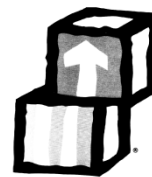




PARENT HANDBOOK



CENTER DIRECTORY

Center _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Web site: www.eastmoaa.org →Head Start→Parent Information

HOURS

Regular Head Start (core time)

Tuesday through Friday from _____ to _____.

Children arrival times: _____ to _____

Full-Day Head Start (extended hours before/after core time)

Morning: _____ to _____ Afternoon: _____ to _____

Please visit the center before the beginning of the school year to familiarize yourself and child with the staff and center.

STAFF

Site manager _____

Child's teacher/assistant teacher _____

Family advocate _____

Cook/cook aide _____

CENTER COMMITTEE

Chairperson _____

Vice Chairperson _____

Secretary/Treasurer _____

POLICY COUNCIL

Representative _____

Alternate _____

Central Office: HEAD START, East Missouri Action Agency, Inc.
403 Parkway Dr., Park Hills, MO 63601 (573) 454-2200
Revised 2016-2017

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WELCOME!

East Missouri Action Agency staff welcomes you and your family to our Head Start Program!

Our goal is to provide many opportunities for children and their families. We look forward to working as a team with you to best meet the need of your children. This Parent Handbook has been designed to enhance your involvement with Head Start and your parental role as the first and most influential educator of your child.

CENTER POLICIES

Parents are encouraged to get to know their child's teacher and the center staff when they drop-off and pick up their children. Feel free to ask questions, to share observations about your child and to let staff know about changes as they occur in your child's world.

1. Except for a change of clothes, Head Start provides everything else your child will need.
2. Children will be released from the center **only** to the parent(s)/guardian and persons included on the 'Release-To List.' If staff do not know a person, they will immediately ask for the visitor's name and purpose of visit for safety of the children and staff. They may be asked to show proof of identity.
3. Head Start provides a smoke-free environment for our children.
4. Adult's beverages are allowed in designated areas only, never in the children's presence.

HOURS OF OPERATION

All parents are to bring their children Tuesday through Friday during the core time (as indicated on the front page) since this is the time in which many of the Head Start specific educational activities occur. If the parent(s)/guardian do not meet the Full-Day criteria (see the following page), their child(ren) must be picked up by the end of the core time each day. For parents who meet the Full-Day criteria, their child(ren) can attend during the extended hours.

CLOSED DATES FOR PROGRAM YEAR

Head Start center will be closed on the following holidays:

*Labor Day *Columbus Day *Veterans Day *Thanksgiving Day *Friday after Thanksgiving
*Martin Luther King Day *Presidents Day *Good Friday

Head Start centers will be closed for the Christmas/New Year's break from _____ to _____. Classes will resume on January ____.

Last day of classes: The last day of classes is scheduled for late April. The closing date depends on how often the center closes due to inclement weather during the year. Make-up days will be held at the end of the year.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Regular Head Start policy. For the Regular Head Start day, children must be picked up at the end of the scheduled core time. If this does not occur, after every attempt has been made to reach the parent and emergency contacts, staff may contact the Family Support Division for child abandonment.

GENERAL FULL DAY INFORMATION

Note that there are two possibilities for enrollment, each with different criteria.

Option #1: Regular Head Start. This option is open to those who have a daytime

caregiver present in the home.

Option #2: Full-Day Head Start. This option will be available to those families who meet the criteria listed below.

Head Start Full-Day Criteria

Enrollment for Full-Day classroom placement is determined by the following criteria:

- Parent/guardian has difficulty caring for the child due to a disability/medical condition or any special need identified by the family that justifies Full-Day care.

OR There is **no caregiver present** in the home due to parent(s)/guardian(s):

- Working.
- In job training.
- Going to school (college or vocational classes).

Information on the application signed by a parent/guardian, verify that they have met the above requirements for Full-Day attendance. Changes in criteria status will be documented on a Change-of-Status form and maintained in the family file.

Change in Employment/Education

If a parent/guardian loses a job or drops out of school, we will give them up to 45 days to find other employment. During this job search time, we will continue to provide Full-Day Head Start. If employment is not obtained after that time, their child will be placed on the Regular Head Start schedule. If a Regular Head Start parent meets the Full-Day Head Start criteria, their child will be able to attend Full-Day Head Start.

FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Volunteering

1. The Head Start Program depends on community support for 20% of operating costs. This support ensures that our Head Start program keeps its federal funding. Parents, other family members and members of the community can support children and help with in-kind by doing the following:

Support your child

- a. Volunteering in the classroom
- b. Going on field trips
- c. Attending local parent and cluster meetings
- d. Serving on Policy Council
- e. Helping in the kitchen
- f. Assisting with health services
- g. Help make classroom materials at home
- h. Participating in family advocate and teacher visits made in the home

Provide in-kind

2. All *regular* volunteers (those who work 8 hrs/week or more) must receive a TB test, and agree to a criminal record check and a child abuse and neglect screening. In addition, those counted in the child/staff ratio must have a physical. Those who participate in food preparation activities must also be immunized against Hepatitis A.

3. Due to state licensing laws, no children under three or over five-years-old may be brought to the center, except for special events.

Family Contacts

1. Head Start families receive several visits from staff. These visits are a very important part of the Head Start Program since they help ensure that we work as an effective team to meet the needs of your children. Thus it is important to keep the appointments. Staff do the following:

- a. Assist parents in developing healthy self-concepts so that they feel capable of meeting the many challenges of raising their children.
- b. Assist families in identifying strengths and needs, as well as family and community resources.
- c. Provide health information and educational opportunities.
- d. Make referrals to community services.

2. Families who move during the school year need to contact a family advocate to make Head Start aware of the new address. Moving may affect a child's enrollment status.

3. Families also need to **contact a family advocate when any important family information changes** including: phone numbers, emergency contacts, custody, change of address, etc.

4. Child Abuse and Neglect Law: As with all professionals working with families, such as medical and school personnel, Head Start staff are mandated child abuse reporters. *However,*

our goal is to help families to reduce stresses in their lives so that your children have the positive childhood that you wish for them to have.

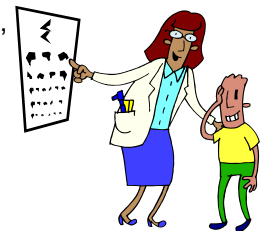
EDUCATION: SCHOOL READINESS



1. Every child receives a variety of learning experiences, using *Creative Curriculum*. These are designed to prepare children for kindergarten by promoting social & emotional and physical development, language & literacy, cognition and general knowledge, e.g. math and science, as well as approaches to learning, e.g. music and art, curiosity and cooperation.
2. Children learn about their community through field trips and special visitors, such as YOU. **Tell us about yourself—your interests, jobs, family activities.** Let us know about—a new baby, pets, musical instruments, etc. **These give us ideas for developing our curriculum and ways to involve you.**
3. Our program uses *Conscious Discipline* strategies to encourage children to express their feelings, to develop self-confidence and the ability to get along with others.
4. Teachers meet with parents for two Education Home Visits and two Parent/Teacher Conferences each year to share information about your child's progress and for you to address any concerns you may have.
 - a. Home visits are an opportunity for your child's teacher to learn more about your child's world.
 - b. Conferences at Head Start enable you to learn more about your child's Head Start world.
5. Teachers, with input from families, assess each child's growth by making entries in the child's portfolio which are then shared with parents. Based on a child's current knowledge and abilities, activities are planned to further each child's development.

NUTRITION

1. The nutrition program is designed to help meet your child's daily nutritional needs. Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Children receive breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. Breakfast is offered to children that are brought to school after the meal is served to ensure that all children have the opportunity to have breakfast. All children are encouraged to taste the different foods, but food is never used as punishment or reward. Parent input and feedback is used during menu development. Parents are provided with center menus, ideas for nutrition activities, and information about food assistance programs.
2. Staff are trained on how to create a pleasant meal atmosphere, which develops acceptance to a variety of foods and creates positive attitudes toward eating. Nutrition activities for children are conducted in the classroom on a weekly basis. Parent education covering a variety of nutrition topics is provided through formal workshops/trainings, newsletters and informational handouts.
3. Head Start requires that all meals and snacks be served family style. Meal time is viewed as an opportunity for learning and developing good health habits, socialization skills, self-help skills, decision-making skills and communication skills.
4. Head Start has a low fat, sugar and salt policy. This is to help promote dental health and healthy food choices. We ask that you **do not bring high fat, sugar or salt treats** to the classroom, as we are not allowed to serve them.
5. A Medical Food Substitution Record Form must be completed by a physician for any enrolled child who has a food allergy or who is on a special or restricted diet.
6. Head Start centers are inspected by the County Health Inspector on a regular basis. The Health Department strictly prohibits the use of home-prepared and home-canned foods. Any regular volunteer who will be handling food must have a T.B. test, physical, and be immunized against Hepatitis A.



HEALTH

1. All enrolled Head Start children receive a complete health screening including a medical examination, lead testing, height and weight measurements, vision screening, hearing test and Hematocrits. All children will have a dental screening. A dental examination by a licensed dentist is required within 90 days of enrollment. Follow-up is the parent's responsibility.

