by keeping First Aid kits readily available in a clean and clearly marked unlocked container and kept out of the reach of the children. First Aid kits are replenished after each use to ensure that necessary supplies are available.

There is one kit per classroom and a kit available during all field trips. The kits are also taken on routine walking trips, to the gym/ gross motor room and playground with every classroom.

Each classroom maintains a supply of disposable gloves that are to be worn while handling bodily fluids, such as, blood spills, diarrhea and bloody noses. Gloves are discarded after each use. Hand washing with soap and water occurs after contact with any bodily fluids.

Equipment Safety

- Equipment is selected for safety features and is repaired or replaced as needed
- Mats or cushioning material are placed under climbing apparatuses
- Both indoor / outdoor facilities are kept free of debris and hazardous materials
- Cleaning supplies are labeled and stored out of the reach of children
- Equipment, toys, materials and cots are cleaned and sanitized weekly. Blankets and bedding are laundered weekly
- The use of aerosol sprays is prohibited when children are in attendance
- Toys and other materials small enough to be swallowed are kept out of reach of children
- Mouthed toys are removed from play, and then cleaned and sanitized daily

Additional Safety Information

- Children are supervised at all times
- Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid
- A telephone is always available to contact parents/guardians for emergency purposes
- Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom, which explains the action to be taken and staff responsibilities in case of fire emergency or weather alert
- Approved working fire extinguishers are available at all times
- Fire drills take place at each Head Start site once a month.
- Tornado drills take place at each Head Start site once a month during the time frame of March thru October.
- For Lock down drills, staff and children will proceed to their designated hiding place and remain quiet until further instructions are given. They will take place quarterly

Emergency Evacuation

The Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start program has an evacuation plan posted at each center. The center has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is in the center's care. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff would follow the written instructions posted in each classroom, describing emergency evacuation routes and the procedures to be followed to assure that children have arrived at the designated spot. In order to prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate the center conducts monthly fire drills and seasonal tornado drills. Should the need to evacuate be necessary due to fire, weather conditions, loss of power, heat or water to the center, the designated location is whichever is in the closest proximity to each particular Step Forward Early Head Start / Head Start center.

A sign will be posted on the front door of the center indicating where parents/guardians are to pick-up their children. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, staff will contact the emergency contacts as listed on your child's enrollment information.

In case of an environmental threat or threat of violence, the staff will secure the children in the safest location possible, contact and follow the directions given by the proper authorities and contact the parents/guardians as soon as the situation allows. Enough supplies will be provided for an extended amount of time. An incident report would also be provided to the parents/guardians.

If an emergency would occur while children are on the bus, the bus drivers will determine which action to pursue. Decision will be based on which action will best protect the students decisively. In the event that children need to evacuate to the site specific evacuation location, staff will ensure that the first aid book bag and lockdown supplies are with them.

Site Evacuation Locations

CARL B. STOKES HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD Head Start staff will move the children to:

Good Shepherd Baptist Church

216-481-5444

17822 Euclid Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44112

Contact Person: Mr. Ken Abercrombie, Business Director

GEORGE FORBES EARLY LEARNING CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD Head Start staff will move the children to:

Elmer Turner 216-541-4128

14101 Euclid Avenue

East Cleveland, Ohio 44112 Contact Person: Rose Ford

GREEN ROAD EARLY LEARNING CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

Green Road Service Center 216-285-9850

Michelle Dobbins 216-403-4309

Program Director

Warrensville Developmental Center

Michelle.Dobbins@dodd.ohio.gov

LAKEVIEW TERRACE HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

St. Malachi School 216-861-5343

2459 Washington Avenue 216-771-3036

Near west 25th

Cleveland, Ohio 44113

LOUIS STOKES HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

JFK Recreation Center 216-664-2572

16100 Harvard Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44128

Contact Person: Sam Woodfolk, Recreation Center Director

Alternative Location

Cleveland Public Library - Harvard Branch 216-623-6990

16918 Harvard Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44128

Contact Person: Harriet Parks

OUTHWAITE HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD Head Start staff will move the children to:

Legacy Park Apartment at Outhwaite 216-432-3940

2452 East 43rd Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44104

Contact Person: Julia Houston

UNION MILES HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

Miles Park School 216-838-4450

4090 East 93rd Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44105

Principal: Tamika Taylor Ivory

VILLA HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

Neighborhood Housing Services 216-458-4663

5700 Broadway

Cleveland, Ohio 44127

Contact: Michael Pires

Alternative:

