

SEVCA

Southeastern Vermont Community Action

Windsor County Head Start



Parent / Staff Handbook 2026-2027

Center Locations:

- Chester Community Preschool, Chester, VT
- Pine Street Preschool, Springfield, VT



Dear Head Start Families,

August 2026

Welcome to SEVCA Head Start. We are pleased that you and your child will be in the program during the coming year. Many pleasant experiences await you, as you and your family get involved in Head Start.

Often being involved with a new program can be confusing. This handbook is designed to help you avoid some of the confusion that is natural when starting something new. This handbook not only explains Head Start and your role and responsibility as a Head Start parent, but also covers our full day, full week child care program in Springfield and Chester.

SEVCA Head Start believes that parents are their children's first and primary teachers. Therefore, your role is crucial as we work together to develop the most comprehensive program that we can offer you and your family. Your participation is essential.

Making a good Head Start program calls for many people to work together, sharing their talents, knowledge and energy so that the children will receive the greatest benefit. The more knowledge and energy parents can invest in the program, the better the program will be.

Parents become involved in Head Start because it works for their children and their families. The reasons for parent involvement are simple. The task of operating the best possible program for the children is complicated. When you become part of the program you show your willingness to participate. Parents work together to decide what kinds of learning experiences they want for themselves and for their children in Head Start.

Fathers, and/or other male figures (stepdads, grandfathers, uncles, etc.) have a special place in their children's lives. Children whose fathers or other male figures, take an active part in their daily lives tend to be better adjusted and better equipped for success. A father's role may not be the same as that of a mother, but your interest in your children can make a significant difference. Be proud of your responsibilities and your efforts. Children need caring and involved fathers and male figures.

As parents, your opportunities will include planning and participating in home visits, parent committee meetings, parent/teacher conferences, volunteering, or being a representative to the Policy Council. Your involvement is crucial, your possibilities endless.

As you and the staff read this material, you will gain a better understanding of Head Start. Please ask any staff member questions you may have regarding your participation in Head Start.

Sincerely,

SEVCA Head Start Management Team

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic:	Page#
I. General Information	4
II. Head Start History	5-6
Head Start Mission Statement	5
Head Start Philosophy	6
III. Parent Involvement	7-11
Roles & Responsibilities	8
Parent Involvement is Family Involvement	9-10
Parent Group Officers & Duties	10
Policy Council	10-11
IV. Parent Volunteers for Skill Building	12-14
Parents as Volunteers	13
Parent Volunteering in the Classroom	13-14
V. Education	15-21
Education Philosophy & Goals	16
Screening & Assessment	16
Transition	17
Transition Plan	17-19
Head Start Classrooms	19
Daily Communication with Parents	19
A Typical Classroom Schedule	19-20
Classroom Play Area Guide	20-21
Full Day Child Care Program	21
VI. Health & Nutrition Services	22-25
Health & Nutrition Services	23
Medical	23
Dental	24
Vision & Hearing	24
Growth Assessments	24
Nutrition	24-25
Screening for Lead Poisoning	25
VII. Family Partnership	26-31
Family Services	28
Gathering Information	28
Family Plans	29
Creating Opportunities	29
Family Partners	29
Home Visits	29
Family Partnership Agreements	30
Family Literacy	31
VIII. Disabilities, Mental Health and Prevention Services	32-35
Disabilities Services	33
ECSE Contact Information	33
Mental Health & Prevention Services	34-35
Prevention	34
Behavioral Health Screening Tools	35
IX. Day-to-Day Operations	36-39
Attendance	37
When should staff & children stay home from school?	37

Operating Hours	37
Snow Days	37
Emergency Procedures	38
Meals	38
Tooth Brushing	38
Confidentiality	38
Holidays	38
Sign-In/Out	38-39
Smoking Policy	39
Parental Freedom of Access	39
X. Administration	40-42
Performance Standards	41
Where does the money come from?	41-42
XI. Policies & Procedures	43-71
Abuse & Neglect Reporting	44-45
Arrival & Departure Policy	45-46
Attendance Policy	46-48
Attendance Policy (Child Care)	48-49
Classroom Safety Policy	49-50
Confidentiality	50-51
Discipline Policy	51-55
Emergency Evacuation Procedures	55-56
Field Trip Policy	56-57
Food & Nutrition Policy	57-59
Head Lice Policy	59-60
Holiday Policy	60
Immunization Policy	60-61
Late Fee Policy (Child Care)	61
Late Pick-up Policy	61-62
Lead Test Information	62-63
Medication Policy	63-65
Rest Time Policy	65-66
Sibling Policy (Child Care)	66
Tobacco Policy	66-67
How Parents Can Access State Licensing Information	67
USDA Notice to Beneficiaries	67-68
SEVCA Head Start Civil Rights Complaint Procedure	68-71
XII. Community Resources	72-77
Emergency Numbers	73-75
Lending Library	76
Additional Important Numbers (for Head Start)	77

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Head Start is a comprehensive child development program which serves children from ages 3- 5 and their families. It is a child-focused program and has the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families.

The Head Start program is administered by the Office of Head Start (OHS), the Administration on Children, Youth and Families ([ACYF](#)), Administration for Children and Families ([ACF](#)), and the Department of Health and Human Services ([DHHS](#)). Grants are awarded by the ACF Regional Offices and the Head Start Bureau's American Indian - Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Program Branches directly to local public agencies, private organizations, Indian Tribes and school systems for the purpose of operating Head Start programs at the community level.

The Head Start program has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high-quality services designed to foster healthy development. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and parent involvement. In addition, the entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child's and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

All Head Start programs must adhere to Program Performance Standards. The [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#) define the services that Head Start Programs are to provide to the children and families they serve. They constitute the expectations and requirements that Head Start grantees must meet. They are designed to ensure that the Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully, that the Head Start philosophy continues to thrive, and that all grantee and delegate agencies maintain the highest possible quality in the provision of Head Start services.

Further information about Head Start objectives and their implementation is provided through publications and information resources and services available from the [Head Start Information and Publication Center](#) website. Another new resource is the Head Start information center: <https://headstart.gov>.



II. HEAD START HISTORY

In 1964, the Federal Government asked a panel of child development experts to draw up a program to help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children. The panel report became the blueprint for Project Head Start.

Project Head Start, launched as an eight-week summer program by the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1965. It was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. Recruiting children age three to school entry age, Head Start was enthusiastically received by education, child development specialists, community leaders, and parents across the Nation. Head Start serves children and their families each year in urban and rural areas in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories, including many American Indians and migrant children.

In 1969, Head Start was transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Office of Child Development in the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and has now become a program within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services. A well-established, though still an innovative program, Head Start has had a strong impact on communities and early childhood programs across the country.

The program is locally administered by community-based non-profit organizations and school systems. Grants are awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services Regional offices, except for the American Indian and Migrant programs, which are administered in Washington, D.C.

