



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Site	Address	Phone
Central Head Start	3233 University Drive South, Fargo	701-235-8931 1-800-618-8439
South Head Start	3329 University Drive South, Fargo	701-364-9331
Kappel Head Start	2761 12 th Avenue South, Fargo	701-365-3580
Early Head Start	3600 15 th Street South, Fargo	701-298-6758
Lisbon Head Start	418 5 th Avenue West, Lisbon	701-683-3133 1-888-881-5043
Wahpeton Head Start	1202 Westmore Avenue, Wahpeton	701-642-9825
My child's classroom information:		

Site:

Center #:

Teacher:

Co-Teacher/Teacher Assistant:

Family Support Coordinator:

Site Supervisor:

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Program Mission Statements

SENDCAA Mission Statement

To provide a range of services and activities designed to alleviate poverty and give low-income people the opportunity to improve their standard of living and achieve self-sufficiency.

Head Start Mission Statement

Creating a community of learners through nurturing children and engaging families.

Head Start Vision Statement

Building on a cornerstone of success that inspires all children and families to reach their full potential.

Find your
site
schedule
here!

Program Options

Head Start **FULL-DAY**: Starting the end of August through May

SITE:	Central, Kappel, Lisbon, South, and the Head Start room at Early
WHEN:	<i>Monday through Thursday</i>
Core hours:	Monday - Thursday 8:30 am–3:30 pm

SITE:	Wahpeton
WHEN:	<i>Monday through Thursday</i>
Core hours:	Monday – Thursday 8:00 am-3:00 pm

Head Start **PART-DAY**: Starting the first part of September through May

SITE:	Central
WHEN:	<i>Monday through Thursday</i>
Core hours:	Monday – Thursday
Mornings:	8:00 am - 11:30 am
Afternoons:	12:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Early Head Start **FULL-DAY**: Starting the end of August through July

SITE:	Early Head Start
WHEN:	<i>Monday through Friday</i>
Core hours:	Monday – Friday 8:30 am-3:30 pm

Head Start Birth to Five services are federally funded, so there is **NO COST** to families.

Family involvement activities offered throughout the school year are also provided at no cost to Head Start Birth to Five families.

Classroom Requirements



**Dress
for the
weather!**

What to Wear

- A child should be wearing comfortable clothes that allow the child to easily play and get “messy” in
- Closed-toe shoes with a back, tennis shoes, preferably

What to Bring

- Please send an extra set of clothes to school, including pants, shirts, underwear, and socks
 - If clothing items need to be borrowed from Head Start/Early Head Start, please wash and return them promptly
- A backpack will be provided by Head Start
- Warm outdoor apparel, including a coat, mittens, a hat, snow boots, and snow pants, during the colder months

What to Leave at Home

- No outside food and beverages are permitted
- Toys
- Pets that are not professionally certified therapy animals
- Holiday cards*, **including invitations**
- Party favors*



*Please do not distribute invitations, party favors, or other treats, as doing so can make other families feel pressured to do the same. Verbal expressions of gratitude are always welcome.

Celebrations/Birthday

For confidentiality reasons, we cannot give family names, addresses, and telephone numbers. We cannot distribute invitations to children.

Our program refrains from celebrating religious belief holidays. Instead, our program celebrates accomplishments, birthdays, the Week of the Young Child, and much more.

**Storm
closures**

Storm Warning Procedure – Announcements will be sent via Brightwheel

The school district where your site is located delays start by 2 hours.	↔	Part-Day Head Start Full-Day Head Start Early Head Start	No morning classes Open at 10:30 am Open at 10:30 am
The school district where your site is located cancels school before 8:00 am.	↔	All Head Start classes are closed. Includes Part-Day, Full-Day, and Early Head Start	
The school district where your site is located closes early due to deteriorating weather conditions.	↔	All Head Start Classes will close early. Please update your phone numbers with staff so you can be reached if needed.	
The SENDCAA Agency is closed.	↔	All Head Start classes are closed. Includes Part-Day, Full-Day, and Early Head Start	

***If Head Start is closed due to weather, school will be made up on the designated storm day.**



Great Plains Snack Bag Program

Children in our Fargo and Wahpeton Head Start are encouraged to participate in the Great Plains Food Bank Snack Bag program. The Snack Bag Program will provide a bag full of kid-friendly, shelf-stable food for your child to take home and eat over the weekend.

There will never be a charge for this program; it's entirely funded through grants and private donations.

The Great Plains Food Bank fills these bags, and SENDCAA Head Start does not have control over what gets put into the bags being distributed. Please read all labels before consuming, as they may contain allergens or ingredients that are not accepted by your cultural beliefs. While we have been informed that there will be no pork products in any bags, please look at the labels to verify. The Great Plains Food Bank and SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five are not responsible for any allergic reactions due to the Snack Bag product. The food is provided by the Great Plains Food Bank.