Head Start will work with parents on resources.

2. Due to state licensing regulations, physicals and lead testing are due within 30 days of enrollment or children will be unable to attend.
3. Immunizations must be up-to-date and must remain updated throughout the year.
4. After all other resources have been exhausted, Head Start may pay for medical and dental expenses for enrolled Head Start children.
5. Parents may request notice at initial enrollment or any time thereafter whether there are children currently enrolled in or attending the facility for whom an immunization exemption has been filed.
6. No medication will be given at Head Start without a doctor's orders. Please do not send over-the-counter medicine with your child, such as, ointment, Tylenol, cough drops, etc.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is an important part of the Head Start Program. **Parents should contact the center when their child will be absent, stating reason for absence.** Children with excessive absences may be dropped from enrollment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/SNOW DAYS

Head Start is committed to being available for the children and families as often as possible. Sometimes due to bad weather it is necessary to close a Head Start center. With the safety of the children in mind, center staff will make the decision whether or not to close based on the best information available at the time. Cancellations will be made over local radio/television stations.



OUTDOOR TIME

1. **Children participate in daily outdoor activities** when the temperature is above 32° F, it is not raining and there is not a heat alert. *Dress your child appropriately.* They may also go outdoors for short periods of time if the temperature is lower unless there is a winter storm advisory.
2. **Snow.** If it is snowing or there is snow on the ground, it is especially important to go outdoors. Playing in snow is a wonderful opportunity for Missouri children to learn about this amazing stuff.
3. With a written note from a parent, a child may stay in if the child is recovering from an illness or a doctor states that a health condition requires a child to stay indoors.

DISCIPLINE

The Head Start staff "use positive methods of child guidance" (P.S. 1304.52(h)(iv)). Head Start Performance Standards (P.S.) do not tolerate any type of physical discipline nor verbal abuse at the Head Start centers. *Most children are challenging at some time—some more than others. We do not exclude even those children who frustrate parents and others the most.* Head Start encourages parents to practice positive discipline techniques in the home. Research (and parents' gut feelings) has shown that children do better when they receive encouragement, hugs and lots of positive attention along with firm, kind, consistent discipline.

SERVICES TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Our Head Start program is enriched by serving a wide variety of children, including those with disabilities. Thus, EMEA Head Start works with families and staff to help **all** children develop their full potential. When families, supported by staff, feel that their child might benefit from disabilities services, their knowledge and feelings will be respected, supported and followed-up. The needs of these children will be met in the most natural environment possible in ways most similar to that of typically developing children. In addition, appropriate support services are provided for children with a disability in the classroom setting and/or through the school and other interagency collaborations. The process for determining a disability is as follows:

Screening

- a. Parents fill out a "Dial-4: Parent Questionnaire" during an early visit with a staff member. You know your child best. Any additional observations you have are appreciated!
- b. Children receive health screenings (described on the previous page) and developmental screenings. Developmental screenings include a brief look at your child's development using the DIAL-4.
- c. Teachers observe each child using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment Tool.
- d. Once screenings are complete, the classroom team holds a 'Family/Child Staffing' and

reviews all of the screening information. This information is then shared with you. If your child needs any follow-up staff will then meet with you to determine how you would like this to be done.

Follow-Up

One follow-up may be to have the school consider evaluating your child to see if there are services they could help provide. If so, you will need to communicate with the school by writing a letter or calling them to tell them that this is what you want to happen. The staff will help you, and will send the school the screening information (as authorized by you during your child's final enrollment).

If the school finds that your child would benefit from further assessment, they will give you Procedural Safeguards. Feel free to ask Head Start staff how these are designed for your protection.

ACCESSIBILITY



Our program takes seriously our responsibility to be accessible to all persons. If there is anything that we can do to better meet your needs, please let us know.

MENTAL HEALTH

Head Start staff work together with parents regarding all aspects of their children's well-being, including their behavior and mental health. Parent information, observations of their child, and concerns about their child's well-being are very valuable in our working as a team to meet your child's needs. Head Start provides mental health services to families who feel the need for behavior guidance or addressing other mental health concerns. Parents are able to discuss concerns during home visits with teaching staff or family advocates—or any other time. Family advocates can put families in contact with our Healthy Living Counselor to provide support and intervention for mental health concerns regarding their children and/or family.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You are welcome to see any information in your child's file. All information remains confidential unless you give your written permission for someone else to look at it, or the records are subpoenaed.