Boys and Girls Club 216-883-4663

6114 Broadway Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44127

Contact: Doug Taylor

WILLARD HEAD START CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

West Tech Lofts 216-631-8324

2201 west 93rd Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44102

Contact Person: Francisca McGhee, Community Manager

Alternative Site

Trinity Free Will Baptist Church

216-651-6911

2226 west 91st Street

Cleveland, OH 44102

WILLIAM PATRICK DAY EARLY LEARNING CENTER

In case of emergency, STEP FORWARD staff will move the children to:

Jane Adams Business Career Center

216-623-8927

2373 East 30th

Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Principle: Elaine Goollate

HEALTH INFORMATION

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE NOTICE

Exclusion

There are few medical conditions that require exclusion of sick children. This exclusion is to protect the other children and staff. The following list is the criteria for excluding ill or infected children and staff from a Head Start program.

- Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit auxiliary (armpit) or greater when accompanied by any sign or symptom of signs of illness
- Diarrhea; more than one loose stool. Exclude until fever/diarrhea are gone and treated if necessary
- Vomiting more than one time when accompanied by any sign or symptom of illness
- Severe coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of eyes, eyelids, thick and purulent (pus) discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain
- Stiff neck
- Sore throat with difficulty swallowing
- Unusually dark urine or gray/white stool
- Unusual skin patches or rashes
- Suspected infestation- scabies, ring worm and head lice.
- Infectious diarrheal germs — Extra strict hand washing, diapering, toileting and cleaning procedures will be followed. In the case of certain infectious vomiting/diarrheal diseases, such as Shigellosis, all exposed children will be required to be tested. Any child who is diagnosed with Shigellosis must be seen and treated by the child's physician, plus cleared by the Public Health Department, prior to returning to the classroom.
- This continues until two negative stool cultures after treatment. Special precautions for children and staff with no diarrhea or illness symptoms will be taken but they are not excluded from the center.

Isolation Precautions

A child exhibiting any of the above symptoms of illness will be isolated and the parent or designated guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact persons will be called. Until the child is picked up, the child will be isolated within sight and hearing of an adult. The child will be provided with a cot and made comfortable. After use, the cot shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicide, or if soiled with blood, feces, vomitus, or other body fluids, the cot shall be cleaned with soap and water and disinfected with an appropriate germicide.

Return Policy

Twenty-four (24) hours of recovery time and treatment is important to strengthen the child and help the child resist further infection. The following guidelines are used to determine if your child can return after an illness:

- 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment
- 24 hours after vomiting has ceased
- 24 hours after stool has returned to normal consistency
- 24 hours after child has been sent home due to illness
- At the discretion of the Site Administrator, Family Service Worker, or Teacher, a doctor's written approval may be requested for re- admission

Notification of Exposure

An exposure will be posted for any child who has been diagnosed and or suspected as having a communicable disease.

Outbreaks, epidemics or other infectious disease emergencies

- If there would be any *Outbreaks, epidemics or other infectious disease emergencies*, the Site Administrator or designee will notify their manager and then contact the Health Coordinator for further instructions.
- The Health Coordinator will contact the local health departments for further instruction to follow.
- Parents will be contacted as soon as authorities gives specific instructions to follow

POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Early Head Start and Head Start has established a written procedure regarding the administration, handling, and storage of medication for any child who requires it. Staff with regular child contact will be trained within three months of hire and ongoing basis to ensure the safety of children in our care. Appropriate staff members who will be administering the medication will be trained by a health professional or parents on the specific needs of the child. Staff will demonstrate proper techniques for administering, handling, and storing medication, including the use of any necessary equipment to administer medication. The child's individual record of all medications administered will be maintained at the center in the health folder for at least one year after the last administration of the medication.

It is the parent's responsibility to administer their child's routine medication at home. Trained staff member will administer dosages of emergency medication and those medications required to be given during Head Start hours.

Over the counter medication will be administered but medication must be in the original container with a manufacturer's label containing directions based on the age and/or weight of the child. There will be no administration of "folk or homemade remedy" medications or treatment.