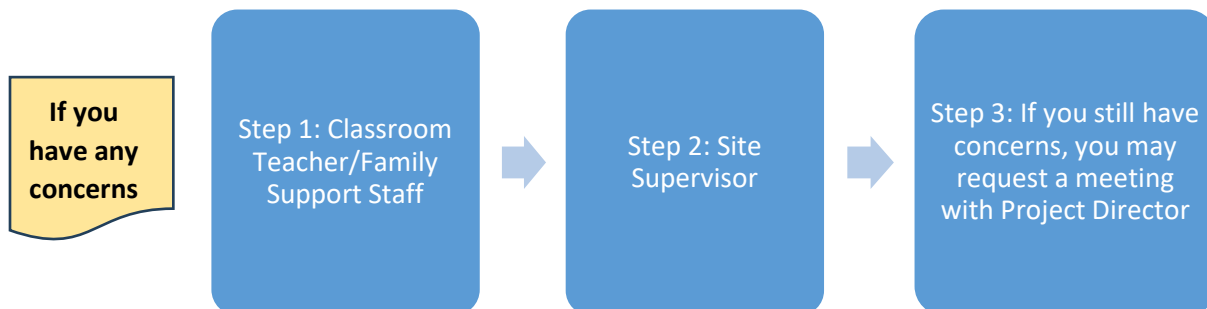
MATBus Public Transportation

City bus stops are conveniently located within walking distance of each of our Fargo sites and can provide affordable and reliable transportation for your family to and from school.

Parent Complaint Procedure

These are the steps to follow if you have a concern regarding your child's services associated with the SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five Program. Over the academic year, you may have concerns that you would like to share with us. Most issues can be fixed by talking directly with the school staff on-site. Step 1: Please first talk with your Classroom Teacher or Family Support Coordinator about your concerns. Step 2: If you follow Step 1 and feel your concern is not addressed appropriately, please speak with the Site Supervisor at your child's site.

After following the first two steps, you may request a meeting with the Project Director if the concern is not addressed appropriately. To request a meeting, please call: 701-235-8931.



Brightwheel Parent Communication

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five utilizes Brightwheel to communicate what's happening in the classroom and at the site with parents. Staff will share classroom information, send updates on what's happening at a program level, and send reminders of important events. It's a quick, efficient way to stay connected and know what your child is doing at school.

Safety

At Head Start Birth to Five, we prepare children and staff should an emergency arise.

Throughout the year we practice:

- ✓ Fire Drills completed monthly, per fire code
- ✓ Shelter in Place Tornado Drills completed seasonally
- ✓ Emergency Lock Down Drills
- ✓ Administrative Lock-Down Drills
- ✓ Bomb Threat Drills
- ✓ Shelter in Place Hazmat Drills
- ✓ Site Evacuation Drills

In case of a real emergency, each site has a safe place for evacuation. Each family would be called by staff and notified of where to pick up their child. In these instances, the safety of yourself and your child is our highest priority. We will keep your child safe until you can safely pick him or her up. If you do not have a phone, we will attempt to reach someone on your emergency contact list to pick up your child.

We recommend that each family practices fire and tornado drills at home and has a plan of where to go for safety in case of a real fire or tornado.

Security Cameras

To ensure safety for the children, staff, and parents, cameras and microphones have been installed in each classroom at the Fargo sites. Cameras have also been installed on the playgrounds, hallways, and to oversee the parking lots at these sites. The cameras might not view some areas of the building, and sometimes have technical difficulties.

Cameras will also be used for staff training and professional development. Please see the Project Director with questions or concerns.

Let's work
together to keep
kids safe!

Drop off and Pick Up Safety

Please follow our rules and expectations regarding drop-off and pick-up safety to keep all our families safe:

- **Drive slowly and stay alert when entering or exiting our lots.** Please yield to all pedestrians in our lots and stay alert when looking for small children. Drivers should avoid cell phone distractions while in our lots.
- **Cars must be parked in designated parking areas.** Cars may not be parked in front of the entrances, blocking walkways or drive-through areas. If you are not in a parking spot, you cannot park there. Also, keep handicapped parking spots open for those families that need handicapped spots (signage on vehicles is required).
- **Children must not be left unsupervised in vehicles.** It is extremely dangerous for any children to be left alone in a vehicle. Young children must be supervised at all times.
- **Children must hold an adult's hand when walking in the parking lot.** The parking lot is very busy during transitions. Young children must hold an adult's hand to remain safe.
- **Children are not to open the doors or gates or push the doorbell button.**
- **Children must always be with an adult.** Children must stay with their parent/guardian until they have been signed in with the teacher and must remain with their parent after they have been signed out with the teacher. Adults, please walk at a pace your child can keep up with and avoid allowing them to dart ahead of you.

- **Parents/Guardians must refrain from cell phone use while dropping off or picking up their child.** We ask that you are present and aware of your surroundings while you are driving and escorting your child to and from the building, to stay alert for possible dangerous situations.
- **Parents/Guardians should not be under the influence of drugs/alcohol when picking up or dropping off children.**
- **All families must be respectful of others.** We ask that all parents set good examples for our children while on our premises by speaking and acting respectfully toward staff and other families.
- **Students will not be released unless** the person picking up is listed on that student's emergency contact list as an approved "Release To" contact. This approved person must present a photo ID for verification and **must be at least 18 years old.** Only custodial parents/guardians can make changes to this list.

If you are having issues with other parents/guardians abiding by these rules, please talk with a staff person and allow us to handle the situation.

