



IVEDC HEAD START

Parent Handbook

Center Based/Home Based

**Illinois Valley Economic Development Corporation,
Head Start/Early Head Start Program
Steffani Verduin - Head Start Director
223 South Macoupin Street, PO Box 88, Gillespie, IL
62033**

Phone: 217-839-4431, Fax: 217-839-3647

Like us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/IllinoisValleyEDC

Head Start Philosophy

Head Start is a child's first experience with school. It is our goal to make this experience a positive one that creates a love for learning that lasts a lifetime. Children should have positive social experiences, appreciate and accept differences in people, and feel good about themselves. We recognize the uniqueness and individuality of each child and try hard to see that children recognize their own self-worth.

We know that children learn best and the most through play. Our classrooms are set up with carefully designed learning activities by the teachers so that children can explore and experience learning. They become actively involved in their own learning. As children grow in this environment of choices, they learn to make decisions, resolve conflicts, and use time and space wisely. Our developmentally appropriate practices allow for growth of the whole child.

Parents are the first teachers of children and we support them. We believe it is important for parents to become involved in all aspects of Head Start/Early Head Start. We encourage parents to join in as teachers and observers during classroom, home sessions and field trips. A wealth of resources is available for parents to access. We encourage parents to let us know of any resources they may provide. Through their involvement in our program, we hope the parents will extend their efforts into the community and become more active citizens.

For Head Start/Early Head Start to be successful, children and parents—the whole family—need to be successful. Our goal is to make sure that they are offered every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Center Based

Curriculum

Head Start follows the “Creative Curriculum” developed by Teaching Strategies, Inc. This is a play-based curriculum where children are very involved in the environment that surrounds them. A booklet describing “Creative Curriculum” in more detail can be checked out at the parent library at each Center. The children will participate in large and small group activities, as well as child initiated and teacher directed activities. Children will be involved in free play at different interest centers which include: blocks, dramatic play, table toys, art, sand and water, library, music and movement, computers, and outdoor play. A strong focus on literacy and language skills should be evident in each classroom.

Schedule of the Day

8:15-8:30 Arrival 8:30 - 9:00 Breakfast
9:00 - 9:15 Morning Meeting
9:15 - 10:30 Work Time
10:30 - 10:45 Clean Up
10:45 - 11:00 Circle Time
11:00 - 11:30 Lunch
11:30 - 11:45 Story Time
11:45 - 12:00 Quiet Time
12:00 - 12:30 Outdoor Time
12:30 - 1:00 Work Time
1:00 - 1:15 Clean Up
1:15 - 1:30 Story & Dismissal

All Centers will have a schedule very similar to this one. Some variations may be made. The schedule allows for plenty of play-based learning as well as group time experiences. A more detailed & exact schedule will be posted in your child's classroom.

Home Based

Home Visits

The Head Start Home Based Program is very unique! Head Start services are provided directly in your child's home environment. A Home Visitor will visit your home once a week for approximately 1-½ hours. The visit will be on the same day and time each week. During these weekly visits, the Home Visitor and the parent work together on an individual education program designed specifically to meet the needs of your child. Parents work with the child on selected developmental activities, socialization, and motor skills. Learning activities in the areas of health and nutrition are also provided as part of the program. Each child progresses at his/her own rate within the structure of the education program.

During these home visits, the Home Visitor also provides parents with information on topics relating to parenting and other areas of need, or interest expressed by individual parents. The home visit also includes an activity in which other family members, such as older and younger siblings, may participate.

Guidelines for Home Visits

1. Be home at the time of the visit.
2. If you cannot be home, call the office or leave a note on the door.
3. Have all members of the household dressed.
4. Have the kitchen table cleared and washed.
5. Have all Head Start materials ready. (crayons, pencils, scissors, glue, activity charts, etc.)
6. Turn off TV.
7. Children should be fed before the visit.
8. TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS, IF YOUR CHILD OR ANYONE IN THE HOME IS ILL, PLEASE NOTIFY THE HOME VISITOR.

Socialization Activities

In addition to weekly visits by the Home Visitor, Home Based children also have the opportunity to participate in socialization activities, which are held twice each month. Socializations provide an opportunity for the children to interact with others from their age group and to develop socialization skills.

General rules for Socializations

We have several guidelines for our classroom; we ask that children bring no gum, candy or money to school. On special occasions, a child may bring treats when advance plans have been made and there is enough for all the children. We ask that the treats be healthy choices. They must be store bought and individually wrapped. We ask that you refrain from juice, soda or any other sweetened drinks. Some suggestions for treats are granola bars, trail mixes, fruit, cheese and crackers, etc. Some other ideas may be to bring in a craft or game the children would enjoy. Always ask the teachers before you make plans as they will have the final decision. We also ask that children not bring toys from home except for sharing during "Show and Tell". We have many toys and activities for the children, and toys from home may be lost or damaged. The children will have many opportunities to share items from home. If they do bring something from home, it must be in a paper sack or box labeled with your child's name. If a child would like to bring a live pet for "Show and Tell", arrangements must be made with the teacher in advance. **Due to DCFS guidelines, we are not licensed for siblings; therefore, they cannot be in attendance at socializations.**

General rules for Classrooms

We have several guidelines for our classroom that we like parents to share in also. We ask that children bring no gum, candy or money to school. On special occasions, a child may bring treats when advance plans have been made and there is enough for all the children. We ask that the treats be healthy choices. They must be store bought and individually wrapped. We ask that you refrain from juice, soda or any other sweetened drinks. Some suggestions for treats are granola bars, trail mixes, fruit, cheese and crackers, etc. Some other ideas may be to bring in a craft or game the children would enjoy. Always ask the teachers before you make plans as they will have the final decision. We also ask that children not bring toys from home except when sharing for "Show and Tell". We have many toys and activities for the children, and toys from home may be lost or damaged unless supervised. The children will have many opportunities to share their items from home. If they do bring something from home, it must be in a paper sack or box and labeled with your child's name. If a child would like to bring a live pet for "Show and Tell", arrangements must be made with the teacher in advance.