For statistical information on Head Start you may go to the [Head Start Statistical Fact Sheets](#) on the [Head Start Information and Publication Center](#) website.

Mission Statement:

SEVCA Head Start empowers children and families to build opportunities for success through education and resources.



The Head Start philosophy rests on four basic principles:



- 1. A child can benefit most from a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program to foster normal development and remedy problems;**
- 2. Parents are the primary educators of their children and must be directly involved in the program;**
- 3. The well-being of children is inextricably linked to the well-being of the entire family; and**
- 4. Partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the community are essential to meeting family needs.**

III. PARENT INVOLVEMENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



“Every interaction with parents is parent involvement.”

Our vision for your family is to create an environment of partnership and mutual respect that will involve your whole family in all aspects of our program. We will support you as the primary educator of your child, honor your efforts to nurture your child and plan together to assure an opportunity for significant involvement. Working together, we can assure your position in making policies and decisions for the program, which is the foundation for our success.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS IN HEAD START

ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES
PARTICIPANT	Planning activities, such as Policy Council Orientation, open house Parent and advisory meetings, center/family outing committee meetings Education opportunity Recreational and social events
LEARNER	Observe in classrooms Assist at family outings Join parent education programs Read about Head Start and child development Sign up for literacy, GED, and/or college credit classes
CONTRIBUTOR	Volunteer in various aspects of the program Contribute ideas and thoughts for the program Give as much time as possible to your Head Start program
SUPPORTER	Get other parents to participate Explain Head Start in the broader community Support all staff in their efforts Help out in centers and whenever needed
EVALUATOR	Participate in annual program evaluation Identify methods for strengthening program
PLANNER	Initiate and/or plan activities of interest to parents Identify goals for Head Start program Help planning process in policy groups Participate in re-funding process
DECISION-MAKER	Participate in/attend policy group meetings Participate in countywide, citywide, statewide policy group meetings Participate in Statewide Parent Association
PRIME EDUCATOR	Work with your child to reinforce what s/he has learned in HS
CHILD ADVOCATE	Understand your child's needs and meet them Protect your child from injury and bodily harm Know and protect your child's rights Be an advocate for your child and other children in your community
PAID EMPLOYEE	Apply for Head Start staff openings, if qualified Become qualified if not already qualified Be an effective, sensitive, responsive staff person
LEADER	Become involved in your community (school, government health and human service activities) Learn the political system and how it works Use any leadership skills you have learned in or outside Head Start Assume a community leadership role

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IS FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

At SEVCA HEAD START we recognize the contribution that both men and women make in the lives of children as parents and care givers. We strive to help families enjoy their children and strengthen their parenting skills through education and support.

Head Start believes that a parent is the most important influence on a child's development. Research tells us that the involvement of parents in their children's lives is the key to their children's academic success. This is why ***parent involvement is the foundation*** of the program. Parents are also involved in running Head Start and making decisions about the experiences they want for themselves and their children. Parents that become involved in Head Start do so because they know it works for their children and their families. At SEVCA HEAD START it is not a question of "***should we***" but rather one of "***how should we***".

Head Start provides a variety of leadership opportunities for parents. In addition to home visits and classroom or center activities, parents participate in parent meetings and activities, program governance, advisory committees, and program evaluation. Parent education and training opportunities are planned in response to parents' interests.

PARENT EDUCATION

An essential part of our local Head Start program is parent involvement. Through participation in orientation, home visits, monthly parent meetings and workshops, classes, discussion groups and conferences – locally, regionally – parents learn about the needs of their children and about educational opportunities for themselves. There are many opportunities for training throughout the year!

LOCAL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT/PARENT GROUP MEETINGS

Each Head Start center will have monthly Family Engagement opportunities. These functions will typically be held at your child's center. Children will have an opportunity to "show off" their work to their families by presenting art exhibits, open houses, maybe a performance or cooking a meal. During these activities, parents will have time to meet as a group to discuss topics that concern the Head Start program. Discussions may center on:

- Activities you want included in the program planning for you and your child
- Your family's expectations in regard to the program
- Issues concerning children
- Menu planning
- Health issues and updates
- Family budgeting
- Home visit content
- Learning about current Policy Council issues
- Planning curriculum for classroom and family outings
- Program and community events
- Education activities that are of interest to the parent group

Your group may decide to invite a speaker, provide hands-on projects, or sponsor a clothing or recipe swap. Parents work together to make the meetings of direct interest to everyone, have fun, be together and **support each other**.

The parent group belongs to each and every parent. Parents bring to these meetings knowledge of their own children and the needs of their families. Staff are asked to attend your meetings to help the group organize and get started. The staff can act as a resource, providing parents with helpful information. Final decisions should be made by parents and staff working together. **Remember: this is your parent group.**

Only through your input can you help it to grow. By faithful attendance and participation followed by responsible action, you can help your local group succeed.

Each local area parent group elects parent officers, as well as representatives and alternates, to act as a “voice” on the Policy Council. Policy Council representatives act as messengers from their local group to Policy Council. In turn, each member supports and aids these elected representatives. This support is provided in two ways. First, the parent group gives the representative ideas on issues coming before Policy Council. Second, the representative reports to the group on the meetings of Policy Council.

PARENT GROUP OFFICERS AND DUTIES

Chairperson or President	Conducts the meetings, sets up the agenda with staff input.
Vice-Chairperson	Assist the Chairperson and chairs the meeting when the Chairperson is absent.
Secretary	Keeps the minutes and attendance of the meetings.
Policy Council Rep.	Attends monthly meetings. Shares thoughts and ideas from the local parent group on issues addressed by the Policy Council, as well as sharing parent meeting updates with the Policy Council.
Policy Council Alternate	Attends Policy Council meetings when possible; assists the Policy council representative and assumes the responsibility at the Policy Council when the representative is absent.
Policy Council Community Member	Our Community Parents from Springfield and Chester are also encouraged to become part of the Council, attend monthly meetings, share thoughts and ideas from the local parent group on issues addressed by the Policy Council, as well as share parent meeting updates with the Policy Council.

POLICY COUNCIL

The Policy Council is an **active** group, working in partnership with the Head Start Director and Managers, that makes major policy decisions concerning all Head Start operations in SEVCA Head Start. Policy Council members include parents of children currently enrolled in the program, and elected representatives from the community. Elected representatives from the community may include past-member parents, as well as our community parents from Springfield and Chester. Each Head Start parent group elects representatives and alternates to represent them at the Policy Council meetings and to vote on important issues. This structure allows for maximum parent involvement in decision making. Head Start parents have the majority of seats on Policy Council and have a strong voice in administrative and managerial decisions. Elections should be held at the first or second parent group meeting after the program opens in the fall.