**We will
complete
developmental
screens!**

Education

Social-Emotional Development

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five realizes that the earliest years set the stage for lifetime emotional well-being, social skills, and competencies. We strive to create an environment where all children leaving Head Start Birth to Five have the skills and knowledge they need to be emotionally healthy, socially competent, and ready to learn.

To help us with this, we use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional Screen (ASQ:SE). Parents, guardians, and classroom teachers each complete this screen to guide us in:

- Providing a positive classroom environment
- Developing social-emotional goals for all children
- Identifying social-emotional developmental concerns early on
- Supporting families and center staff working together to address challenging behaviors
- Assisting families in:
 - Understanding typical social-emotional development
 - Developing and using positive guidance techniques
 - Understanding the link between family and child mental health and wellness
 - Developing a nurturing environment
 - Identifying and strengthening young children's protective factors and increasing resilience

Along with the ASQ:SE, we use the Conscious Discipline model. See the next page to learn more about Conscious Discipline.

Global Developmental Screening

In addition to the ASQ:SE, each child in SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five is required to participate in a developmental screening. This must be done within 45 days of the child's enrollment in the program. This will be done by SENDCAA Head Start staff.

Children are screened in the following areas:

- Language (how well a child understands what is being said, as well as the development level of the child's spoken language)
- Cognitive Skills (colors, numbers, reasoning/problem-solving ability)

- Gross Motor (balance, jumping, etc.) and Fine Motor (grasping, manipulation of items)
- Speech (a child's ability to use speech sounds in words)

The screening looks briefly at a broad range of skills. When scores indicate a referral for services, the information is shared with you. Additional testing is sometimes completed. SENDCAA Head Start and our public school districts work together to provide the best developmental opportunities for young children. Special services are provided to children who qualify for them at no cost to the parent/guardian. Early Childhood Special Education teachers and therapists meet with SENDCAA Head Start teachers during the year as consultants.

We also employ a Mental Health and Disability Coordinator who provides classroom consultation. This individual specializes in working with young children and families. They visit classrooms regularly to observe and support teachers and children in their social-emotional growth. They are also available to support families with concerns, education, guidance, and community resources as needed. Please let your child's Teacher or Education Coordinator know if you would like to meet with our Mental Health and Disability Coordinator.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is an emotional intelligence program pioneered by Dr. Becky Bailey that teaches children to respond, rather than react, during life events. Every day life events are used as teachable moments and guide children to develop self-control, utilize tools for conflict resolution, boost self-esteem, and foster positive relationships and social skills. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and best educational practices.

Our program will provide opportunities for parents to learn more about Conscious Discipline throughout the school year. For more information on Conscious Discipline, please talk to your child's teacher or visit: www.consciousdiscipline.com.

We welcome you and your child to our School Family!



Home Visits and Conferences

Parents and teachers are partners working together to help children grow and learn. Family visits are scheduled four times throughout the year (2 conferences & 2 home visits). Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed or at the parent's request. You and your child's teacher will:

- Identify your child's strengths and needs, along with your family's strengths and goals
- Evaluate your child's progress
- Set goals and plan activities that will help your child grow
- Review community resources and information available

**Let's visit!
Communication
is key!**

Head Start Education

Curriculum

Head Start utilizes *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*. The curriculum is based on five fundamental principles:

- *Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning*
- *Social-Emotional competence is a significant factor in school success*
- *Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning*
- *The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions*
- *Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning*

Physical Environment

The physical environment of a classroom has a profound effect on individual children, the group, and the teacher. Our top priority is creating a safe, comfortable, and well-designed space for the children in our classrooms.

The Head Start classrooms are divided into interest areas. Children can spend time each day exploring and experimenting in the interest areas.

The Interest Areas are as follows:

***Blocks**

***Sensory**

***Art**

***Discovery**

***Toys and Games**

***Cooking**

***Dramatic Play**

***Music and Movement**

***Library**

Daily Schedule

A daily schedule establishes consistency that helps young children predict the sequence of events to feel more secure and more in control of events.

Each classroom will have a daily schedule posted for parents/guardians to view, and a daily picture schedule for children in the classroom.

In the Head Start classrooms, you will notice a balance of active and quiet activities throughout the day. Children will spend time in the classroom and outdoors. There are at least two read-aloud books read daily. Teachers also include times to teach literacy and math skills throughout the day.

Typical schedules include:

Group Meeting

Read-Aloud

Mealtime

Rest Time (Full-Day Classrooms)

Choice Time

Small and Large Group

Outdoor Play



Children will also learn lifelong healthy habits like handwashing, toothbrushing, dressing for the weather, staying safe, healthy food choices, and much more!

Early Head Start Education

Curriculum

Early Head Start utilizes *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos*. This curriculum helps teachers appreciate and find joy in the everyday discoveries that delight a child: the sound a rattle makes; the leaves blowing in circles by the wind; the ball that unexpectedly rolls across a child's path; the ants marching across the pavement. It is a comprehensive curriculum that helps teachers achieve the very best classroom for children under three. If the interactions children have are nurturing, consistent, and loving, and the experiences they have are appropriately challenging, then infants, toddlers, and twos grow and flourish. In our classrooms at Early Head Start, children learn to trust and joyfully explore their surroundings, making discoveries and developing a sense of themselves as capable learners and caring human beings.