What to wear-Children and Parents

The days at the Center or Socialization Activities are very busy with many activities planned. Children and adults are often involved in learning activities which can be very messy. Please do not send your child in dress clothes. We do emphasize neatness and good grooming in Head Start, but dress clothes are not necessary and often interfere with active play. It is better to send the children in clothes they can easily move in and that they are comfortable in. Tile floors and playground equipment can be slippery, so non-skid shoes like tennis shoes are best for children. We do go outdoors whenever possible, so your child should be sent to school with the right coat for the weather, including hat/hood, scarf, mittens/gloves and boots during cold weather. Please label your child's mittens, hats, etc. with his name. It is difficult to tell which blue mittens belong to which child. You and your child should wear clothes that are comfortable and washable. Remember that we use paint, play with play -dough and serve food. You never know when you will get a paint or peanut butter hug! Dress to play and **have fun!**

Visits, trips, or excursions off the premises

As part of our program, the children will participate in field trips. Such trips will include the nursing home, pumpkin farm, apple orchard, fire station, library, ambulance service and other points of local interests. Field trips are limited to a 50-mile radius. Parents are informed about field trips and sign a parent permission slip. Parents may be required to attend field trips with their child due to the behavior of the child and to ensure the safety of the other children.

Guidance and Discipline Policy for Head Start Classrooms & Socialization Activities

Any discipline measure must help the individual child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his/her own actions. The rules established set the limits of behavior required for the protection of both the group as well as individuals. Discipline shall be the responsibility of adults who have an on-going relationship with the child.

With these factors in mind, the following procedures will be used in disciplining children involved in program activities:

- (1) Conscious Discipline, developed by Dr. Becky Bailey, focuses on redirection, positive discipline tactics and choices. These concepts have been adopted by our program and are to be used with all children.
- (2) Children are encouraged to recognize their need to regain control by separating themselves from the group by going to the “safe place”. A child is free to use the “safe place” whenever needed. Children will be supported by classroom staff while in “safe place” to help the child regain control to be able to rejoin the group as quickly as possible.
- (3) Any disciplinary action is to be developmentally related to the child’s act and shall not be out of proportion to the particular behavior. The child shall be made aware of the relationship between the act and its consequences. Simple classroom rules shall be established and discussed with the children and parents. If the child is receptive at the time of the misbehavior, the teacher or responsible adult is to discuss the action with the child at the time. If not, this can be done at a later time when the child is ready to listen and understand why his actions were unacceptable.
- (4) Whenever possible, children will be redirected when displaying unwanted or inappropriate behavior by suggesting another activity. By doing this, you can often avoid inappropriate behavior altogether. For example, if the adult sees that the child is getting overly excited or losing control in an active area such as the block corner, a quiet activity could be suggested to the child until he/she has better control.
- (5) If a child has lost control of themselves in a situation and their behavior endangers themselves or others, they will be removed from the group and attended to by a staff member. During this time, the staff member would discuss the child’s behavior, consequences, and ways to make better choices in the future.
- (6) In all cases, praise and encouragement will be given to each child for appropriate behaviors. By doing this, unwanted behaviors should decrease and increase wanted behaviors. Emphasize the positive! For example, instead of constantly telling Jack to

keep his hands to himself during story time, praise Susan for being such a good listener and sitting quietly.

- (7) The staff is to work together with parents to assess a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior in order to formulate a plan for improvement. Documentation will be maintained regarding the child's progress towards the established goals and parents will be informed regarding the increase/decrease of unwanted behaviors. The staff will communicate with parents through written notes, direct contact, or phone calls.
- (8) No child shall be subjected, under any circumstances, to corporal punishment or verbal abuse. No child shall be deprived of regularly scheduled meals or any part of meals as a punishment. No child shall be punished for toilet accidents.
- (9) Acceptable reward for appropriate behavior is verbal praises. Food cannot be used as a reward or punishment.
- (10) Teachers and other adults will be role models for children regarding appropriate behavior. Teachers are encouraged to use books on behavior topics during story time and to use plays and puppets to teach appropriate behavior and the results of misbehavior.
- (11) If at any time a child's behavior becomes a danger to them self or others, the parent may be called to remove the child from the Center or the Socialization Activity. (Refer to Serious Disruptive Behavior Policy)
- (12) Due to DCFS guidelines, parents are required to sign a copy of the Discipline and Guidance Policy for their child's file.