The elected members of the Policy Council appoint a chairperson who chairs the meetings and sets the agenda, with parent and staff input. The vice-chair chairs the meeting in the absence of the chairperson. The secretary acts as the “recorder”, taking the minutes of the meeting and the attendance. The minutes are given to the Head Start Director and a copy is kept in the central office. These minutes are included in the following month’s board packet. The treasurer is responsible for keeping the regular accounts and works with the office manager or director in keeping these financial records accurate. (This Policy Council does not have a need for a treasurer).

Some of the functions of Policy Council are:

- to participate in and approve the results of the annual program self-assessment
- to participate in preparation and review of the budget (including all funding sources: Head Start, Child Care, Act 166, CACFP and Unrestricted Funding)
- to approve program policies
- to approve the hiring and termination of Head Start staff
- to approve selection and guidelines
- to approve all funding and grant applications
- to act as a link between Head Start and other agencies

Policy Council meetings are scheduled once each month excluding the summer. (Occasionally, summer meetings will be scheduled when there is work that we need to do.) The meetings are open to all parents. Only selected representatives, or in their absence, alternates may vote. Only income eligible members may receive travel and childcare reimbursement. If a representative is absent from three consecutive meetings she/he will receive a letter from the Policy Council chairperson requesting an explanation and/or determine whether the representative intends to return. If there is no response, the affected parent group will be asked to fill the vacancy.

The elected representative of each parent group submits regular reports and all pertinent information to the Policy Council. The representative shares success, achievements issues, educational programs, newsletter and agendas with other parents.

IV. PARENT VOLUNTEERING FOR SKILL BUILDING



Every child in Head Start should be raised in the most nurturing way possible.

PARENTS AS VOLUNTEERS

Head Start is a family program. When we enroll your child, we enroll you too! What does it mean? We provide a variety of opportunities in all areas of our program for you and your child. Since parents are the adults with whom children spend most their time, we cannot stress enough the importance of parent involvement in Head Start. The relationship the parent and child form with one another shapes the entire course of the child's learning and growing years. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their services in any way that's comfortable for them. They will be considered for employment in positions where they meet established job requirements. Volunteering is a good way to work toward employment in the program. Working with children and other staff members gives parents and staff the opportunity to observe your interests, skills and commitment to Head Start. When jobs become available, you will find them through local newsletters, newspapers, Facebook or postings in Head Start and community action offices.

Volunteering is necessary for the program to run effectively, and it can be a rewarding experience. Volunteers must participate in Head Start volunteer training. You will learn new techniques for working with children, and you will have an opportunity to share your knowledge and experience with parents and staff. Head Start considers volunteer work as an "in-kind" donation to the program. Volunteers fill out an in-kind form, documenting the specific days they volunteered, the tasks they completed, and the amount of time they contributed. Documenting your volunteer work lets the program demonstrate community support to its funding sources.

Volunteering can build new skills and may even count for college credit. Come up with ideas of your own on how to get and stay involved. Check with your child's teacher or Family Partner.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM

Head Start welcomes parents in the classrooms. Performance Standard 1302.34(b) (1) states that Head Start sites need to be open to parents during all program hours. Parents who are interested in participating in the classroom on a regular basis (a regular basis is considered anything more than just an initial observation of the class and dropping off and picking up your child each day) are considered volunteers and, as such, must comply with the following volunteer requirements:

- Complete the volunteer paperwork if volunteering more than 5 hours per week.
- Pass the records authorization check.
- Agree to adhere to Head Start's confidentiality policy.

As classroom volunteers, parents have much to offer to the classroom, the children, the teachers and to the overall smooth functioning of the room.

- Parents can provide an extra pair of hands for messy and fun activities.
- Parents can interact one-to-one with a child, engaging in block play, pretend play, an art activity, doing puzzles, or reading a book.
- Parents can eat with the children and teachers at mealtimes, encouraging children to pass food to one another, use good manners and socialize appropriately.
- Parents can share special skills with the class (teach them a new song, play an instrument, do a cooking project, etc.).
- Parents can play outside on the playground with children and staff.

In addition to the many contributions you can make to the classroom, it is our hope that you will also find that **you** can get a lot out of volunteering in the classroom.

- You will have an opportunity to observe your child interacting with other children.
- You can observe children using their problem-solving abilities to master new skills.
- You may learn more about new ways to interact with your child.

- You may discover a new interest of your child's that you were not previously aware of.

Head Start's goal for this partnership of parent volunteers with staff in the classroom is for everyone to benefit; the children, the parents, the staff and the person as a whole. In order to ensure this, there are certain ground rules that must apply. These include, but are not limited to:

- Adults need to be focused on the children; not chatting with each other and taking time away from the children.
- Parents and staff should work together to develop a volunteer schedule.
- Volunteers should be familiar with the schedule and the routine and have specific tasks to participate in and help with.
- As Head Start staff, the classroom teachers are ultimately responsible for the well-being of each child and the entire classroom, so volunteers need to take directions from the teachers.
- At times, volunteers in the classroom may hear some confidential information. It is important to understand that this information must not be shared with anyone.

Once again, we welcome Head Start parent volunteers in our classrooms. Please talk to your child's classroom teacher or your Family Partner if you are interested in volunteering in the classroom.

V. EDUCATION



Every child in Head Start deserves the opportunity to learn through play in age-appropriate environments.

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Our goal is to support children in feeling good about themselves. Together we build on the child's strengths and interests.

We believe that children learn about themselves and the world through their play with other children and their relationships to close adults. We value that each child is unique and we work to provide opportunities for your child to learn and develop at his or her own pace.

We recognize parents as the child's first and foremost teacher. We believe in the family unit and will do all we can to help strengthen and support that unit. We support and assist the family in recognizing and achieving their goals.

The goal of the education component is to promote the Head Start characteristics that most affect how well a child learns in school. They include self-control, confidence, curiosity, intentionality, relatedness, capacity to communicate and cooperativeness. Head Start supports parents in their role as primary teachers of their children, based on the understanding that a healthy relationship between parents and children is the most important factor in promoting learning.

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT FOR THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLDS

Behavioral Screening: During the first home visit, teachers will work with parents to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for Social and Emotional Development. Results will be shared at the first parent teacher conference in October.

Developmental Screening: During the first parent teacher conference, teachers will also administer the Early Screening Inventory-Revised with individual children. This is a brief developmental screening, which is intended to be a quick snapshot of your child to highlight strengths and areas to support.

On-going Developmental Assessment: In the Head Start program, teachers are using observations they take in the classrooms and use The Creative Curriculum, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, and the Vermont Early Learning Standards to guide them in creating quality learning environments that include:

- Approaches to Learning (Engagement, Curiosity and Persistence)
- Social & Emotional Development
- Language and Literacy
- Cognition (Problem Solving, Math, Science)
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

By choosing activities and experiences that highlight and include these domains, your child will have fun while learning many new skills.

We will work with you to complete three assessments each year for your child. These assessments are based on the classroom observations of your child and the activities they participate in and will help us to develop a plan to meet individual needs of your child. We rely on important information from you, the parents, by completing forms about your child's development, as well as screening and observations done by staff. You will set goals for your child with staff. These goals will be evaluated each time parents and staff meet to record the progress.