Physical Environment

The classroom environment will vary, considering the age of the children in that classroom. Overall, we consider the need to keep children safe and healthy. When arranging their classrooms, teachers also think about accommodating for mixed-age groups and for children with disabilities.

Daily Schedule

At Early Head Start, you will notice that schedules are flexible and adaptable to meet the individual needs of all children. The schedules set an unhurried, child-directed pace for the routines and experiences of the day. There is a balance between active and quiet times. Children are provided with opportunities to spend time in small groups of 2-3 children, and children go outdoors when weather permits.

Children will also learn lifelong healthy habits like handwashing, toothbrushing, dressing for the weather, staying safe, healthy food choices, and much more!

We welcome YOU into the classroom at any time and strongly encourage your involvement in your child's education. You can be involved by coming into the classroom to read your favorite book to the children, sharing a tradition, sharing a meal, or joining your child in his or her daily routine. Please further discuss this with your child's teacher, if you are interested. If you have any curriculum suggestions, we would love to hear them.

Changing
schools?

Program Transitions

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five implements strategies and practices to support successful transitions for children and their families transitioning either within our program or out of our program. Whether transitioning between classrooms, sites, or kindergarten, our program implements age-appropriate strategies to help children and families be successful in the transitioning process.

Early Head Start

For our program to function efficiently and for children to make the most of the program, transitions must occur. Your child will transition between age classrooms. When your child's age is about to change, they will transition to the next room, pending availability and the program's assessment of their developmental readiness. Opting out of transitions to the next age level is not an option. Our program staff will provide extra support as needed to ensure a successful transition for your child, your family, and the program.

As your child approaches age 3, we will work with you to ensure eligibility to transition to our Head Start program. If your family is deemed over-income and is unable to continue to our Head Start program, you will have 60 days from the day your child turns 3 to transition out of the program. Staff will work with you to help explore other options for your family. Children who are eligible for Head Start will move to the next available opening once they are 3.

*****Be aware that Head Start hours of operation are not the same as the days and hours of Early Head Start.*****

Head Start

The main goal of Head Start Birth to Five is to prepare your child for kindergarten. The transition to kindergarten is a very big change for your family and your child. Our program staff recognizes this big transition and uses many strategies to prepare your child and your family for kindergarten, including:

- ✓ Helping you identify your neighborhood school
- ✓ Sharing information from public schools on kindergarten registration
- ✓ Sharing information on kindergarten round-up events in the community
- ✓ Taking trips to visit kindergarten classrooms, when possible
- ✓ With parent permission, sharing relevant information with your child's kindergarten teacher to ensure a successful transition occurs

Moving Out of Town

If you plan on moving out of our service area (i.e., Minnesota), please notify staff as soon as possible so we can work with you to make your transition to your next home as smooth as possible. Children who remain in the area but have moved across the state border to Minnesota will have 60 days to transition out of the program. Staff will work with you to help explore other options for your family. This excludes children who are considered to be homeless or in foster or kinship care.

School Readiness

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Our program has a comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy child development, which results in school readiness.

We recognize that parents are their child's primary teacher and advocate. For parents and families, school readiness means that they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child.

Our school readiness goals appropriately reflect the ages of children from birth to five.

**Getting kids
ready for
kindergarten
is our ultimate
goal!**

Approaches to Learning

- Children will learn and follow classroom rules, routines, and directions
- Children will participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations

Language and Literacy

- Children will demonstrate receptive and expressive language skills and communication (such as using correct grammar & conversations with others)
- Children will demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet (such as identifying and matching letter sounds)

*If you or your child speak a language other than English, we will honor that, while also helping your child learn the English language

Social and Emotional Development

- Children will use strategies to handle strong emotions (e.g., seeking an adult, removing themselves, taking deep breaths)
- Children will engage in positive relationships with adults and children

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Children will use math concepts (numbers, patterns, & shapes) during daily routines and experiences
- Children will use observation and manipulation to ask questions and make predictions to better understand information and develop problem-solving

Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

- Children will demonstrate control of small muscles for self-care, using utensils, building, and writing
- Children will learn and use safe, healthy behaviors

Head Start and Early Head Start will track your child's progress toward school readiness by utilizing our curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum*, along with *MyTeachingStrategiesGOLD*, *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework*, and *ND Core Competencies*.