Serious Disruptive Behavior Policy

It is our responsibility to provide ample opportunities for each child to learn and participate in a safe, secure and well-managed classroom. We support ongoing teacher training, positive reinforcement of children, graduated discipline practices, and on occasion, special intervention plans to create successful experiences for children both educationally and behaviorally. At some Head Start sites, a Special Needs Aide is available to assist with children with diagnosed disabilities and/or behavioral issues. This person can provide one-on-one guidance for children with individualized needs.

BEHAVIORS WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED SERIOUSLY DISRUPTIVE INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Aggression toward other children, staff, volunteers, or parents
- Running away from the group/or classroom where the likelihood of danger exists
- Climbing onto/into areas where a physical danger exists
- Destruction, breaking, throwing of classroom items, which may cause physical injury

For the purposes of the above procedure Serious Disruptive Behavior is NOT: yelling, cursing, tearing paper, poking or tapping, verbal teasing or name-calling. Alternative classroom/teacher behavioral interventions will be used in these instances. However, continued issues in these areas may become serious disruptive behaviors causing the above procedure to come in effect.

Should a child exhibit serious disruptive behavior that interferes with the ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for themselves, other children in the classroom and staff, the following steps will be taken:

1st Incident

Parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing of the specific incident the same day. Written documentation will be completed and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and they will be asked to sign that they have received a copy of the documentation.

2nd Incident

Parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing of the specific incident the same day. Written documentation will be completed and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and they will be asked to sign that they have received a copy of the documentation. Within 5 days, the parent(s)/guardian(s), Teacher, Site Director, Special Needs Aide, Disability Coordinator, & Education Coordinator will meet to formulate a plan and will work together to prevent the behavior(s) in the future so that the child may achieve success and experience improved behavior.

The behavior plan may include any or all of the following options:

- classroom modifications such as staffing changes, charting of positive behaviors, transition assistance plans, seating modifications

- enrollment modifications such as a shortened day for child, dual enrollment in Early Childhood Special Education and Head Start, or placement in the Home Based option
- mental health interventions such as referral for counseling, classroom observation by Mental Health Consultant or Disability Coordinator to provide strategies to the parent and/or staff
- referral for further evaluation by medical or special education services

If necessary, the Disability Coordinator will contact the Mental Health Consultant to formulate an Individual Behavior Support Plan. The Mental Health Consultant will be readily available to the Head Start Teacher as well as the parents for consultation. Should the parent(s)/guardian(s) be unwilling to give permission for observation of their child by the Mental Health Consultant and the child's disruptive behavior continues, the Head Start teacher and the Disability Coordinator will continue to work with the child to resolve behavior issues and maintain contact with the parent(s)/guardian(s).

3rd Incident

The parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing of the specific incident the same day. Written documentation will be completed and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and they will be asked to sign that they have received a copy of the documentation. The child may be taken out of the classroom for a short period of time by a Head Start staff member for his/her own safety and that of the other children and adults until the child's behavior is under control.

4th Incident

The parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing of the specific incident the same day. Written documentation will be completed and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and they will be asked to sign that they have received a copy of the documentation. The child may be taken out of the classroom for a short period of time by a Head Start staff member for his/her own safety and that of the other children and adults until the child's behavior is under control. If the child's behavior does not become under control the parent/guardian may be contacted and requested to pick the child up from the Center for the remainder of the class day.

If the individual Behavior Support Plan is not successful in resolving the child's behavioral issues within the given timeframe specified in the Individual Behavior Support Plan, then the plan will be reviewed and modified by parent(s)/guardian(s), Teacher, Site Director, Special Needs Aide, Disability Coordinator, Education Coordinator, & Mental Health Consultant.

5th Incident

The parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing of the specific incident the same day. Written documentation will be completed and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and they will be asked to sign that they have received a copy of the documentation. The child may be taken out of the classroom for a short period of time by a Head Start staff member for his/her own safety and that of the other children and adults until the child's behavior is under control. If the child's behavior does not become under control the parent/guardian may be contacted and requested to pick the child up from the Center for the remainder of the class day.

Documentation

The child's teacher will document all incidents and contacts made with the parents/guardians and with other resources and will forward copies to the Disability Coordinator weekly. The Disability Coordinator will keep all documentation and notes in the child's file and keep the Education Coordinator updated regarding the child's progress. The Head Start Director will be consulted as needed.

Transportation

Each of our busses is equipped with safety harnesses and all children will be required to wear them while on the bus.

The children are expected to remain seated while the bus is in motion.

Children may not have any food, gum, or candy while on the bus as it becomes a choking hazard. Please do not send any of these items in your child's backpack or pockets. Keep the snacks for a treat when they get home.

Children will participate in bus evacuations throughout the year to practice in the event an evacuation is necessary. In the event a bus evacuation must occur due to an accident or weather related incident, the staff on the bus will ensure all children are safe and accounted for. We will contact you with further instructions if needed.

Each child enrolled in a **Center Based program** has a designated pick-up/drop-off point agreed upon by staff and parents. This is usually the child's home, but may be a group pick-up point. You will be given a pick-up and drop-off time for your child. We ask that you please have your child ready about 5 minutes before the bus comes.

Parents will be asked to sign their child on and off the bus. Remember that anyone who is to pick your child up off the bus must be a listed contact on file with Head Start. Children will not be released to anyone other than those listed contacts.

Please be at the door or have someone there to receive your child. The staff is expected to make it known to the Department of Children and Family Services when a parent is repeatedly not home to receive their child. It is a big inconvenience for the driver and it is upsetting to the children when no one is home to be with them. As a courtesy to our staff and other parents whose children are dropped off after yours, please be home to receive your child.

