

Head Start Orientation Course Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Head Start Program.

We are excited to have your child start the program this year and look forward to working with you in their health and education.

This course is designed to help you navigate the various aspects of the Head Start Program. You may access any portion of this course by using the navigational menu located in the course player.

Purpose

In response to local health needs, the Head Start Program will follow CDC, Federal, State, and local guidelines for all activities. The local school district procedures may be updated and will be followed as needed throughout the school year. In situations where “in person” activities are not appropriate, virtual opportunities will be implemented as possible. Parents and/or Guardians will be informed when adjustments need to be made.

The following information is presented as per our typical school and program process. The health and safety of children, families, and staff will be kept at the forefront and procedures will reflect adjustments as appropriate.

Our intention is to provide timely and ongoing communication with the families we serve. We also encourage you to contact staff when you have questions or concerns.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

As part of the Head Start Program a Family Service Associate is assigned to each family for ongoing support.

Staff will provide consistent monthly communication and are kept informed of all program activities and events.

Parenting education training is offered using a research-based Curriculum.

Fathers and other male role models are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program.

For a better understanding of various topics, parents and guardians are encouraged to use the online training modules.

Parents and guardians are provided opportunities to engage with their child through activities such as home projects and the “Read With Me” or “Read with Dad” programs.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT cont.

Parents and guardians receive referrals and information about a variety of community agencies

Parents and guardians have opportunities to volunteer in the classrooms, parent centers or at the school campus

Persons interested in volunteering must first complete the school district process and Head Start volunteer training

Family resources and family goal setting opportunities are provided

ATTENDANCE

Daily school attendance is important for school success and the education of your child.

If a child is absent, parents or guardians should contact the program within the first hour of school. A note will be required for the school’s records

If a parent or guardian has not reported their child’s absence to the school, front office, classroom teacher or FSA staff within the first hour of school, then the FSA will make attempts to contact the parent or guardian to inquire about the child’s absence and safety.

Attendance support and education will be provided during monthly contacts with Family Service Associate

HEALTH SERVICES

Your child's health is an important part of their ability to attend school and be ready to learn. Health services support and aid your child in their education.

A Health, Dental and Nutrition Facilitator will work with you as needed to obtain a current physical exam to include lab results and a renewed physical exam twelve months later to determine if the child needs follow-up services

Nurses and/or Head Start staff will conduct a hearing and vision screening within the first 45 days of school to determine if follow-up services are needed

If a child has asthma, allergies, or other medical conditions, families provide a physician Action Plan

Classroom staff guide children to wash their hands before meals and after toileting to ensure healthy habits are practiced

DENTAL SERVICES

Your child's dental health is an important part of staying healthy, attending school, and being ready to learn.

In the Head Start Program children brush their teeth twice a day at school

The program provides a new toothbrush every six weeks as well as toothpaste with fluoride

Parents and Guardians provide the program with a current dental exam and a renewed dental exam twelve months later to determine if the child needs follow-up services

NUTRITION SERVICES

Nutrition services are an important service provided to your child, receiving proper nutrition in school prepares them for their education.

Head Start staff will conduct growth assessment of children within the first 45 days of school and share results with parents.

Breakfast and lunch meals follow USDA requirements for portion sizes and nutrition and are provided at no cost.

Head start provides a daily snack at no cost.

Special diets due to food allergies or other health conditions can be designed with instructions or an Action Plan from a physician

Menus are posted in the classrooms and provided to families

During breakfast, lunch and snack time staff encourage conversation and self-help skills. Children are encouraged to try new foods, but never forced to eat meals

EDUCATION SERVICES

Services off to your child while they are learning are considered educational services.

In the Head Start program The child to teacher ratio is 10 to 1. Ten children to every one teacher

School supplies are provided for each student. Additionally, classroom staff are certified in both First Aid and CPR

Teachers conduct a developmental screening within the first 45 days of school to get a baseline on child's developmental and learning progress

Teachers observe children and document their educational progress throughout the school year.

Teachers conduct two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences to provide parents with child progress information.

EDUCATION SERVICES

Resting mats are provided for the children, however they may bring a small towel or blanket if the school district permits it

Rules of the classroom are designed to create safe learning environments

An extra set of clothes should be kept at school so the child can change into dry clothes in case of an accident

DISABILITIES SERVICES

Teachers work through the school district to address children's individual needs

Teachers individualize instruction for children with an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Parents or Guardians who suspect their child has special needs should conference with the child's teacher to discuss the screening and referral process

A school readiness coach will collaborate with the school staff to maximize services and attend the ARD and other meetings with the family, when possible.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health services are a very important component to the overall health and education provided to your child.

Teachers complete a wellness screening within the first 45 days of school to get a baseline on child's social / emotional progress.

The program promotes age appropriate and positive child guidance practices.

The program has a Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning Consultant to observe and support the teacher, family and child as needed.

SAFETY

One of the most important aspects of the head start program is child safety.

Every classroom has two adults to ensure proper monitoring of children for safety

Classroom staff monitor the classrooms and outdoor play areas each day for any potential safety hazards, which are then reported to the facility maintenance staff for correction

Children receive bus safety training within the first 30 days of school and evacuation drills are conducted throughout the school year

Parents and guardians receive Pedestrian & Bus Safety information at the initial visit/orientation meeting

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND RELEASE OF CHILD

Transportation of your child to and from school is another service offered by the head start program.

The Head Start program DOES provide transportation services for children to and from school in Lytle, Natalia & Devine ISD in partnership with the ISD Families are referred to the school district for possible transportation services. The school district determines if children are eligible for transportation to and from school

Each campus has a designated area for loading and unloading children

It is important to note that children will only be released to an authorized person

Each bus driver will have a list from the parent/guardian of authorized persons to pick-up the child from the bus stop

If no authorized person is available to pick-up the child at the bus stop, the bus driver will take the child back to the campus. Parents will be contacted to pick-up their child from the campus.

Children should be picked up when school is released for the day

If early pick-up is necessary, parents must go to the office and sign the child out before going to the classroom

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND RELEASE OF CHILD

Families are referred to the school district for possible transportation services

If early pick-up is necessary, parents must go to the office and sign the child out before going to the classroom

Children will only be released to an authorized person with appropriate ID

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Parents and Guardians have opportunities to participate on the campus Parent Committee Meetings

Parents and community members can be elected to the Policy

Council to represent their school district in making program-wide decisions along with the program leadership.

Mileage reimbursement is provided by the program to and from

Policy Council meetings for members who drive themselves to the meetings

Childcare reimbursement is available upon request by Policy Council members who attend the meetings

CLOSING

We thank you for using this module to better understand the Head Start Program.

Your Family Service Associate will be available for any questions you may have.

You can find this Parent Orientation Guide — Overview of Services, on the ESC Region 20 Head Start website.