Family



**Growth
takes
teamwork!**

Family Partnership Agreement

SENDCAA Head Birth to Five staff will:

- Provide a safe environment that meets your child's developmental needs
- Promote open communication and opportunities to discuss your family's progress in our program
- Utilize the student engagement app, Brightwheel, to aid in communication and photo sharing regarding your child's activities throughout the day
- Provide mental health professionals to observe your child in the classroom concerning behavioral and/or developmental concerns
- Provide School Readiness Goal-based learning activities for your child to best prepare them for continuing their education
- Provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks for your child throughout the day
- Provide health and developmental screenings and education
- Promote daily, on-time attendance
- Provide family engagement opportunities to promote family well-being

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five families will:

- Follow program policies and safety expectations to maintain a safe environment for all families and staff
- Follow the requirements laid out in the Family Handbook
- Communicate with staff regarding attendance, child concerns, health appointments, changes in address and phone number, and any other need-to-know information to allow Head Start to provide services
- Utilize the student engagement app, Brightwheel, to aid in communication and engagement regarding my child
- Give staff permission to call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency, and to follow the dispatcher's recommendations for care
- Receive program services free of charge and contribute In-Kind hours by participating in volunteer opportunities and at-home school readiness activities
- Honor time commitments made with Head Start staff and community partners (i.e., IEP meetings)
- Complete the following health requirements: physical exam, immunizations, dental exam, hemoglobin, lead, flu shot, COVID vaccine, and any needed treatments
- Participate in two parent-teacher home visits and two parent-teacher conferences
- Have children at the center on time consistently during the core hours to allow them to participate in all learning experiences and curriculum-guided activities
 - For FULL-DAY classes, our school hours are as follows:
Central, South, Kappel, and Lisbon Sites: 8:30 am-3:30 pm, Monday-Thursday
Early Head Start: 8:30 am-3:30 pm, Monday-Friday
Wahpeton Site: 8:00 am-3:00 pm, Monday-Thursday
 - For PART-DAY classes, our school hours are as follows:
Central: Morning class: 8 am-11:30 am, Monday-Thursday
Afternoon class: 12:00 pm-3:30 pm, Monday-Thursday

- Have children picked up by a parent/guardian or an approved Emergency contact **by the end of their session. If you cannot arrive on time at the end of the session, please make arrangements to have your child picked up early rather than late.**
- If your child is not picked up, **we will assume your family is in crisis and contact the local police department.**

Attendance Requirements

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five is a school readiness program designed to teach our students how to be successful in school. An important factor in school success is establishing a routine of attendance.

****This means attending each scheduled school day with on-time arrival and pick-up.****

Our program has an extensive waiting list for enrollment slots, and it is our responsibility to our community to ensure the students enrolled in our program are utilizing them effectively. Frequent absences can put a student's enrollment at Head Start Birth to Five in jeopardy.

Outlined below are our attendance requirements to maintain enrollment in our program:

Communication

- Students must be signed in and out of the center daily
- Parents/Guardians must contact their child's Teacher or Family Support Coordinator if their child is going to be absent or running late
- If our program does not receive a call from the parent/guardian regarding a student's absence, the program will call the parent/guardian, the student's emergency contacts, or make a home visit to follow up on the absence(s)

Arrivals and Pick Ups

- **Students must arrive on time and be picked up on time.** On-time arrivals and pick-ups are essential to the routines of each classroom, the students' meal participation, and the students' developmental progress
- Students will not be released unless the person picking up is listed on that student's emergency contact list as an approved "Release To" contact. This approved person must present a photo ID for verification **and must be at least 18 years old.** Only custodial parents/guardians can make changes to this list
- If staff believe the parent or release to contact is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, dispatch will be notified, and a Mandated Reporter Child Abuse & Neglect report will be submitted
- If a student has not been dropped off on time, parents/guardians will be encouraged to make up the time with in-kind volunteer hours in the classroom
- If a student has not been picked up on time, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian and any emergency contacts listed for the family. After 30 minutes of no contact, staff will assume the family is in crisis and will be calling law enforcement to conduct a welfare check
- If late pick-ups are becoming consistent, you will be required to complete an Attendance Action Plan

Chronic Absenteeism

- An enrolled student must maintain a monthly attendance rate of 85%, meaning a student cannot be gone from school, excused or unexcused, more than 15% of the days in session for the month. If a student's rate drops below this level, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with their Family Support Coordinator to complete an Attendance Action Plan
- If attendance issues continue and no progress is made by the family, the child will be removed from their placement

**Regular
attendance
is important!**

Consecutive Unexcused Absences



- If a student has four consecutive unexcused absences with no contact, staff will complete a home visit to check on the student's well-being. This could put the family and student in jeopardy of being removed from the program
- If ten calendar days have elapsed and a parent/guardian has not made contact, the student will be withdrawn from the program

*****If attendance guidelines are not followed, a student's placement may be forfeited.*****

Family Engagement and School Readiness

Head Start Birth to Five welcomes and encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's school experience. Children have a more positive experience when their parents are involved. Parents are their child's first and most important teacher.

Family Services

- SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five works in partnership with parents to identify strengths and family goals
- Family Support Coordinators are available to talk to about resources and services in our community

Parents as Partners

- Stay active and involved in your child's school life
- Attend school meetings and parent-teacher conferences
- When you meet the teacher, tell him/her something positive about your child
- Read all materials that come home from school. The classroom newsletter will have important information
- Read to your child for a few minutes or more each day
- Utilize Brightwheel to stay engaged with your child's day and for easy communication

Parent Involvement

- There are many ways to be involved in Head Start, including volunteering in the classroom, sharing your traditions or a special talent, and participating in program management
- Parents are encouraged to visit their child's center anytime during hours of operation

Parent Committee

- All parents are automatically members of your Head Start site's Parent Committee and are encouraged to be active members
- Parent Meetings will be held several times in the year

TIME = MONEY!