Storage of medication will be out of reach of children and are accessible to employees at all times. If medication has to be stored in the refrigerator, then place it in a separate container. No food or drink is allowed in the refrigerator that holds the medication. Medication that has expired or is no longer being used, must be removed from the center.

The administration of any medication or treatment will require the completion of the Child Medical/Physical Care Plan, plus the Request for Administration of Medication form.

- The parent will provide the original labeled container of medication from the pharmacy. (Date on the prescription should be no more than one-year-old.) The label will state the name of the child, the medication, the dosage to be given, the route it is to be given and the frequency with possible symptoms noted.
- The instructions on the medication label must exactly match the information in Box 1 of the ODJFS Medication form.
- Box 2 of the form must be completed when by a licensed Physician, licensed dentist, or advance practice nurse.
- It will be completed when:
 - It is a sample medication without a label.
 - The non-prescription medication is to be taken for longer than 3 consecutive days within a 14-day period---or---a topical product or lotion that is being used for a skin ailment and is to be applied longer than 14 consecutive days ---or---
 - The medication contains aspirin or codeine.

Every time any medication is given, Box 3 of the prescribed form must be completed.

- The staff who will administer the medication will receive training from the parent/guardian on how to administer the medication and/or provide the treatment. The staff who are trained by the parent/guardian will sign the ODJFS Child Medical/Physical Care Plan (JFS01236 Rev. 12/2017) acknowledging they were trained. Staff will be further instructed by the parent/guardian of the possible side effects, adverse reactions and any emergency procedures. When and if these possible side effects, adverse reactions, emergency procedures do occur, then the following steps must happen:
 1. If reaction is severe, 911 should be called.
 2. Recorded in Box 3, in the signature section.
 3. Child's parent should be notified as soon as possible.
 4. Site Administrator should be notified.

- The Family Service Worker, as designated by the Health Coordinator, will assist parents to complete health care plans based on information specific to the child.
- Emergency medications such as inhaler, Epi-Pen or seizure medications are required to be easily assessable but stored out of the reach of children.
- Staff must wash their hands before and after administering medication. The staff person and the child must step outside the classroom for the administration of medication. This is to prevent any distraction.
- Only staff who have been trained by the parent/guardian or certified professional can administer the medication and/or treatment.
- Health Staff will review all requests for administration of medication 90 days after the medication is started.
- Request for as needed medication and/or treatment must have specific instructions from the parent/guardian to assist staff in the decision making process.
- Over the counter medications, cough syrup, eye drops, etc. must have a completed Request for Administration of Medication before they can be administered. The medication must be in its original container, and must not be expired.
- All other treatments will be demonstrated by the parent/guardian prior to the completion and signatures on the ODJFS Child Medical/Physical Care Plan.

Water Play

Step Forward will get written permission from the parent/guardian when water is directly accessible to children and for the following categories:

- Before the child participates in activities in or near water 18 inches or more in depth
 - This includes field trips that may be near water

Step Forward does engage children in activities that involve swimming, water play in water of 18 inches or more in depth or the use of wading pools.

For Field Trips

Medication Administration forms including the medication for the children with health conditions such as allergies, asthma, seizure disorders, or breathing problems are taken on the field trip. Staff trained to perform a medical procedure must go along on the field trip. The trained staff has signed the Health Care Plan.

Head Start Food Program Information

The Head Start Nutrition Service Area follows all rules and regulations set by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. Mealtimes serve as social and educational activities. Table conversation is focused on daily activities, child initiated topics, and discussion of food and health. Classroom staff eats with the children. Meals are served family-style and children participate in setting the table, serving themselves, cleaning up, etc. Children are encouraged to try new foods but are not forced to eat. Food is never used as a reward or punishment.

Meals are provided for all children in the centers and meet 1/3 to 2/3 of the daily nutritional requirements. Menus meet the USDA/CACFP food program regulations. In these program options, children enrolled receive: Full Day Sessions — breakfast, lunch and snack

Because we are an Ohio Healthy Program, we adhere to the following menu requirements:

1. Offer a different non-fried vegetable and whole fruit every day in a 5-day period
2. Offer a whole grain food everyday
3. Serve beverages with no added sugar or sweeteners including plain milk
4. Serve cereals with 6 grams of sugar or less per serving
5. Offer fried foods no more than once a week
6. Offer 100% Juice no more than once a day and limiting the portion to 4-6 oz
7. Do not serve highly processed meats such as hot dogs, bologna, pepperoni, sausages, salami or breakfast meats to name a few.
8. Offer water to children during meals and physical activities.
9. Encourage a half hour of general activity and half hour of large motor physical activity.