TRANSITION

Children transition to different classrooms in school, different Head Start programs, and special education programs. These may not seem like big steps to adults but for children it is hard to leave the comfort of known people and routines for the unknown. Even going across the hall to a new classroom means leaving friends and staff behind, so it is natural for children to be a little sad and a little anxious. (See the Transition Plan).

TRANSITION PLAN

Transition is an important part of the Head Start program. Transitioning families and children to and from the program is an ongoing process with specific events and activities planned throughout the year to help families feel comfortable.

Transition plans may be as simple as making two or three visits to the next setting or as complex as any individual child may need. It is important to be guided by the needs and comfort level of the child.

Transition Goals:

The transition process shall consider the following goals:

- Continuity of services and care
- Minimal disruption of the family system
- Enhanced child development from one environment to the next
- Planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation within and between programs and with the family

Tips for transition:

- Prepare children for new experiences by talking about them before they happen.
- Read books about making changes.
- Involving parents in the transition process.

Transitioning into Head Start:

When families enroll their child into Head Start, they are given the opportunity to bring their child to the center to become familiar with the environment and teachers. If children are transitioning from another preschool program into Head Start, we often get permission to speak with the sending preschool for academic record and any screenings that may have been done. All children entering Head Start receive a home visit from the teachers before they start in the classroom, so that children can meet the teachers and begin to form a secure relationship with them in their own home environment. Teachers take pictures of children and their families to have in the classroom for comfort. Children's pictures are displayed in the classroom so that the child feels welcome, and there is a family board with pictures of the child's family that the child can look at to help comfort them and feel secure in the classroom environment. Teachers form relationships with families by communicating daily either at pickup, or through communication logs and activity sheets, and message groups. By creating these relationships with families, children receive a consistent message between home and school from parents and teachers.

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

Ongoing activities:

- Enrollment: All children who are three years old by September 1, and meet other necessary Head Start guidelines are enrolled in the program throughout the year.
- Transition Books: Each classroom has books available about public schools in the area, discussing what kindergarten will be like in the fall.

- Reading Books: About growing older, Kindergarten experiences, and the feelings around transition from one place to another.
- Daily Discussion: Teachers encourage children to talk about going to the “Big School”, becoming familiar with what the experience will be like, and with whom they will be spending their day.
- School Visits: Teachers will plan with the area elementary schools for children to visit.
- Visitors: Throughout the year visitors from the elementary school will visit the classroom to meet the children and spend time with them. These include the principal, Kindergarten teacher, school nurse, librarian, etc.

August:

- Enrollment of children into the program
- Teaching Team sends letter to Kindergarten students.
- New families that are interested in the program are encouraged to come and visit the classroom.
- Transition Plan is discussed with families during the first home visit.

September:

- Courtesy call made by Head Start teachers to Kindergarten teachers to about how former Head Start children are doing. (If new teacher, former teacher can make the call and introduce new teacher.)
- Open House/Community Event held at each center inviting all school personnel, former and present Head Start families and children, and community volunteers.

October:

- Parent Meeting: Staff and families can invite former Head Start parents/guardians to their meeting to discuss their experience with the transition process, possibly becoming, “Family Mentors.”
- Lead Teachers will observe Kindergarten classrooms within their community

November:

- Invite the school nurse to come and visit the classroom(s) and possibly read a story.

January:

- Contact local PTA groups and invite them to come to a Head Start Parent Meeting, so that transiting parents can get to know how they can be involved in public school PTA
- Invite school principal to visit the classroom

February:

- Invite Kindergarten teachers to share a meal at Head Start
- Registration for Kindergarten is usually announced for all towns
- Call Kindergarten teachers to set up Kindergarten Pen pals to begin in March

March:

- Head Start teachers will contact Kindergarten teachers about scheduling times to visit the classroom, and discuss dates for the Head Start~ Kindergarten Connection Meeting
- List of each child eligible for Kindergarten will be returned to the corresponding Kindergarten teacher with registration forms sent to all centers by participating schools.
- Provide interaction between children that are attending the same public school, but are not in the same classroom
- Begin Kindergarten Pen pals

April:

- Head Start children will start making visits to the Kindergarten classrooms and tour the school.
- Head Start/Kindergarten Connection Meeting/Recruitment and Open House will be held at each center and or participating school.
- Teaching Teams will complete the Teacher Observation Form for Transition on children moving on to Kindergarten and send to the corresponding schools.
- Transition meetings will be scheduled in collaboration with ECSE and school districts for children with IEPs.
- Schedule a visit from the school bus driver for children so explore a school bus.

May:

- Head Start children will finish making visits to the Kindergarten classrooms and a tour of the school.
- Food Service Providers will work with teaching teams to provide “cafeteria style” meals to children for the last two weeks of school.
- Teaching Teams will provide activities for families to do at home over the summer.

The Vermont Head Start Association created statewide School Readiness Goals to be used and measured by each Head Start program in the state. These goals include:

- Social Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Literacy/Language Development
- Physical Health and Development
- Cognitive Development

HEAD START CLASSROOMS

The importance for parent involvement in your Head Start classroom cannot be stressed enough.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom. Classroom experience gives you the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the specific techniques used in working with the children, and your children will gain a sense of their importance to you. This valuable experience also gives you ideas for activities you can do with your children. Staff also benefit from your experiences. Staff provide orientation and training for parent involvement in the classroom. Teachers can answer any questions you may have regarding you or your child’s participation.

DAILY COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Teachers will communicate daily with parents during drop-off and pick-up times. For parents who do not see the teaching staff due to work schedules, centers utilize parent messaging apps and daily communication forms. If parents have any questions, they are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher to schedule a meeting if necessary.

A TYPICAL CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

Head Start classrooms provide a reliable routine with choice of developmentally appropriate materials, activities and experiences that encourage children to learn and develop through play. The daily schedule varies from classroom to classroom and is flexible to allow for individualization, field trips and other learning experiences.

The typical program may include:

- Arrival
- Hand washing
- Free play/choice: storytelling and making books, open-end art activities, many small and large motor activities, etc.
- Hand washing
- Breakfast
- Tooth brushing
- Circle or group activities such as story time
- Choice Time
- Outdoor play
- Hand washing
- Lunch
- Rest Time
- Snack

- Choice Time
- Outdoor Play
- Departure

Each child should bring several sets of clothing to keep at school in their cubby, appropriate for the time of year. This should include underwear and socks. Occasionally accidents happen where clothing needs to be changed, so having another shirt or pair of pants to change into can make a big difference. Teachers plan activities that are messy, so please make sure your child has clothes that you will not be upset if they get paint on or other messy materials.

CLASSROOM PLAY AREA GUIDE

Children will have a chance to play and learn, both alone and with others. The classrooms, based on The Creative Curriculum, provide specific play areas for the enjoyment and education of your child.