Please do not photograph any child during Head Start classroom hours. There are many reasons why this action is prohibited, all of which pertain to each family's right to confidentiality. With modern technology, visitors sometimes have digital cameras or cell phones (that can take pictures) with them when they come into the center, however, we cannot allow children to be photographed without permission from parents and guardians. We must respect each family's right to privacy. Only Head Start staff may photograph children.

WHEN A CHILD IS TOO SICK TO ATTEND

Most children with mild illnesses can safely attend child care. However, a child may be too sick

to attend if:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities.
- The staff cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
- The child has any of the following symptoms unless a health provider determines that the child is well enough to attend and that the illness is not contagious:
 1. Fever (above 100° F. auxiliary—under arm—or above 101° F. orally) accompanied by behavior change and other signs or symptoms of illness (i.e., the child looks and acts sick).
 2. Signs or symptoms of possibly severe illness (e.g., persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing lethargy).
 3. Diarrhea: Changes from the child's usual stool pattern - increased frequency of stools, looser/watery stools, stool runs out of the diaper, or child cannot get to the bathroom in time.
 4. Vomiting more than once in the previous 24 hours.
 5. Rash with a fever or behavior change.
- The child has any of the following diagnoses from a health provider (until treated and/or no longer contagious):
 1. Infectious conjunctivitis/pink eye (with eye discharge) - until 24 hours after treatment started.
 2. Scabies, head lice or other infestation - until 24 hours after treatment and free of nits.
 3. Impetigo - until 24 hours after treatment started.
 4. Strep throat, scarlet fever, or other strep infection - until 24 hours after treatment started and the child is free of fever.
 5. Pertussis - until five days after treatment started.
 6. Tuberculosis (TB) - until a health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious
 7. Chicken pox - until six days after start of rash or all sores have crusted over
 8. Mumps - until nine days after start of symptoms (swelling of "cheeks").
 9. Hepatitis A - until seven days after start of symptoms (e.g., jaundice).
 10. Measles - until six days after start of rash.
 11. Rubella (German measles) - until six days after start of rash.
 12. Oral herpes (if child is drooling or lesions cannot be covered) - until lesions heal.
 13. Shingles (if lesions cannot be covered) - until lesions are dry.

EMAA Emergency Preparedness

All Head Start Centers will have emergency preparedness plans for the following:

- **Health/Dental Treatment**

- Fire/Smoke/Bomb Threat/Carbon Monoxide/Hazardous Material Exposure/ Gas Leak/ Chemical Spill
- Tornado/Thunderstorm
- Earthquake
- Kidnapping/Missing Child
- Dangerous Intruder/Disgruntled Parent/Potentially Violent Situation
- Flooding/Water Line Disturbance/Power Outage
- Ice/Snow Storm

In the event of an emergency, the site manager or designee will institute the appropriate response action as indicated in the center's individual emergency plans.

The site manager will designate two (2) locations near the center to be used in the event of an emergency that requires off site sheltering of children.

Location and Phone Numbers of off-site locations for _____ Head Start

1 _____

2 _____

Head Start staff will make every effort to contact the parent or guardians in the case of an emergency. In the event that a parent, guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the nearest emergency medical facility by emergency medical staff.

It is very important to let your Family Advocate or Site Manager know **immediately** if you have any changes in address, phone numbers or emergency contacts.

Complete Emergency Preparedness Plans are posted in all Head Start classrooms.

Pedestrian Safety Training for Parents: Do's and Don'ts

To ensure that your child remains safe when outdoors, read and follow these simple Pedestrian Safety tips. These rules help by teaching your child the rules right from the start.

Teach your child....

1. Do not cross the street alone if you're younger than 10 years old.
2. Do stop at the curb before crossing the street.
3. Don't run, across the street, walk.
4. Do cross at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks.
5. Do look left, right, and left again before crossing.
6. Do walk facing traffic.
7. Make sure drivers see you before crossing in front of them.
8. Do not play in driveways, streets, parking lots or unfenced yards by the street.
9. Wear white clothing or reflectors when walking at night.
10. Cross at least 10 feet in front of a school bus.

For more information visit: <http://www.usa.safekids.org/>

Say this each time you cross the street—holding your child's hand:
Stop, look and listen before you cross the street
Use your eyes, use your ears—then use your feet.



Car Safety

#1 BUCKLE UP FOR LIFE



#2 LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK

In those crazy moments...ways to remember your quiet child.

*Place a teddy bear in the passenger seat.

*Put something in the back of your car next to your child, such as a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination.