In-Kind

- In-Kind support is defined as a donation of time, skills, and/or goods from a parent, community member, or another agency to benefit the Head Start Birth to Five program
- All Head Start programs must receive In-Kind support from local sources in addition to their federal funding
- Parents give the most by volunteering their time to SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five
- Staff will have you sign an In-Kind form when you volunteer
- Monthly In-Kind activities will be sent home with your child, and we need you to fill them out and send them back with your child. It is required for all Head Start programs, so we can receive funding for this program
- Please ask your child's teacher or other HS staff if you have questions about In-Kind



*****Submit quality time spent with your child to help us secure our full grant budget!*****

Policy Council

The SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five Policy Council is a decision-making parent group mandated by the Head Start and Early Head Start Program.

The Policy Council includes representation of elected parents in our program and local community members who work closely with our program and our families. Policy Council members serve as a voice for families in our program. Policy Council members meet once a month to approve agency policies, hiring of staff, grant applications, and more!

- **What are the benefits of serving on the Policy Council?**
 - Have a voice in the programs at SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five
 - Gain knowledge and experience toward your own educational and employment goals (Policy Council is a great resume booster!)
 - Learn how to advocate for your child in the education system
 - Become more informed about our program and other community services
 - Meet and form friendships and partnerships with other parents and staff
 - Free childcare is available during meeting times for your children
 - A free meal, during meetings, for Policy Council members and attending children
 - Giving back to the program that provides high-quality education for your child
- **No Experience Necessary! Talk to your child's Teacher or Family Support staff if you have any questions!**
- **That sounds great! How do I run?**
 - If you would like to be considered for this very important position, please speak with your Family Support Coordinator. A ballot will be available during the first few weeks of school with names and information about the parents who are running for a policy council seat within your child's site

Health Services Advisory Committee

SENDCAA's Head Start Birth to Five program provides Health Services in partnership with families and community health organizations. Together, they support the health and safety of children and their families. The Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) helps Head Start Programs make decisions about health services.

- **Who can join?** - Any Head Start Parent can become a member of our Health Services Advisory Committee, and no experience is required, just willing to attend meetings twice per year
- **Want to know more?** - Talk to your Family Support Coordinator for more information

Family Confidentiality Procedures

Parents, families, and their children have a right to privacy and confidentiality. Whether a volunteer or a teacher, confidentiality is required by law. This is violated if staff or volunteers discuss a child or family in inappropriate places or situations.

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five follows the federally mandated Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (*HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (**FERPA) confidentiality and family permission rules.

Each staff member, volunteer, substitute, or student teacher is required to read and sign the Standards of Conduct at the start of his or her employment or volunteer experience. This demonstrates that they understand and agree to abide by the confidentiality policy of FERPA and HIPAA. The Family Partnership Agreement is included in the Family Handbook, and parents will be asked to sign it before their child's enrollment.

Release of Information

**We know
your
privacy is
important!**

- If parents are separated or divorced, either or both parents may request their child's educational information through a written request unless SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five has a court order prohibiting a parent from receiving information.
- Any information being released to newspapers, magazines, and television or radio reports, via telephone, email, or in person regarding Head Start may be released only through Head Start administrative staff who have been formally designated by the Project Director.
- Any sharing of any information or data will always be compliant with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Act.
- Data must be secure, and access limited only to the specific individuals approved and assigned to work with Head Start students or families. This is to ensure that no data is released or reported in any manner that would allow the identification of individuals.

*Confidentiality of all data found in health records is required under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191.

**Confidentiality of information contained in educational records is required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232(g).

**We are partners
in keeping kids
safe!**

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five are mandated reporters under this law. The employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with a parent/guardian before reporting the matter to county Social Services, nor are they allowed to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition before making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. Head Start takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. Child Protective Services is designed to protect the welfare and best interests of all children. As mandated reporters, the staff of Head Start Birth to Five cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services, which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

More screens!

Health and Nutrition

Preventive health services are important in SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five, and for this reason, all children are required by federal guidelines to have record of, a complete dental exam and physical exam within the first 90 days of enrollment. Children enrolled in EHS have more frequent well-child exams in the first two years of life. When health problems are discovered, the Family Support Coordinator helps the families seek treatment right away. A medical/dental home (a place where your child receives ongoing, accessible, and continuous health care) must be found. Ask your Family Support Coordinator for information if you need a medical or dental home.

*Make an
Appointment*

Health and Dental Services

If your child has North Dakota Medicaid for their insurance, health and dental care services are covered for your child.

If transportation is needed for appointments, the Human Services Zone or Tribal office can help provide transportation with prior approval. Talk to your Family Support Coordinator to help arrange this ahead of time.

Please keep your Family Support Coordinator informed whether your child has or does not have a source of health insurance. SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five may assist in coordinating health and dental services with families. Any additional assistance and/or payment for health or dental services must have prior approval from the Project Director. Please speak with your Family Support Coordinator for more information.