If someone other than a parent will be getting your child off at your house (your regular drop-off point) we must have a note signed by the parent. Example: **Please let Bob Jones get John Doe off the bus at our house on 9-12-16. Thank you. Mary Doe.** Remember that anyone who is to pick your child up off the bus must be a listed contact on file with Head Start. Children will not be released to anyone other than those listed contacts.

If your child needs to be picked up or dropped off somewhere else, please make contact with your child's teacher and/or bus driver to ensure that they are able to provide transportation to that location. Remember that anyone who is to pick your child up off the bus, or from the center must be a listed contact on file with Head Start. Children will not be released to anyone other than those listed contacts.

Children enrolled in the **Home Based program** will also be riding the bus on occasions to field trips and other events. Parents will be riding the bus with children and are expected to help ensure each child's safety by sitting with your child and reminding him/her to stay buckled.

All safety rules and guidelines apply to Home Based children as well.

Policy for Children Who Are Not Picked Up on Time

If a child is not picked up from school on time or from a bus stop; the following procedures will be followed.

- A. If the individuals on the child pick up form are not available at the pick-up point, the child will be returned to the Center.
- B. The teacher will then try to call the parents or guardians. If no answer, emergency contacts will be called next.
- C. Calls will be made until 3:30pm. At that time the teacher will contact the local police department and the child will be left with someone at the department.
- D. It will be the discretion of the police department on how to handle the case or to contact the Department of Children and Family Services.
- E. Staff will emphasize on the importance of having up-to-date emergency contact numbers on file.
- F. Staff acknowledges the provider's responsibility for the child's protection and well-being until the parent or outside authorities arrive.
- G. The staff shall follow policy and not hold the child responsible for the situation and that discussion of the issue will only be with the parent or guardian and never with the child.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheet

Anytime that you bring your child to the Center or pick him up from the Center you need to sign him in or out on the Sign-In/Sign-Out form, including times. This applies every time you or someone else provides transportation for your child. Remember that anyone who is to pick your child up off the bus, or from the center must be a listed contact on file with Head Start. Children will not be released to anyone other than those listed contacts.

Attendance

Regular attendance at Head Start/Early Head Start is very important. These years are a time of readiness for public school; therefore, we want to develop good attendance habits.

If your child enrolled in a **Center Based program** is sick and must miss school, please call the bus driver at the Center the night before (if possible) or early that morning no later than 6:30 a.m. and leave a message with a reason why your child will not be at school. If this is not possible, please be at the door to tell the bus to go on. We must have a note signed by the parent after each day of school the child misses. Example: **Please excuse John Doe for missing school yesterday, September 14, 2016. Thank you. Mary Doe.**

If your child enrolled in the **Home Based program** is sick and must miss a home visit, please call your home visitor as soon as possible so they know not to come to your home.

Children should not be participate in school attendance, home visits, field trips, or socializations if they have an oral temperature of 101.0 F or higher, vomiting, or diarrhea. We do not want to take the risk of exposing other children or staff. **The child will not be able to return to school until 24 hours has passed since the child has remained fever, diarrhea, or vomiting free without the use of medication.**

If a child becomes ill during school time, we will contact you or someone on your emergency pick-up list to come to get your child. All parents will be asked to fill out an “emergency” sheet. This person should be a close friend, neighbor or relative whom the child knows and is comfortable with. If our staff does not know this person, he/she will be asked to show identification before receiving your child. Remember that anyone who is to pick your child up off the bus, or from the center must be a listed contact on file with Head Start. Children will not be released to anyone other than those listed contacts.

If a child has missed three or more consecutive days of school without contact from the parents/guardians, the family will be contacted by the Family Community Development Specialist (FCD) to determine when the child will be returning to school.

Families with children who are frequently absent from school and fall below 85% attendance rate, will receive a letter from the Head Start Director regarding their attendance. The letter will explain the importance of attendance and reach out to the family to ensure attendance. After a second month of below 85% attendance, the child may be dropped from the program to open the spot to another child who will fully take advantage of the offered program.

Parent Volunteers

In-Kind

We need you to make our program successful! Parents who are the most active in the program will be given special acknowledgement at the end of the year. All volunteer tasks and activities are kept track of and recorded. We ask that you sign In-Kind documentation for this purpose. This is sent to the main office in Gillespie each month. We must have a certain number of parent volunteer hours in order for the government to continue to fund the Head Start program for future years! You will benefit as well as your child.

Volunteering in the Classroom

We welcome all parents to come and help in our classroom, during socializations, and on field trips. It's important that you see your child learning and growing and you will learn new ideas, games, songs and activities too. The classroom is often a place where several activities are going on at the same time. As a parent volunteer, you may be needed to help with a particular activity, to supervise an area of the room or to work with an individual child.

When you are doing an activity, you should invite a few children at a time to come over and do it with you. No one needs to be forced to do a particular project. Encourage reluctant children. As much as possible, children are encouraged to do things for themselves and talk about what they are doing. We are not as interested in "perfect artwork" or a project just like the "teacher's" as we are in the child having the experience of creating something of his own. Being a good listener is an important as asking questions and giving directions.