Babies and young kids can sometimes sleep so peacefully that we forget they are even there. It can also be tempting to leave a baby alone in a car while we quickly run into the store. The problem is that leaving a child alone in a car can lead to serious injury or death from heatstroke. Young children are particularly at risk, as their bodies' heat up three to five times faster than an adult's. These tragedies are completely preventable.

Pedestrian Safety

In parking lots, remind your child:

"Hold my hand. You're short. Cars can't see you."

Say this each time you cross the street—holding your child's hand:

***Stop, look and listen
before you cross the street
Use your eyes, use your ears
—then use your feet.***

MISSOURI CAR SEAT AGE/WEIGHT/HEIGHT CLASSIFICATION

1. LESS THAN 4 YEARS OLD - This act requires children less than four years old, regardless of weight, to use an appropriate child passenger restraint system.
2. LESS THAN 40 POUNDS - The act requires children weighing less than 40 pounds, regardless of age, to be secured in a child passenger restraint system appropriate for the child.
3. LESS THAN 8 YEARS OLD/80 POUNDS OR UNDER 4'9" - Children (ages 4-7) and who weigh at least 40 pounds but less than 80 pounds, and are less than 4'9" tall must be secured in a child passenger restraint system or booster seat appropriate for that child.
4. GREATER THAN 80 POUNDS OR TALLER THAN 4'9" - Children who are at least 80 pounds or children taller than 4'9" shall be secured by a vehicle safety belt or booster seat appropriate for that child.

The act allows a child to be transported in back seat without a booster seat if the child is secured with a lap belt if the vehicle is not equipped with combination lap and shoulder belt for booster seat installation.

The act also provides that when transporting children in the immediate family when there are more children than there are seating positions in the enclosed area of a motor vehicle, the children who are not able to be restrained by a child safety restraint device appropriate for the child shall sit in the area behind the front seat of the motor vehicle unless the motor vehicle is designed only for a front seat area. The driver transporting children under this scenario shall not be in violation of the child seat restriction law.

<http://www.modot.org/safety/NewChildPassengerRestraintLaw.htm>

Note: for proper installation of car seats, follow manufacturer's instructions.

AGREEMENT FORM SIGNED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

AUTHORIZATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

If required for the above named child, I hereby authorize Head Start staff:

1. To administer basic first aid to my child in the classroom should injury occur.
2. To call emergency medical personnel to transport my child to the nearest emergency medical facility.
3. To obtain medical aid from my child's physician, hospital emergency room staff or emergency technicians if they are unable to contact me or another legal guardian.

I authorize the emergency doctors (and whomever they may designate as their assistants) to perform necessary emergency treatment and/or procedures they deem therapeutically necessary for the above named child.

I understand that Head Start will make every effort to contact me in case of emergency and that when reached, my presence with my child is necessary.

I agree:	YES	NO
1. My child will attend Head Start regularly.		
2. I will participate in the required home visits during the program year at my convenience.		
3. I will make every attempt to attend parent meetings and activities.		
4. Any picture taken of my child may be used in newspapers, classroom displays, web pages, Head Start Facebook pages, bulletin boards, or other types of educational publications.		
5. I will not photograph/videotape any child during Head Start classroom hours. Only Head Start staff may photograph children.		

I give my permission for my child to have the following screenings:

Height and weight	Blood pressure	Mental health observation
Vision	Hearing	Speech
Developmental	Hematocrit/hemoglobin	Dental exam
Lead test		

SCHOOL TRANSITION/SCREENING INFORMATION

By signing this form, I authorize Head Start to release any or all of my child's file to the public school that he or she may attend during or after Head Start and that Head Start may obtain my child's screening information from public school.

AGREEMENT REGARDING LICENSING

- a) I have received a copy of this facility's policies pertaining to child care practices (this Parent Handbook).
- b) I have been informed that a copy of Missouri licensing rules for child care centers is available at this facility for review as well as on Head Start's web site (www.eastmoaa.org →Head Start→Parent Information).
- c) The provider and I have agreed on a plan for continuing communication regarding my child's development, behavior and individual needs.
- d) I agree to keep the facility updated on any changes of information on the application for enrollment form.
- e) When my child is ill, I understand and agree that s/he may not be accepted for care or remain in care.
- f) I understand that the facility will contact or notify me about any medical emergency, accident, injury, or at risk situation.
- g) I understand that short, unscheduled walks may be taken without notifying me.
Exceptions/Explanations (to above items or other considerations, i.e. religious or ethnic holidays, etc.):
- h) I have been noticed that I may request notice at initial enrollment or any time there after whether there are children currently enrolled in or attending the facility

for whom an immunization exemption has been files.