Hearing Screening

During the early years, children are learning many things. Language is a very important part of their education. Even slight problems with a child's hearing can cause them to experience gaps in their learning. For this reason, we include hearing screenings as part of our developmental screenings. Your child's hearing screening will be completed within 45 days of entry into our program. If your child is experiencing hearing or ear problems, three things may happen:

- ✓ We may wait a month and then repeat the screening
- ✓ You may be asked to take your child to a doctor to determine if there is a medical problem
- ✓ Your child may need a complete hearing evaluation. We will discuss these steps with you if they become necessary, and give you names of professionals whose services you might use

If you have any questions about your child's hearing, please discuss those with the Family Support Coordinator at SENDCAA Head Start. **If the child fails the screening, a professional follow-up is required to be completed.**

Vision Screening

All children need regular vision screening throughout childhood. Untreated vision problems have been associated with poor learning.

A vision screening will be completed by the SENDCAA Head Start Family Support Coordinator within 45 days of entry into our program. If any concerns are found (per our procedures), the child will be referred to an eye doctor of your choice for follow-up. **If the child fails the screening, a professional follow-up is required to be completed.** SENDCAA Head Start may be able to help you obtain glasses for your child, if necessary.

Height and Weight

Your child's height and weight are monitored throughout the year by the Family Support Coordinator.

Physical Examination



Has your child had a physical exam in the last year? Please communicate that information with the Family Support Coordinator so they can request those records. If your Head Start child needs a physical exam, the Family Support Coordinator can assist you with making an appointment, if necessary. SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will **NOT** pay costs if you take your child to your doctor for a physical exam. If you do not have medical coverage for your child, please visit your Family Support Coordinator.

Immunization

In the State of ND, children are required to show proof of immunization before entry into childcare or school. All children need to be up-to-date according to the childcare immunization requirements or have claimed an exemption within 30 days of enrollment, or they must be excluded from our program. If you have any questions about immunizations, please visit with your Family Support Coordinator.



Dental Examination

Has your child had a dental exam in the last year? Please communicate that information with the Family Support Coordinator so they can request those records.

Each child enrolled in the Head Start program is required by federal guidelines to have a dental exam. If your child needs a dental exam or dental follow-up, the Family Support Coordinator may assist you in making those appointments. SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will **NOT** pay costs if you take your child to your dentist.

Parents/Guardians who fail to call the dental office to cancel their child's appointment will not be seen again at that dental office.



Appointments

When you make an appointment for a well-child exam and/or dental exam, it is very important to keep those appointments. If you cannot keep the appointment, call the dentist or clinic and call SENDCAA Head Start. If possible, call early so the dentist can give someone else your appointment time. Please help SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five maintain a good reputation by keeping your appointment, arriving at your appointment on time, and canceling an appointment if you have a necessary conflict.

**We need med forms,
or we can't give
meds.**

Medication Administration

Parent(s)/guardian(s) must complete a *Medication Administration form* before prescribed medications or over-the-counter medications can be given at SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five. This includes lotions, chapstick, and diaper rash cream/ointment. The parent/guardian **and** the child's licensed healthcare provider must sign the *Medication Administration form*.

Any medication sent to school or being sent home must be handed to the adult responsible for transporting the child for safekeeping. Please do not send medication with your child or put it in your child's backpack.

Non-emergency medication sent to SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will be kept in a locked box or cabinet, and out of reach. Emergency medication will be kept out of reach. Any medication needing refrigeration will be stored in a locked box while refrigerated.

Head Start/EHS does not have EpiPens on site. If your child is required to carry an EpiPen for a health condition, the parent/guardian will be responsible for supplying HS/EHS with an EpiPen to keep on-site for their child.

Head Start/Early Head Start staff will always carry a cell phone with them when they are away from their sites (ex. walks, fieldtrips) to call 9-1-1 in case of an emergency.

Any prescription medication or over-the-counter medication (Ibuprofen, Tylenol, etc.) brought to Head Start must be in the original container with the name of the medication, prescription label, strength, dosage that needs to be given, time medication needs to be administered, etc. Most pharmacies will provide a second bottle if needed. All medications will only be given with a completed *Medication Administration form* signed by the parent/guardian and the child's licensed health care provider. If necessary, Head Start can contact healthcare professionals for clarification. All prescriptions must be reviewed and have a new *Medication Administration form* signed by the parent/guardian and the child's licensed health care provider at the beginning of every program year, and throughout the year as needed.

Parents/Guardians can provide education to designated staff that will be giving the medication. The first dose of medication is always to be given by the Parent/Guardian. Parents are encouraged to give scheduled doses of medication at home, as much as possible.

Sunscreen

SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five will provide generic sunscreen lotion for children over 6 months old. A permission form must be completed by the parent/guardian first. Staff will apply sunscreen 20-30 minutes before going outside between April through September. SENDCAA Head Start Birth to Five is not responsible for any allergic reactions a child may have to sunscreen. NO SPRAY SUNSCREENS WILL BE USED.