Area: Gross Motor

Using large muscles helps children develop coordination and strength. Gross motor activities are also a wonderful means of relieving tension and releasing energy. Many gross motor activities require children to practice social skills, such as cooperating with a partner on a seesaw.

Area: Art

Art activities for preschoolers are an expression of how they feel at the moment. Older children may choose to “make something” during an art experience. However, they approach it, children generally enjoy the process because it feels good, or it’s interesting, or just simply fun! It’s important that children experiment with art materials in different ways. If a child is expected to produce something specific that the adult has in mind, then she/he might begin to think that’s the only way to do it. Art is an expression of who children are, not of what they can do. The process is more important than the product.

Area: Books

Developing a love of books is a basic ingredient of your child’s education. Picture books with very little text are good choices for very young children. Developing a sense of pleasure and enjoyment in books is much more important to the child’s education in the early years than learning the technical part of reading skills. You know you’re on the right track when a child asks if you can find a book to help her learn more about something she/he likes; or if children act out stories that they have heard; or if a child repeats a rhyme phrase from a book that she/he loves. Then you know that they have come to regard books as an enjoyable activity, rather than something that just tests their reading skills.

Area: Pretend/Dramatic Play

Children love to pretend. They like to try out different characters and roles. This area helps them to make sense of the world by dramatizing how they see real life or how they wish life could be.

Area: Nature/Science/Discovery

Children may have a real advantage over adults in this area because they are still fascinated by things in natural world-things that adults may overlook. Children explore and understand the environment around them by using their senses. This area gives them a chance to explore the natural world.

Area: Puzzles and Manipulatives

As children fit things together with their fingers (Legos, puzzles, Tinker Toys), they are building hand-eye coordination and smaller muscle strength, which helps them later in reading and writing. This area is also a great place for children to develop persistence and a sense of accomplishment. “Look Mommy, I did the whole puzzle by myself!”

Area: Music and Movement

Music is very much tied to children's emotions – it is a way to express how they feel. Rhythm helps them develop speech skills and physical balance. Music does not have to be a separate area. It can be blended with other activities to help children celebrate whatever they are doing.

Area: Blocks

Playing with blocks and the accessories that usually go in this area (cars, trucks, houses, animals, etc.) allows children to role-play and create their own worlds. The block area is also a place where the first signs of cooperation may show up in a classroom. The younger preschooler will want to build his or her own tower. Older children may eventually begin working on a project together. Unit blocks are cut to match up evenly so that children will learn about balance and proportions, math concepts, and about shape and size. After children have had repeated opportunities to organize equal size blocks to build a building, and then someone introduces the word "equal" at a later time they understand the concept better because it has a physical "hands on" context.

Area: Outdoors

Outdoor play is fun for children and important for their development. Opportunities to jump, run, hop, skip, and use their "outside" voices, provide children with a healthy release and the chance to stretch their muscles and explore their natural environment. Young children learn communication skills and new language concepts by engaging in all these activities and by interacting with each other and adults.

FULL DAY/YEAR CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Our sites offer full day, full week, full year care for children. We are closed for holidays, in-service days, and parent teacher conference days. The program runs Monday through Friday with operating hours of 7:30am to 4:30pm. Weekly tuition for Head Start weeks is stated in parent's child care contracts. We do not offer part-time care. Weekly full-time tuition, M-F from 7:30am-4:30pm for non-Head Start weeks is \$382.50/week. Our program does accept child care financial assistance, so families that are eligible for this assistance would have varying co-pay (if any), depending on the amount of assistance that they receive. Child sick days, holidays, in-service days, early release days, and parent teacher conferences days are included in weekly tuition.

Tuition is due on the Friday before the week of care. If tuition becomes two weeks late, the family will have until next Friday to pay the full tuition, or the child will be withdrawn from the child care program until the balance is paid.

Please contact Jodi Farashahi, Child Care Services Manager, for more information.

SEE also Late Fee Policy, Rest Time Policy and Sibling Discount Policies in the Policy & Procedure section of the Handbook.

VI. HEALTH/NUTRITION SERVICES



Every child in Head Start has the opportunity to try new foods.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES

The focus of the health component in Head Start is really about preventive health practices, and children's overall health in relation to their development. Head Start provides a comprehensive health program-including medical, dental, nutrition and mental health services to ensure that children grow and develop to their fullest potential. We believe the best way to accomplish this is by working together with parents on preventive health care and early identification of health problems.

Head Start Performance Standards require programs to obtain information about each child's current health status. The information obtained is determined by the Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Testing schedule from the Vermont Department of Health. Most of the information about your child's health can be provided by your child's doctor. However, Head Start does offer screenings for height, weight, hearing, vision and dental. These screenings need to be completed for each enrolled child **within 45 days** of the date they begin Head Start. To ensure that we provide families with the best services possible, it is very important that we have parents' active help and cooperation in scheduling and keeping these required medical and dental appointments. To avoid unnecessary duplication of testing, please inform staff of any test already completed. If we need to request any information from a doctor's office, we must first have your written authorization.

If a family does not have medical or dental insurance, Head Start staff will help to determine eligibility and aid in applying for the appropriate coverage. If a family is not eligible for state Medicaid or Dr. Dynosaur, Head Start will pay for the health screenings that we require. Head Start will also help the family to plan for follow-up treatment for identified health problems. Further financial assistance for follow-up treatment from Head Start must be cleared through the health manager.

Medical

In order to ensure that children remain healthy, Head Start places an emphasis on prevention and early intervention. To do this, Head Start requires that each enrolled child receive routine, preventative health care in the form of Well Child exams/physicals done by a physician in accordance with the schedule recommended by the Vermont Department of Health, also known as Early Periodic Screenings and Diagnostic Treatment (EPSDT). These exams must be completed at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 24 months, and yearly thereafter at ages 3, 4, and 5 years. Up-to-date immunizations are important to keep children safe from childhood diseases. Head Start and Vermont State Early Childhood Licensing Regulations require that each child have a current immunization record on file. (See Immunization Policy).

VERMONT STATE LICENSING BUREAU REQUIRES ALL CHILDREN IN HEAD START, AND/OR CHILDCARE, MUST HAVE A CURRENT PHYSICAL ON FILE WITHIN 45 DAYS OF ENROLLMENT.



Dental

Prevention is the key to good dental health. It is important to take proper care of baby teeth so grown-up teeth will come in healthy and strong. Children should begin routine visits to the dentist at age one. Head Start requires that each child three years and older have a dental exam and cleaning, as well as any follow-up work that is needed. Children will participate in teeth brushing twice a day after meals in the Head Start classroom with tooth brushes and fluoride toothpaste being provided by Head Start. Children and parents will be given the opportunity to learn more about good dental hygiene and available dental services in their communities. A Tooth Tutor may be available to assist families that are having difficulties locating a dental home. The Tooth Tutor will screen children to determine the child's dental risk. No screening will be done without the parental permission. (This service will be offered as long as we have someone in the Tooth Tutor position.)