You can help the children share materials, talk with them about whatever they're doing, make sure things are put away when they're done with them, and manage the number of children in the area. Be sure to always ask if you have a question or don't understand something.

If you notice any special problems of the children, mention them to the teacher or aide at a later time. Please limit comments about children to the appropriate personnel. We do not talk about children in front of them or to other parents. We respect each child as an individual and expect you will do the same.

General Volunteer Guidelines

1. Be punctual and reliable when riding the bus.
2. Be friendly and courteous when working with other adults and children at the Center.
3. Ask the staff any questions to which you are not sure of the right answer.
4. If you enjoy doing a special activity with children, please let the teacher know.
5. Make suggestions for the classroom or let us know about a fun or interesting field trip. They are welcome as a means of improving our program.
6. Our smoking policy is: **No smoking in the building or on the buses or any space utilized by Head Start children.** No smoking in the presence of children on field trips. Recent studies of health risks faced by children and adults inhaling smoke include lung cancer and eye, nose throat irritation. In addition, resistance to communicable disease is lowered.
7. Always encourage children to help themselves.
8. Sit down with the children during breakfast and lunch and encourage a warm conversational atmosphere.
9. Discipline in the classroom is a learning experience. Staff will model positive reinforcement methods and should handle all discipline.
10. Be constantly aware of the safety of children. Station yourself near where children are climbing, sliding and swinging.
11. There are many ways that all parents can participate with Head Start activities, such as participating in the classroom, being a representative for Policy Council, attending Parent Committee Meetings, going on field trips, and doing at home activities. Contact the Parent Involvement Coordinator at (217) 839-4431 for more opportunities available to you.
12. Parents need to read and sign the Guidelines for Volunteers before participating in Head Start activities. A copy of the guidelines will be given to each parent at the first parent-teacher conference. Volunteer Training & the Volunteer Training Guide will be provided at the Parent Committee meeting in September.
13. Please remember as a volunteer, you may hear or see things that **MUST** remain confidential. Children's behavior, skill, family situations, etc. should not be discussed outside the classroom. If another parent has a question or wants information, please refer them to a classroom teacher.

14. Due to DCFS regulations, parent volunteers are not able to be left alone with children other than their own child. This includes the classroom, bathroom, and on field trips.
15. Volunteers are held to the same cell phone use policy as Head Start staff members, which states cell phones are not to be used while supervising children. Volunteers are **ONLY** allowed to photograph their own children!

Health Services Advisory Committee

The Health Advisory Committee (HAC) brings together community professionals and Head Start parents to gather input from all involved in the planning of the Health and Nutrition needs of the Head Start children. The HAC helps to ensure their needs are met while remaining in compliance with Head Start Standards. The committee meets at least two times a year at the Administrative Office.

Parent Committee Meetings

During the year we will have several parent meetings during which the parents make important decisions about their part in the Head Start program. The meetings will include a short parent training on topics of the parents' choice and updates on classroom activities. Sometimes special speakers come to our meetings to present short training on subjects the parents are interested in and want to learn more about.

At the first parent committee meeting, parents elect classroom officers. The classroom officers conduct future meetings; they may choose the date, time and content of the meeting; they may decide something needs to be discussed with the parent group and voted on; they are in charge of parent group activities. Any decisions made in parent meetings are called to a vote with a quorum of parents present. There must be 30% attendance of total parent members to vote and carry a motion. The motion must be won by a majority or it will be brought up at the next parent meeting. At times, it may be necessary to send a written ballot home with students for the parents to reply. This is the case when it has become impossible to schedule a date and time for 30% of the total parents to attend a meeting.

Policy Council

It is our procedure to have Policy Council representatives elected during the first Parent Committee Meeting. The parents on this council make decisions about the Head Start program involving all four counties, all of our Head Start Centers, and all of our Home Based programs.

Policy Council meetings are held approximately six times a year. Meetings are held at the Illinois Valley Office in Gillespie with the first meeting scheduled for October. Members are encouraged to carpool. Drivers are paid a mileage reimbursement of \$.42 per mile. A child-care reimbursement is issued to assist with child-care costs.

Health Services

The role of Illinois Valley Head Start is to help our students participate fully in their learning by preventing, removing, and /or reducing health-related barriers that interfere with their development and learning.

Current Health Status

All families will provide the following information on their child:

- Parent contact information
- Emergency contact information
- Health care provider contact information
- Dental care provider contact information
- Current well child exam (physical exam form)- yearly
- Current dental exam (dental exam form) - yearly
- Immunization history- updated as necessary
- Child's Medical History- updated as necessary and reviewed each year
- Nutrition Assessment

A TB test must have been obtained no earlier than six months prior to starting school. A hemoglobin/hematocrit must be obtained before a child begins Head Start. Failure to complete these basic immunization requirements will exclude your child from attending any group session. Head Start also requires that children continue to show progress toward receiving all remaining age-appropriate immunizations.

State law requires that all children between the ages of six months and six years of age have a lead screening completed before entering a childcare program or public school. It is the parent's responsibility to have this done and submit appropriate documentation that states that this has been completed. A lead test must be obtained at 2 years of age or over to be in compliance.

Screenings

In addition to the medical information families provide to the program, we will provide your child with several screenings to make sure he/she is developing as expected and there are no concerns. You will be notified of all screening results in writing either by mail, notes sent home from school, or during Parent Teacher Conferences. If you have any questions regarding any screening result, please contact your child's teacher for further information.