Illness Guidelines

- **Please call if your child is going to be absent.** We will call you if we do not hear from you
- If your child becomes ill while at school, you or your indicated alternate will be contacted and asked to take your child home
- Children with the following symptoms/illnesses should stay home or will be sent home until improved, treated, or diagnosed as non-contagious:
 - Symptoms and signs of possible illness, such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other unusual signs for the child. If a child does not feel well enough to participate in the usual center activities, or illness results in a greater need for care than staff can provide
 - Fever with behavior changes or other symptoms - Fever is a temperature above 101°F (taken by any method) in infants aged 3 months and older. Infants 2 months or younger of age with a temperature above 100.4°F (taken by any method) with or without behavior changes or other symptoms require exclusion and immediate medical attention. **A child's temperature should be normal for 24 hours without medication to reduce fever prior to returning to Head Start Birth to Five.** Even a child with a serious infection may show no signs of fever upon waking in the morning
 - Vomiting - 2 or more times in 24 hours. **Children with vomiting should not return to Head Start Birth to Five until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours**
 - Diarrhea - stool not contained in a diaper; "accidents" for toilet-trained children; stool frequency exceeds 2 or more stools above what is normal for a child, or if stool contains blood or mucus. **Children with diarrhea should not return to Head Start Birth to Five until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours**
 - Persistent abdominal pain - (2 or more hours) or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other systemic signs and symptoms
 - Chickenpox - A child will not be allowed to return to Head Start Birth to Five until all lesions have crusted over and no new blisters have started for 24 hours
 - Impetigo - until treatment is started and lesions are covered
 - Head lice - can return the next day after the first treatment
 - Scabies - can return after the first treatment is complete
 - Strep throat - until treated for 12 hours
 - Any unexplainable rash - with fever or behavior change
 - Skin lesions - if they are weeping/draining/oozing and unable to be kept covered with a waterproof dressing
 - Oral lesions - if the child cannot control drool or participate due to other symptoms, or until the child is considered non-infectious
 - COVID-19 - fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and overall improving symptoms
 - Influenza - fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and overall improving symptoms



Sick kids need
extra care at
home.

- If your child is exposed to something contagious away from Head Start Birth to Five, please notify us
- If your child has a positive (+) Mantoux, medical clearance in writing from a physician must be given to attend
- We require a written order from a healthcare provider if you do not want your child to play outdoors **(with a medical reason stated)**
- Please inform your child's teacher or the Family Support Coordinator if your child was injured at home
- The program does not deny admission to a child, nor exclude any enrolled child from program participation for a long-term period, solely based on his or her health care needs or medication requirements, unless keeping the child in care poses a significant risk to the health or safety of the child or anyone in contact with the child

Medical Emergency Procedure

If an immediate medical emergency occurs, the following emergency procedure will be utilized:

- All staff are trained and certified to perform first aid and CPR as needed. A medical response team will be called, such as 9-1-1 and/or the Poison Control Center, if a poison emergency occurs. (1-800-222-1222)
- Emergencies that require staff to call 9-1-1 include, but are not limited to:
 - Allergic reaction
 - Emergency medical personnel must be immediately contacted whenever an EPIPen has been administered
 - The child is having difficulty breathing
 - Change in the child's mental status (unusual behavior, difficulty waking up)
 - Sudden severe pain
 - Uncontrolled bleeding
 - Poisoning: call the poison emergency number above
 - Seizures, if a child has never had one, or if the seizure is longer than five minutes
 - Major trauma or injury
 - Suspected spinal or neck injury
 - Severe burns
 - Child is unconscious
 - The child is lifeless or not breathing
- Staff will follow the dispatcher's recommendation on how to proceed with care
- The parent/guardian will be called as soon as possible, and no later than 30 minutes after the emergency call has been made. If unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff will call the emergency contacts
- A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and stay with the child until the parent/guardian or emergency contact has arrived
- Parents will be contacted whenever there is a head injury

Child Nutrition Policy



- Staff will work with families to determine each child's nutritional needs concerning:
 - Information about family eating patterns, including preferences, special dietary requirements for each child with nutrition-related health problems, feeding requirements of infants, toddlers, and each child with disabilities

- Each child in a part-day, center-based setting must receive meals and snacks that provide at least 1/3 to 1/2 of the child's daily nutritional needs. Each child in a center-based full-day program must receive meals and snacks that provide 1/2 to 2/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs, depending upon the length of the program day
- All children in morning center-based settings who have not received breakfast at the time they arrive at the center must be served a nourishing breakfast
- Each infant and toddler in center-based settings must receive food appropriate to his or her nutritional needs, developmental readiness, and feeding skills, as recommended in the USDA meal pattern
 - Infants are held while bottle feeding and are not laid down to sleep with a bottle
 - Feeding schedules and amounts and types of food provided, meal patterns, new foods introduced, food intolerances and preferences, voiding patterns, and observations related to developmental changes in feeding and nutrition must be shared with parents and updated as needed
 - We promote breastfeeding. This includes providing facilities to properly store and handle breast milk, making accommodations for mothers who wish to breastfeed during program hours, and, if necessary, providing referrals to lactation consultants
 - Infants and young toddlers must be fed "on demand" to the extent possible or at appropriate intervals
 - All toddlers, preschool children, and staff will eat together in a family-style setting
- For 3- to 5-year-olds in center-based settings, the quantities and kinds of food served must conform to the recommended USDA requirements
- Children brush their teeth once during the day
- Children are offered various age-appropriate nutrition experiences in the classroom
- Safe drinking water is available to all children throughout the program day