The cultural and religious needs of our general population are taken into consideration when menus are planned. Pork and seafood are not served at Head Start sites. Peanuts can be a highly allergic food; therefore, peanuts are omitted from Head Start menus. Chocolate milk or any flavored milk is not served to infants, toddlers, and pre-school children.

NOTE: The children with any specific restrictions or food allergies must submit a statement from a physician. The parent or guardian of a child with any food allergy must complete a Health Care Plan with the Family Service Worker. If the child receives a modified diet or food supplement (i.e. Pediasure), they must have the physician complete the Request for Administration of Medication form.

All children on a medically based diet or with a food allergy will have an ODJFS Health Care Plan completed and on file at their site (ODJFS Health Care Plan Form 01236)

Head Start will follow the regulations specified by ODJFS under 5101:2-12-39: Requirements for meals and snacks in licensed child care centers (7)(D): Modified diets shall be approved in writing by a licensed physician. If an entire food group is eliminated, the center shall obtain written instructions from a physician on the prescribed form provided by the department (ODJFS Health Care Plan 01236). When special diets are required for cultural or religious reasons, the center shall obtain written, dated and signed instructions from the child's parent or guardian unless the special diet is part of a center program.

Special diets/dietary needs require documentation from a medical doctor in order for these modifications to be implemented. Head Start will follow the regulations specified by ODJFS under 5101:2-12-31: Administration of medication in licensed child care centers (A)(I): Prescription medication, food supplements and modified diets: the center shall secure and follow the written instructions of a licensed physician, an advanced practice nurse certified to prescribe medication, or a licensed dentist on the JFS 01217 form "Request for Administration of Medication" (Rev. 9 / 2005).

All instructions on this form shall be followed. The center shall also secure written instructions from the parent or guardian on the form.

Head Start/Early Head Start monthly menus are posted at the site, shared at the monthly parent committee meetings and available on site.

The Head Start food program is a supplementary meal program and does not in any way replace meals the child ate in the home. If parents/guardians are unable to provide food in the home, they are encouraged to speak to a Family Service Worker for available resources.

Each parent will complete the CACFP Enrollment Form for each year his or her child participates in the program. The form and instructions to complete it will be available during the enrollment process.

The Early Head Start program supports parental preferences in infant feeding, including breast feeding and introduction of solid foods when developmentally appropriate. Each parent must sign an infant meal-parent preference letter. Parents may provide their own iron-fortified formula, use the specific iron-fortified formula provided by the center, bring expressed breast milk, or come to the center to breast feed. Specific formula will be provided by the center if the parent provides a medical statement for the child from a physician. If breast-milk is provided by the parent/guardian, it shall be labeled with the child's name, the date that the breast milk was expressed and the date of receipt to the Early Head Start program. The breast milk will be immediately frozen or refrigerated by staff of the Early Head Start program. Infant food is prepared and served in a manner appropriate to the developmental needs of each individual child according to his/her stage of development. All infants are fed on demand. Onsite space for mothers to breastfeed and/or pump breastmilk is available.

A toddler menu is posted in each classroom indicating which foods will be served each day. Children older than 12 months but under 24 months will receive whole milk- no chocolate milk. Children ages 2 to 5 will receive 1% milk. Meal service for the Early Head Start program follows all rules and regulations set by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Rules and Regulations for Meal Service

Head Start promotes and encourages healthy eating habits. The USDA-CACFP meal pattern provides the appropriate daily intake of food for children. To comply with Head Start regulations, no outside food is to be brought into the Head Start centers.

Parents/staff/and children are not permitted to bring in any food items, this includes snacks, candy, birthday cakes or holiday treats, into the Head Start centers. This policy ensures that children with food allergies are not exposed to harmful allergens, especially peanuts.

Neither staff nor parents/guardians may take food or food supplies out of the Head Start / Early Head Start Center. The only exceptions to this rule is when bag lunches are taken with the children on field trips.

Individuals volunteering to assist with mealtime activities more than one time, must have a negative tuberculosis test reading and have had a recent physical (within one year).