We encourage parents to help their children brush their teeth in the morning and again before bed.



Vision and Hearing

Vision and hearing screenings may be done during a child's physical. If not, they will be done by a trained Head Start staff person, or a community professional. No screenings will be conducted by Head Start without the parent's permission. Parents will be informed of results of the screenings.



Growth Assessments

Physical growth is an important part of children's total development. To help assess your child's growth and development, Head Start measures and graphs the height and weight of each child once in the fall and again in the spring. We also offer opportunities to meet with our nutrition consultant regarding concerns about your child's height or weight or nutrition concerns.



Nutrition

Good nutrition plays an important part in a child's total development. Head Start provides two meals, breakfast and lunch each day, as well as a snack for those children in the full day program. These meals are designed to follow USDA recommendations.

Children and staff eat together, and meals are served family style, meaning that children will be serving themselves and passing the food bowls to their friends at the table. Children are given opportunities to serve themselves, even if they need a little assistance from our teachers, as well as occasional opportunities to help prepare food. No child is forced to eat. **Please be sure staff are notified of any food allergies or special dietary needs or food modifications needed for your child. Documentation from the child's physician will be required.** You will be asked to complete a Nutrition Health Assessment to help identify any nutritional needs or concerns. Each assessment will be kept confidential in the health section of your child's file and reviewed by Head Start's health management staff; who will make recommendations if needed or requested by parents to our nutrition consultant. The nutrition consultant is available to meet individually with a family, if desired. Parents are given information on how to select affordable, healthy foods and prepare well-balanced meals, as well as opportunities to assist in meal planning and preparation.

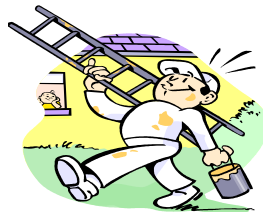
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The full Non-Discrimination Statement is provided to you at the end of this handbook.



Screening for Lead Poisoning

Based on the widespread occurrence of lead poisoning and its hazardous effects in young children, Head Start requires that every child have a lead screening assessment, or lead screening results on file. Some of the effects of lead poisoning include learning disabilities, impaired hearing, reduced attention span, hyperactivity and behavior problems. A simple blood test is the only safe way to make sure children don't have a dangerous level of lead in their system. This test can be done as a routine part of the child's physical exam if your physician determines that your child is at risk for lead exposure. Once the lead level is determined, steps can be taken to eliminate further exposure and reduce side effects. Parents will be given the opportunity to learn more about lead poisoning. We request the lead levels of your child at age 1 and 2 and others if necessary. It is important to follow up with your child's doctor if your child's lead level is high, it is recommended that the lead level is less than 5.



VII. Family Partnership



Every family is welcomed into our Head Start program.

FAMILY SERVICES



Family Services is one of the content areas that makes Head Start unique from other pre-school programs. Family Services in Head Start provides parents with opportunities to share their interest, build on their strengths, and to reach goals and dreams. The services provided are tailored to the family. That is: we do not have any set agenda for what services families receive. We recognize and respect that every family is unique and has individual interests. You tell us what it is that we can do for you!

GATHERING INFORMATION

You will have opportunities during ***Home Visits, Parent Orientation, Parent/Teacher Conferences** and visits to the Head Start center-to share information with staff that pertain to your child and your family. Staff will also provide you with a form titled ***Family Profile***. This is a document you can use to help you tell us about your family's interest and needs. *You* choose what information you want to share about yourself or your family. The information gathered is then used to assist you and your family in identifying your strengths and to help you find resources to meet your hopes and dreams!

Many families in Head Start have pursued the following:

- Adult Basic Ed., Adult Diploma Program-GED
- College courses – i.e. Community College of VT
- Job training program
- Driver's license
- Housing issues or buying a home
- Literacy issues
- Budgeting & financial management
- Workshops regarding Parenting concerns

These may not be topics of interest to you, but it is an example of what we can provide for services. You will have opportunities to review your profile with staff during home visits and parent/teacher conferences.

*We also ask that you complete a one-page **Parent Volunteer Survey** that lets us know what types of involvement you would like to be part of, at Head Start. There are many opportunities in the classrooms, on field trips, cooking, or sharing a talent that you may have with the children.

FAMILY PLANS



What are your hopes and dreams for your family? Everyone has them. Let us know what you are striving towards and we can assist you with information and resources.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



Finally, once you determine what it is that you want to pursue for your future, Head Start staff begin to help you put those pieces together. We collaborate with the community which provides many services and opportunities that families are seeking. We call this **Community Partnership**. Sometimes we may have a guest speaker attend **Parent Meetings** that are held on a regular basis. Other times we may send home flyers or give you a call about a workshop that is coming up; on a topic you have shared you are interested in. We also provide **Home Visits** from our **Teachers** and our **Family Partners!**

FAMILY PARTNERS

SEVCA Head Start provides a Family Partner to all families enrolled in the Head Start program. The Family Partner's primary role is to provide information and resources to families, as well as supporting families to engage in the Head Start program opportunities. The FP will assist staff and families with information about available services (medical, dental, fuel, housing, food, etc.) and training (parent workshops, budgeting, CPR/First Aid, support groups, etc.). The FP will also assist staff and parents at each site by:

- Organizing and Facilitating Parent Engagement Activities
- Helping families to “hook-up” with area services
- Advocating for families and children
- Providing individualized meetings and home visits

HOME VISITS



Head Start staff provide at least three (3) Home Visits each program year. Teachers will conduct the first Home Visit, in the fall, a week or so before children begin in the classroom. The Family Partner will provide two (2) more visits; later in the fall and in the late winter/early spring. These are planned visits with you. They are simply an opportunity for you to have the one-on-one time that you deserve to meet with staff and discuss your child's progress, your own “Hopes and Dreams” and community opportunities. There are always opportunities to speak with staff when you are bringing your child to and from school or at family engagement activities, however these times are not always convenient for staff to truly give you the time and attention you deserve to hear about your child's developmental progress or to follow-up with goals you have working on for yourself or your family. Again, we are not coming to your home to see your house, we are simply coming to see you!

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

The **Partnership Agreement** is an agreement between families and Head Start that confirms that staff and families agree to pursue the interest and resources that families have identified. Head Start does not share this information with anyone that a family doesn't choose to have it shared with.