Vision/Hearing Screening

We depend on our vision and hearing to provide the primary cues for learning about our environment. Preschoolers typically develop visually guided eye-hand-body coordination, fine motor skills, and visual motor skills necessary to learn to read. Hearing loss may interfere with speech and language development, overall health and well-being, or future school performance. Each Head Start student will be screened for vision and hearing. A vision and hearing screen gives us a “snapshot” of what is happening with your child. Early childhood screening can prevent the unnecessary loss of sight and / or hearing by finding these problems early, prompt care may minimize the effects of a suspected vision or hearing problem.

Height/Weight Screen

Head Start students will be measured for height and weight. We use the measurements of your child’s height and weight to calculate their body mass index (BMI). The BMI has been shown to be a reliable indicator for determining for most children if they are under weight, at a healthy weight, and / or at risk or overweight.

IMIL

I am Moving, I am Learning (IMIL), is a term used at Head Start to remind staff and families that children’s brains develop through movement. Preschoolers should have a minimum of one hour of structured and several hours of unstructured physical activity per day. Families are asked to partner with Head Start to keep their children and family active at home. For physical activity ideas contact your child’s teacher.

Social Emotional Screenings

Each family will be asked to complete a short survey about their child’s ability to cope with situations and their overall emotional wellness. Teachers will also complete the survey on the behaviors they see in the classroom. Children with difficulty coping or who are experiencing stress in the classroom may be referred to our Mental Health Consultant for further evaluation or counseling if the family approves.

Developmental Screenings

Children will be screened with a developmental assessment within the first 45 calendar days of attendance. This screening will help your child's teacher/home visitor to plan an individualized program for your child's learning needs. It will also help to identify any areas of possible delayed development that may need further evaluation. Children will also be assessed three times per year using the Teaching Strategies Gold Tool along with a portfolio that is kept on each child. These assessments and progress will be shared with you at Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS GUIDELINES

Illnesses

Children should only be at Head Start when they can fully participate in the program. At the Illinois Valley Head Start Program we want to keep illness to a minimum in the classroom, and we are not staffed to care for sick children.

Therefore we ask that you keep your child home when:

- A child has an oral temperature of 101 degrees or above in conjunction with other symptoms.
- Please keep your child home until the temperature has returned to normal (98.6 degrees) for 24 hours without the aid of medication to bring the fever down.
- A child vomits or has diarrhea, parents must keep the child home for 24 hours after the condition ends.
- A child has an undiagnosed rash, please consult a doctor before sending the child to school. The child will need to bring a note from a doctor in order to reenter school.
- A child has skin or mouth lesions that are draining and unable to be covered.
- A child has been diagnosed with conjunctivitis (pink eye), the child must stay home for 24 hours after taking the first dose of medication or have a note from a doctor in order to reenter school.
- A child goes to the doctor for a strep test. The child must stay home while waiting for the results of the test. If a child is diagnosed with strep throat, the child must stay home for 24 hours after taking the first dose of medication.
- A child has head lice or nits, the child must stay home until the child has been treated and all nits have been removed from the child's hair.

Please DO NOT send your child to Head Start in these instances. If your child becomes ill while at Head Start, we will notify you and ask you to come to pick him / her up within one hour. **If you cannot pick your child up within one hour after you are called, you are responsible for having a RELIABLE emergency person come for your child.** If you cannot be reached first, an emergency contact person will be called to pick your child up.

NOTE: *When your child returns to school after an illness he / she will be going outdoors as weather permits.* If you feel your child should not go outdoors, you should keep him / her at home.

Communicable Diseases

Some illnesses are highly contagious (catchy). Head Start will have communicable (catchy) diseases just like all public places. Germs can be spread between two children playing with blocks just as they are passed on shopping cart handles, library books, or the playground or park. There are also communicable conditions, such as head lice, ringworm and scabies. These conditions are not diseases, but they are “catchy” and can easily spread from one person to another. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease or condition please keep him/her home until it is no longer “catchy”, and notify your Head Start Center. This will help your child recover more quickly and prevent other children and families from getting sick.

Head Lice

To decrease and eliminate cases of head lice in the school setting, Illinois Valley Head Start has adopted a **“NO NIT” policy** which states that any child found to have nits present must be sent home. Head checks for lice are done on the first school day of the week for every child attending. Parents of those children found to have head lice will be contacted and asked to pick up their child. **You will be required to bring your child to school to be checked before the child can return to class.** If you will need transportation for this, please contact the Head Start office. Please review the Head Lice Protocol for cleaning and treatment procedures. **It is expected that the child will be treated and will usually be back to school within 24 hours.**

Medication Administration

Only those medications which are absolutely necessary to maintain the student in Head Start and must be given during school hours will be administered. Medications should be administered to students by their parents/guardians at home whenever possible. Head Start staff will administer medication to a student only when the medication schedule cannot be adjusted to exclude school hours, or when a chronic medical problem may make administration necessary during school hours.

Medications that can be safely administered at Head Start include:

- Those medications prescribed by your physician.
- Those not prescribed, but available over the counter, for which written instructions are given by your physician or other healthcare provider legally authorized to prescribe medication.