Additional Information

Children may be referred to WIC for a variety of reasons. Parents / guardians are encouraged to participate in the WIC program for supplementary food and nutrition education.

In Head Start, children are provided a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low fat and low sugar snacks and water. In an effort to address the rise in childhood obesity, children are encouraged to follow the menu portions and make daily exercise and movement part of their day.

Health and nutrition information is made available to parents/guardians at trainings and through handouts that are sent home with the children. Parents are encouraged to explore, www.MyPlate.gov and www.teamnutrition-usda.gov on their home or library computer and incorporate these suggestions for healthy eating practices as part of their everyday family life.

Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3207) found at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html. and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992 Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S W, Washington D.C. 20250-9410:
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

The Step Forward Head Start program invites all parents to be an active participant in their child's educational and social development process. Therefore, all parents with children currently enrolled (*this includes parents with legal custody and foster care parents*) in any program option of our agency are automatically members of the Parent Committee at their respective center.

To ensure a functional meeting environment, each Parent Committee must elect officers to lead them as a whole. We encourage all parents to participate with the vote for Officers (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary & Treasurer) at their Head Start Center.

Each center presents monthly Parent Committee meetings in which parents/guardians plan the agenda and vote on decisions relating to their children at the Head Start center level.

In addition to serving as the parent committee officers' opportunity, we have our Policy Council who are selected members that work together in a formal leadership and Policy making role for parents. These participants can self-nominate or be elected by your center's parent committee peers to enter a ballot for policy council drawing selection.

For more information on the election process, please have a conversation with your Home Visitor/Family Service Worker or contact the Parent Family and Community Engagement Coordinators at (216) 696-9077.

Parent Training / Workshops

The Early Head Start / Head Start program offers a range of training and workshops for parents/guardians throughout the program year. Parents/guardians are invited to attend these informative and valuable sessions. Please see the Step Forward Head Start Program Year Calendar and the Parent Board at your child's Head Start site for notices on upcoming activities.

It is a known fact that "Word of Mouth" is the highest ranked way that people in the community hear about Step Forward Head Start. We thank you in advance for sharing your wonderful experience and opportunities in Head Start with others. Know that all of our families are welcomed to participate with Recruitment Events. Thank you,

Please call 216-589-9922 or contact the Recruitment Coordinator to obtain the list of events.

Volunteering/In-Kind

All Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate as volunteers in the Early Head Start/Head Start program. Community leaders, grandparents and other relatives over the age of 18, are also welcome. Volunteers build skills and confidence, are exposed to employment opportunities at Step Forward, and strengthen the Head Start experience.

Volunteer options include: assisting in the classroom, attending field trips, participating in parent meetings, helping with special projects and events, recruiting new families, serving as Policy Council or parent committee officers, and more. Volunteers must also follow all current COVID guidelines. A tuberculosis (TB) Risk Questionnaire must be completed by volunteers who are on site four or more times per calendar year; a follow up TB Test may be required. Background checks may also be required for frequent volunteers.

Our Head Start/Early Head Start program must match at least 20% of the federal grants that fund our programming with non-federal match, or in-kind, contributions. Donations of volunteer hours, goods, supplies, services, equipment or property that benefit our Head Start and Early Start programs count as In-Kind and help us meet our annual requirements.

Every time you volunteer or contribute to our program, make sure to record your participation in In-Kind records. We can only “count” in-kind that has been properly documented. At the end of the program year, volunteers are recognized for their service at Step Forward Head Start/Early Head Start Volunteer Recognition Events.

Male Involvement

Step Forward recognizes the value of the male presence in the lives of children. Therefore, Step Forward Early/Head Start provides events, activities and resources to the fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers, uncles, brothers, etc., who have children enrolled in the Early Head Start/Head Start program. Throughout the year, there are activities and functions scheduled specifically for males and their Early/Head Start child. These activities may include Fathers Walk to School, Male Involvement Breakfast, Donuts for Dads and educational challenge initiatives at the sites. The Parent Family and Community Engagement Service Area recognizes that males within the Early/Head Start program may need support and guidance. As a result, males may contact the Parent, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator for referrals to community agencies that provide a particular service to meet their needs. For more information, contact the Male Engagement Coordinator at (216) 696-9077 ext. 604.