FAMILY LITERACY

The Improving School Readiness for Head Start Act of 2007 (Sec.637(4)(A)(B)(C)&(D) [42 U.S.C 9801]) defines the term “family literacy services” as:

... services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- (A) [Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.](#)
- (B) Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- (C) [Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and financial literacy](#)
- (D) [An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences](#)

All families enrolled in Head Start, Child Care or our collaborative programs, are offered opportunities in and out of the Head Start classroom to enhance their literacy desires. Some of the ways that we provide the above requirements are:

- Encouraging parents to participate in the classroom, attend trainings and meetings, and offer activity ideas to do in their homes with their children.
- Head Start provides training in financial areas, such as budgeting and IDA plans. We give parents information about Earned Income Credit (EIC) and can assist families with filing tax returns through our CAP agency.
- We receive free tickets to museums and state parks, and offer field trips to museums, libraries, farms and other community programs that offer rich literacy experiences.
- We have a Lending Library that is available to everyone in Head Start. The library is comprised of various books and videos that pertain to child development, discipline, health and nutrition, including cookbooks & exercise tapes! Ask your child's teacher how you can access this free service!

**For additional assistance in Literacy, families may partner
with area Learning Centers**

CHESTER/SPRINGFIELD

Springfield Learning Center

100 River Street Suite 102

Springfield, VT 05156

Telephone: (802) 546-0879

Email: info@vtadultlearning.org

WINDSOR/WRJ

Hartford Learning Center

225 #6 Maple St

Hartford, VT 05047

Telephone: (802) 299-2469

Email: info@vtadultlearning.org

VIII. DISABILITIES, MENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENTION SERVICES



Every child thrives in Head Start!

DISABILITIES SERVICES

Head Start serves children of all abilities. We want you and your child to develop full and rich lives. Children with disabilities participate fully in all Head Start activities, which include children with and without special needs. Head Start believes that all children benefit from interacting with each other. Head Start works closely with local schools to ensure that children with disabilities and their families receive needed support and services.

Head Start staff conducts a child development screening during the first 45 days following Head Start enrollment. This screening, coupled with parent and staff observations, allows staff to determine whether or not a referral to the local school district (ECSE Program) would be in your child's best interest. If the staff member and you agree that referral is warranted, Head Start will offer support throughout the evaluation process. If your child is determined eligible to receive services, Head Start staff will work with you to make sure your concerns are addressed in your child's educational plan. The point of gathering information is to find a child's current strengths, abilities, and needs. School staff use a variety of tests and measures to determine eligibility. Your knowledge and experiences with your child are an important part of gathering this information.

You are your child's most important advocate. Head Start staff can help you with questions you may have about your child's development and local resources. Our staff works closely with schools and community agencies to provide services to meet the individualized needs of children with disabilities.

If your child's age is from three to five years old, and you have concerns about your child's development, call the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program in your local school district. Tell them your child's needs and concerns. Then you, the ECSE program, and Head Start will form a team to decide how to best serve your child. ECSE provides specialized education services free of charge that meets the child's unique needs such as speech and language therapy. Related services are services that a child needs in order to benefit from special education.

ECSE Contact Information:

Springfield: Courtney Dextraze-Wiese, 802-885-5242

Chester: Kristina Shelley, 802-875-4206

If your child is already receiving services, like visits by a speech-language therapist or physical therapist, make sure they explain to you what they are doing. You are the most important part of your child's success. Do not be afraid to ask the teachers questions. It is important that the teachers and therapists tell you what they are doing and why. Regular communication helps everyone to work together.





MENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENTION SERVICES

All families experience stress from the everyday pressures of working, paying bills and trying to balance the needs of children and adults. Everyone, even children, experience some depression and anxiety. Usually, the depression and anxiety pass. Head Start recognizes that stress can reach the point where families are having difficulty coping.

Sometimes simple wellness activities, like going for a walk or a swim or talking to friends and relatives are all people need to help them regain a sense of balance. Sometimes families need outside help before that balance can be achieved.

SEVCA Head Start employees a Mental Health Services Manager who also has the qualification of a licensed mental health consultant, to help families decide if they might benefit from outside support for their children or themselves. The Head Start Mental Health Manager/Consultant is a licensed clinician and consultant with expertise in various behavior, anxiety and learning disorders. She visits all our classrooms on a weekly basis, meets with staff, and is available for consultation meetings with families to assist in developing parenting and behavior plans. The consultant may meet with you privately to listen to your concerns and stressors. The consultant will help direct you to the appropriate community resources.

Prevention

Prevention of alcohol and substance abuse is an important element of family wellness. Prevention includes good communication between parent and child, promoting positive self-esteem, and developing healthy problem solving and decision making within your family. If you or another family member has been affected by alcohol or substance abuse and you believe you and/or family members would benefit from counseling or additional resources, please discuss this with the Family Partner, or Family Services Manager. Head Start's contracted consultants can assist and support you in the referral process to community agencies, which specialize in substance abuse prevention and intervention.

Tips for helping children learn and be confident:

- Children learn by doing. Try to limit children's watching TV, and instead, provide simple play experience for them.
- Talk to your child from the day he or she is born. Talk about what he or she is doing, what you are doing, seeing, feeling, about what you did yesterday, or are going to do tomorrow. Talk about colors, shapes, pictures, people, family, pets...whatever you talk about teaches children new words.
- Learn to recognize and talk to your child about what he or she is feeling. Teach children the words for different feelings so they are able to tell grown-ups what they are feeling.
- Read to your child often. Establish some regular reading times every day.
- Avoid battles by using redirection. Focus on what they can have rather than what they can't.
- Make a big deal out of the things children do right and as little fuss as possible over the things they do wrong.



Behavioral Health Screening Tools

Ages & Stages Questionnaire-Social & Emotional (ASQ:SE): This is a questionnaire completed by parents at the beginning of the year and a few weeks after a new child starts later in the year. *General areas screened:* Personal-social (self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people). This tool lets teachers and parents know if further evaluation is necessary.

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): This assessment tool focuses on the social and emotional strengths of young children. This form is completed by both parents and teachers in the Fall and Winter and the information we gather from this assessment is used to strengthen our classroom designs, routines and schedules and offers families suggestive ways to strengthen social and emotional development if further evaluation is recommended.

IX. Day-To-Day Operations



“Routine and consistency create secure children.”

Now that you have read about all the content areas that are incorporated into the Head Start program, we want to share some important information that will ensure these services are being provided and implemented to the highest quality.

Attendance

There are many important reasons for children to arrive on time. Children and staff benefit from a routine that allows time for the transition from home to school. When children arrive late, it is sometimes difficult to maintain a calm routine. Children miss out on participating in the day's plans. Our food service staff also counts on a breakfast meal count to prepare adequate amounts of food for the lunch meal.

When children are absent for any length of time, it can be difficult for them to transition from one day to the next. Children need to be able to build on lessons from the day before. Head Start is not a mandatory program, however, children who are enrolled in Head Start are expected to maintain regular attendance. This is a requirement from our *Performance Standards*. We understand that children become ill, or family situations arise. Please call your child's teacher if your child will be late or not attending. **PLEASE READ THE ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CHILD CARE ATTENDANCE POLICY IN THE BACK OF THIS HANDBOOK.**

When should staff and children stay home from school?