In order to give any medication at Head Start the following rules apply:

- A **Medication Authorization Form** requesting that medication be given during school hours must be filled out and **signed by a parent or guardian**. **All requests** for the administration of prescription and over the counter medication **must have written instructions and be signed by a physician or other healthcare provider legally authorized to prescribe medications**.

- Over the counter medication must be brought in the original container.
- Prescribed medication must be brought to Head Start by the parent or guardian in a container labeled by the pharmacy with the following clearly stated:
 - a. Child's Name.
 - b. Physician's Name.
 - c. Name of Medication.
 - d. Dosage to be given
 - e. Time(s) to be administered
 - f. Expiration Date

******When having a prescription filled, please ask the pharmacist to give you a second properly-labeled bottle for school.**

Medication will be given to the child by the Head Start Staff at the scheduled time. It will be their responsibility to document the administration of the medication in the medical log as well as on the Medical Administration Form. All medications will be stored in a locked area or refrigerated if needed. The Head Start Health Coordinator will check the medication administration form periodically and be available for any question or concerns regarding the medication(s). The Head Start Health Coordinator will retain the discretion to reject, in a timely fashion, requests for administration of medications in school. (*See Medication Authorization Form*)

Provision for Emergency Medical Care, Treatment of Illness and Accident

In case of minor illness or accident, basic first aid will be administered on site by Head Start staff. Staff is trained in first aid and CPR. If an illness or accident requires additional medical attention, the child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital until the parent has arrived. The parent will be notified immediately. If the parent cannot be contacted, the emergency contact person will be contacted. If that person is not available, the local police department will be contacted to locate and inform the parent or legal guardian of the situation with their child. Illinois Valley carries insurance to cover any injury or accident that may occur to a child while in attendance at Head Start.

Sunscreen

To help prevent overexposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays that can cause harmful effects to the body, the Illinois Valley Head Start Program will apply sun screen to those children whose parent / guardian have given their consent. Consent for the application of sun screen must be obtained each school year. Sun screen will not be applied to children who do not have a signed consent form on file. (*See Topical Consent Form*)

Toilet Training

A child who is not toilet trained, regardless of whether or not the child has a disability shall not be denied placement in a center or home based program. 45 CFR1304.22 (b)(2); CFR1304.22(e)(5); 45 CFR 1308.4(c)

We allow and enable all children to learn independent toileting skills when it is developmentally appropriate and supported by parents. All appropriate sanitation procedures will be followed, according to the Illinois DCFS Licensing Standards Section 407.340. Head Start will provide pull-ups / diapers and wipes to all the Head Start Centers who have children involved in toilet training. If a special request is made by the parent for a specific brand of pull-ups/ diapers and/or wipes, medical documentation will be needed for this request to be approved.

Adaptive potty training seats will also be accessible at each of the Head Start Centers. Toilet training will begin when the parents/guardians and teacher feel that the child is developmentally ready. Each child being toilet trained will have an individual written developmentally appropriate toilet training plan developed by the teacher in conjunction with the child's parents/guardians. Having both the teaching staff and parents/guardians share in the progress and successes will reinforce a positive toilet training experience and outcome. Children involved in toilet training will be treated with respect, provided positive reinforcement, and given as much privacy as possible.

Nutrition

During the course of the Head Start program day, a breakfast and a lunch will be served. Head Start gives special attention to the food requirements of children. Meals are child-centered. Children are encouraged to eat and experiment with new foods. Food is not used as a reward or a punishment. All staff is expected (and any other adult present is encouraged) to eat with the children and converse with them. Mealtime is a happy, pleasant experience for all. The meals are planned to provide children the opportunity to become familiar with different foods, a variety of food shapes, textures and colors.

Disability Services

Head Start encourages the enrollment of children with disabilities. Head Start offers children with disabilities the opportunity to learn and play alongside their peers. The full range of Head Start services including health, nutrition, social services and parent involvement are available to families of children with disabilities. Parents are supported in developing parenting practices, which effectively meet the needs of their child.

The program works closely with the local school districts to coordinate any services a child may need when services are available. The Disability Coordinator will be available to help your family through any process involving referrals, screenings, or IEP services.

Integrated Pest Management Procedures

It is the policy of Illinois Valley to incorporate the following Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Procedures for control of structural and landscape pest. These pests and pesticides can pose significant hazards to people, property, and the environment. It is therefore why we adopted the policy.

Pests

Pests are populations of living organisms (animal, plants or microorganisms) that interfere with the human purposes for the day care centers. Strategies for managing pest populations will be influenced by the pest species and any threat they pose to people, property, or the environment.

Pest Management

Pest management will:

- Reduce any potential harm or protect against a significant threat to public safety;
- Preserve the integrity of the school buildings or structures;
- Prevent interference with the learning environment of the students;
- Prevent pest from spreading in the community or to plant and animal operations beyond the site.

Integrated Pest Management Procedures

Site directors at each Center will be responsible for pest management operations at their Centers. They will report to the Head Start Director about any potential problems with pests. Written documentation will be kept at each center on: parent notification, pest monitoring, and pesticide applications.

Monitoring will be completed on a monthly basis (or more often if problems arise). If pests are found during monitoring, staff will determine if it's a health, nuisance, or safety issue. They will complete the pest sighting form and then take appropriate actions.