Family Partnership Process

Step Forward Early/Head Start focus on developing a relationship-based approach that values different perspectives and contributions, explores options, and honors all types of family progress. During this process, we partner with families to identify priorities and set meaningful goals together. At enrollment each family sign a consent form to participate in the Family Partnership Agreement process. This process allows families and staff to work together and set goals for the family and focus on any immediate needs in order to provide resources. Staff will aim to engage all parental figures in the partnership process, remaining sensitive to the differing needs, roles, and interests of each individual. For more information, contact Parent, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator at (216) 696-9077 ext. 421.

Parent Grievance

Step Forward Early Head Start/Head Start encourages parents/guardians to settle differences and complaints with other parents/guardians or staff (Teachers, Family Service Workers and Site Administrators) in a cooperative fashion. If this is not possible, please follow procedures below:

1. Share the concerns or complaints with the Site Administrator or assigned Family Service Worker. The matters should then be documented and forwarded to the Site Administrator. If the matter is not resolved at the center level, the Site Administrator is responsible for submitting the written documentation and a request for assistance, to the Parent Family Community Engagement Coordinator.
2. The Parent Family Community Engagement Coordinator will arrange a team conference with the center staff, then a resolution meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s). If the issue(s) remains unresolved or unsatisfactory at this level, written complaints will be submitted to the Early Childhood Education Service Manager.

3. The Direct Operated Program Manager will review all documentation and arrange to speak with the parent(s)/guardian(s) via phone, person-to-person or in-group with the necessary parties. If and when both parties agree to a solution, a letter will be drafted detailing the solution that was agreed upon and copies will be given to all parties involved.
4. Complaints are considered high priority. If a resolution is still not reached, the written complaint will be forwarded to the Vice President for Children and Families.
5. The Vice President for Children and Families, and with appropriate parties, will attempt to resolve the matter, as he/she deems most appropriate for the best interest of the family and staff.

Rights and responsibilities of Head Start Parents

Rights

1. To always be treated with respect and dignity
2. To take part in policy decisions
3. To be welcomed into the classroom
4. To choose whether or not to participate without fear of endangering my child's rights to be in the program
5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start
6. To expect guidance for my child from teachers and staff which will help his/her total individual development
7. To be able to learn about program and fiscal operation
8. To be informed about community resources
9. To have input into the program

Responsibilities

1. To ensure that the Head Start child is in attendance and brought to and picked up from the Head Start center on time everyday
2. To always treat staff with respect and dignity
3. To accept Head Start as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives
4. To provide leadership by taking part in elections, center meetings and parent activities
5. To take part in the classroom as an observer, a volunteer or paid employee and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program
6. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions
7. To complement and work with staff, teachers and other parents in a cooperative way, as partners who care to build a better program
8. To welcome teachers and staff into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home in relation to the school experience
9. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment
10. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair critics and to share in evaluating the program

Standards of Conduct

Head Start parents and visitors are expected to conduct themselves as responsible individuals and positive members of the Head Start program, consistent with the philosophy and vision of STEP FORWARD. Disorderly conduct, physical or verbal abuse, profanity or violence in any form is disrespectful and hurtful and will not be tolerated.

Additional Policies

Discrimination

It is unlawful for Step Forward Head Start to discriminate in the enrollment of children and families based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disabilities.

Weapons

Step Forward Early Head Start/ Head Start centers, classroom, and on the premises must not have any including but, not limited to firearms, pellet or BB guns, darts, bows and arrows, cap pistols, stun guns, paint ball guns, or objects manufactured for play as toy guns. Pepper spray and knives are not permitted.

A sign is posted that contains this statement: "Unless otherwise authorized by law, no person shall knowingly possess, have under the person's control, convey, or attempt to convey a deadly weapon or dangerous ordinance on to these premises"

Emergency School Closings

Because of the large geographical areas served by Early Head Start / Head Start and the variability of weather conditions, Step Forward's decision about center closings will reside with the Vice President, Children and Families or designee in consultation with STEP FORWARD's President/CEO. In case of severe weather conditions and other emergencies, which require the entire agency and / or center closings, the official notice will be announced on local television, radio, text and e-mail.

In case of an individual Head Start site emergency closing, Early Head Start / Head Start staff are required to notify parents / guardians. The telephone numbers on the child's pick-up slip and Child Health and Enrollment Information will be used to contact parents/guardians to pick-up their children.

Step Forward reserves the right to adjust the program calendar to meet or exceed the minimum number of attendance days. In this event, timely notice will be provided.

Licensing

1. The Step Forward Head Start Programs are licensed to operate by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.
2. The license is posted at all centers for review.
3. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has its own manual governing licensing rules and regulations for childcare programs. These manuals are available to be reviewed by parents upon request, from the Site Administrator.
4. The licensing capacity in each age category of the center is also available at each site.
5. The food service licenses are posted at each site (Cuyahoga County Board of Health or Cleveland Department of Health).

Smoking Policy

STEP FORWARD Early Head Start / Head Start provide a smoke -free environment. A no smoking sign is posted at the main entrance of the center with a notice stating that smoking is prohibited.

Information Required by the Ohio Administrative Code

The facilities are licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted in a conspicuous place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administration rules. The licensing law and rules governing childcare are available for review at the facility upon request.

The administrator and each employee of the facility is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the facility or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

Contact information for parents/guardians of the children attending the facility are available upon request. The information will not include the name, telephone number or e-mail of any parent/guardian who requests that his/her name or telephone number or e-mail not be included.

Recent licensing inspection reports and substantiated complaint investigation reports for the past two years are posted in a conspicuous place in the facility for review.

The licensing record including compliance report forms, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire department are available for review upon written request from the Ohio Department

of Job and Family Services. The Department's web site is <http://ifs.ohio.gov/cdc>. The center's licensing inspection reports for the past two years are also available for review on the Child Care Ohio website.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

What

What is Universal Pre-Kindergarten?

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) is an award-winning initiative administered by Invest in Children in Cuyahoga County to help preschool children ages 3-5 have access to a **high-quality** pre-kindergarten program. Only those preschool sites that meet strict local and state requirements for quality can be a UPK Site!

What is Invest in Children?

Invest in Children is Cuyahoga County's public/private partnership serving the needs of young children from prenatal to kindergarten. We partner with Starting Point, the regional child care resource and referral agency, to provide technical assistance and training to all UPK programs.



Where

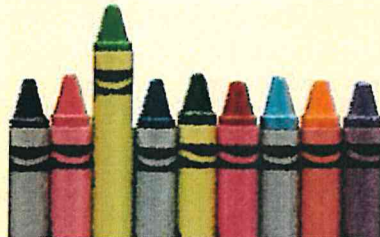
Where is UPK?

UPK sites are located throughout the county and include public preschools, Head Start programs, community child care centers, and family child care homes. All UPK sites meet a series of standards, proven through research to be the hallmarks of quality that result in improved school readiness. View a UPK site map at:

www.investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us

Is UPK Affordable?

Each program sets its own tuition rates. Cuyahoga County can provide scholarship assistance for one-third of the cost to families earning up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level (for example: \$95,400 annual income for a family of four.)



Quality

What does a UPK preschool look like?

The very best preschools meet these high standards and many others.

-  Teachers hold higher education qualifications, and value and participate in professional development that exceeds the minimum requirements.
-  Low teacher / child ratios.
-  The needs, interests and abilities of children are the basis for developing experiences and activities.
-  Programs share child screening and assessment results with families and together activities and plans are developed to support children's learning and development goals.
-  Family and community input is used to inform the program's continuous improvement process.
-  A variety of high-quality and engaging materials are provided for children to explore.

UPK Sites are a step UP!

Center Parent Information

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the center's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules governing child care are available for review at the center.

The administrator and each employee of the center is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

The administrator's hours of availability to meet with parents and child/staff ratios are posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the ODJFS. Inspections are also online at <http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov/>. Parents may search for a specific program and sign up to be notified when the program's latest inspection is posted online.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or ODJFS. HHS and ODJFS are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call:

HHS
Region V, Office of Civil Rights
233 N. Michigan Ave, Ste. 240
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 886-2359 (voice)
(312) 353-5693 (TDD)
(312) 886-1807 (fax)

Write or Call:

ODJFS
Bureau of Civil Rights
30 E. Broad St., 37th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-3414
(614) 644-2703 (voice)
1-866-277-6353 (toll free)
(614) 752-6381 (fax)
1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your child, please visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/families.stm>.