Staff will follow effective pest management tips found in the *Practical Guide to Management of Common Pests in Schools*. The choice of using a pesticide will be based on a review of all other available options and a determination that these options alone are not acceptable or feasible. Selected non-chemical pest management methods will be implemented whenever possible. The full range of alternatives, including no action, will be considered. When it is determined that a pesticide must be used to meet important management goals, the least hazardous

material will be chosen. The record of pest control procedures should then be completed and the Head Start director shall be notified.

Notification

Parents will be notified at least 2 business days prior to but not more than 30 days prior to any pesticide application in the child care Center. This will either be done in a newsletter, calendar or a note sent home. Staff will also post notes in the building accessible to parents as to when pesticides will be applied.

Pesticides may not be applied while children are present. Children cannot be in the building until 2 hours after pesticide application.

Educating IPM Participants

All staff will be educated on the IPM program following the IPM strategies located in the *Integrated Management of Structural Pests in Schools 1994* handbook. Staff will learn about the basic concepts of IPM and how the principles are being applied. Parents will be notified of the IPM program in the parent handbook.

Recordkeeping

Records of pesticide use, parent notification and pest monitoring will be kept on site to meet the requirements of the state regulatory agency. Records will be current and up to date. The site director will be responsible for the record keeping.

Pesticide Storage and Purchase

Pesticide purchases will be limited to the amount authorized for available use. Pesticides will be stored and disposed of in accordance with the USEPA-registered label directions and state regulations. Pesticides must be stored in an appropriate, secure location not accessible to students or unauthorized personnel.

Pesticide Applicators

In most cases Illinois Valley will contract application to certified applicators. In rare cases when pesticides are applied by staff the site director will evaluate the situation and follow regulations and label precautions.

Policy regarding personal information

Head Start classroom staff will not release any information on a child without the permission of the parent.

The release of information signed by the parent at the time of enrollment allows Illinois Valley to pass information on to the public school such as health and developmental screening results prior to the child's entry into kindergarten.

Planned means of communication between the Center and the parents

Parents can call the Center between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child that require discussion with the teacher, please call after 1:30 p.m. when the children have left the Center. Newsletters are sent out from Illinois Valley and the Centers. Should the Head Start parent feel that a matter has not been resolved after speaking to their child's teacher, they should contact the Head Start Director at the IVEDC Administrative office in Gillespie at 217-839-4431.

Planned lines of communication between the IVEDC Governing Board, Head Start Facilities, Staff & Parents

There is a formal method of communication to ensure communication between all persons and groups involved in the IVEDC Head Start Program. These specifics are outlined in the By-Laws of the Governing Board, Head Start Policy Council & Head Start Parent Committees. As stated under Parent Meetings-Policy Council in this Parent Handbook, parents are provided with the opportunity to participate in parent meetings at their center and be elected to the Policy Council where they can provide input into the operation of the Head Start Program. In addition, Head Start parents serve as members of the Governing Board and report back to the Policy Council. Elected parent Policy Council members provide feedback to their parent committee at their local center. Staff receive information and updates regarding program changes and goals and objectives during pre-service training in August, throughout the program year at regularly scheduled staff meetings and through emails and memos.

Home Visits

Periodic home visits are an essential part of the Head Start program. During home visits from the Center staff, you will be given a variety of activities to do with your child at home as the year progresses. This is your special time with your child's teacher. This is a good time to share ideas and plan activities for home and classroom to help your child learn and grow. The teacher will visit your family a minimum of two times during the year. The staff wants to spend this special time with each family but their time is limited. We ask you to please keep your appointments for home visits. The staff will try to make appointments at times convenient for you whenever possible. If a real emergency comes up, please let the Center staff know that you must change your appointment at least 24 hours in advance so we can switch your appointment with another family. Of course, you are welcome at any time to request an additional home visit to discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

Kindergarten Transition Program

The Kindergarten Transition Program is set up for families that have children going into kindergarten the year following Head Start. Some things that are included in the program are: a checklist of things to do before the first day of school, summer activity calendars, Transition kits with books for both parents and kids, and much, much more!

Head Start believes that children, as well as parents, can feel more at ease with change if they have a better idea about what to expect when they make that change. We try to work together with the public schools to get any and all information that is important for our families to know.

It can sometimes be scary to go from an environment that is comfortable to one that is different and unfamiliar. This Transition Program is there to help ease that change and help with any questions or concerns that a parent may have. The public schools can be quite different from Head Start and there will be a lot of new changes in both your child's life as well as your own.

There may also be some parents who have more specific questions that deal with a child with special needs. You may be concerned with how your child's special needs will be met when they enter kindergarten. We will work together with these families in order to help with any concerns.

Head Start believes that this program will be a great help in preparing you and your child for kindergarten. If you would like more information about this program, you can contact the Transition Coordinator at the Gillespie Office.

Fees

Although the IVEDC Head Start Programs operate as DCFS Licensed Day Care Centers, no fees of any type are charged to families for participation of their child in the program. The Head Start program is provided free of charge to all families who meet the Federally defined eligibility requirements which are based on family income and the age of their child.

Holiday and Vacations

The following holidays are always NO SCHOOL days for children.

- Labor Day (September)
- Columbus Day (October)
- Election Day – even years (November)
- Veteran’s Day – (November)
- Thanksgiving – (November)
- Christmas – (December)
- New Year’s Day – (January)
- Martin Luther King Jr’s Birthday – (January)
- Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday – (February)
- President’s Day – (February)
- Memorial Day – (May)