The Vermont Early Childhood Licensing Regulations, Appendix B (posted in each classroom) determines when an individual should be excluded from the program. Please become familiar with these signs and symptoms. The basic overview is that anyone who is unable to participate comfortably in regular activities, has signs or symptoms of a possible serious condition, contagious illness, oral temperature of 100.1°, discharge from eyes, nose, ears, complaining of pain or discomfort, difficulty breathing, etc., should not attend classes until the condition has been diagnosed and okayed by a physician, or has gone away on its own. If children or staff are not well enough to participate, they should stay home or be sent home from the classroom if they begin to feel ill while in the classroom. Children and staff can return to school once their symptoms have subsided and they have met the child care criteria for their illness.

Children and staff who have a temperature of 100.1° must stay home until they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

Classrooms may have to close or change their hours, without warning, if staff are out due to illness. Head Start Management will do their best to make decisions as quickly as possible to give families as much notice as possible.

Operating Hours

SEVCA HEAD START school year program, is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The full-year program is open Monday-Friday, 7:30am-4:30pm. We discourage staff from arriving late and leaving early. We encourage appointments to be made after 2:30 pm, if possible. We also discourage children from arriving early and staying late. Staff wear many hats. In the mornings, teaching staff are busy getting the room ready for the day. When children leave at their scheduled time, teaching staff need to clean-up, do paperwork, plan, and attend meetings. Please respect the value of their time. It is difficult to concentrate on important work when staff are responsible for children. Thank you.

Snow Days

Parents will be informed which stations will broadcast Head Start snow days or delays. Each center is in a different school district; therefore, some centers may be closed and others open. Like us on FACEBOOK for closing announcements.

Emergency Procedures

Specific procedures are posted in case of fire, medical, or other evacuation emergencies. Emergency phone numbers are posted next to phones. Each site posts emergency procedures specific to their location. Centers also conduct a monthly fire drill. Centers are equipped with first aid kits, and all centers have staff on site that have a current certification in First Aid and CPR.

Meals

Two meals are served daily, breakfast and lunch, in our classrooms. We also provide an afternoon snack. Meals are served “family style” with children and adults seated together to serve themselves, eat and socialize. Children participate in meals by setting tables, serving themselves, putting their dishes in bins. Food is never used as a form of punishment or reward. We welcome your suggestions and ideas for the menu. We also welcome parents to join us. Please let the food service provider know ahead of time so planning can be done accordingly. **Please do not send snacks or drinks. See Food & Nutrition Policy.** Staff will sit and eat with children at meal times.

Meals will be served family style. Food will be placed in serving bowls and milk will be poured into pitchers. Children will serve themselves and pass the serving bowl to their friends. Teachers will encourage good portion control by having children place 1 serving size of the meal component on their plate and to ask for seconds, if they wish.

Tooth brushing

Children will brush their teeth two times each day, after breakfast and after lunch. Head Start staff will assist children as needed with tooth brushing, Head Start provides toothbrushes and toothpaste with fluoride for children. Parents do not need to supply these items.

We encourage parents to help their children brush their teeth in the morning and again before bed.

Confidentiality

SEVCA HEAD START respects the privacy of each Head Start participant and complies with the federal regulations on confidentiality of information. All information held by the program whether gathered formally or informally, is private and protected. This includes medical history, family status, financial information and personal data. Our written Head Start policy on confidentiality is available for families and staff at each Head Start center. Staff and parents are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. **PLEASE READ THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AT THE END OF THIS BOOK.**

Holidays

SEVCA Head Start bases its operation on developmentally appropriate practices and The Creative Curriculum, in conjunction with the Head Start Performance Standards. The children and families in our program come from varied cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Teachers may recognize diversity within the classroom in support of the families as they develop their celebration traditions, as well as the children developing a sense of self and independence. Please let staff know what holidays you and your family celebrate, and how!

Sign-in/out



Each classroom has a form for signing children in and out each day. Please be sure to do this. **If you are not going to be picking your child up, the person you choose to do so will need to be listed on the emergency form. This is for the safety of your child. Photo identification may be asked for by Head Start staff, so please make sure the person picking up your child has proper identification.** If parents **DO NOT** pick up their child at the scheduled time according to the option your child is enrolled in, (2:30/4:30) and have not called to explain why they are late or will be late, then staff members will contact the local police department and

have the child wait at the police department until the parent arrives. ***PLEASE*** be responsible and do not put yourself, staff members or your CHILD in this situation! **SEE Late Pick-up Policy.**

Smoking Policy

There is no smoking, tobacco usage or vape devices allowed at any Head Start center, in the building or outside. If staff or parents wish to smoke, they are asked to do so in their own vehicles. Please make sure cigarette butts are disposed of properly and not left on the ground. **SEE Tobacco Policy.**



Parental Freedom of Access

Parents have the right to access their child's record/file to review the information that is collected there. Please send a written request to the director to review the file. If parents would like a copy of something, they can ask to have it removed and copied. All parents are asked to sign an Access to Records Form on the First Home Visit or during Parent Orientation.

X. ADMINISTRATION



When you are at Head Start, it feels like home.

THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

To ensure quality among Head Start programs across the country, the federal government established guidelines that all programs must follow. These guidelines are called **Performance Standards**. They define what you as a parent can expect from your Head Start program. They are the basis of operation for all Head Start programs. The performance standards are divided into five sections:



1. Program Governance
2. Program Operations
3. Financial and Administrative Requirements
4. Federal Administrative Procedures
5. Definitions

In December 2007, an extensive revision and reorganization of the Performance Standards was proposed, due to the changes made in the Reauthorization Act which was signed into law on December 12, 2007. The changes are the most far-reaching in the past 50 years of Head Start's existence. These new standards were published in August of 2024 and were effective immediately, with some having more time for programs to comply.

Parents may access the Performance Standards through their local parent group chairperson, Policy Council representative, Teacher, Family Partner, a Manager, or the Director. Each center has copies of the Performance Standards to use as a resource.

Every year the program is evaluated by parents and staff through a process called program self-assessment (PSA). Based upon the results of the PSA, the strategic plan is changed accordingly to describe what goals SEVCA HEAD START plans to focus on. Through the appropriate advisory committee, the strategic plan is revised and then submitted to the Policy Council for approval. These plans become the blueprint for the next year's program funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



Eighty percent of Head Start funds are provided by the U.S. Congress and distributed through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF- a part of the Department of Health and Human Services) to local agencies. SEVCA receives and administers the money to the SEVCA HEAD START. Currently we have seven Head Start classrooms, in four different locations; with all having collaborative partners.

Twenty percent of our grant must come from local sources. The sources do not need to be in the form of money. The sources can be from donated time, space and items. When you donate your time and skills it's considered an **in-kind** contribution*. **The most important local source is in the form of volunteer activities and services provided by parents.** Any time you do something for Head Start that relates to the program it counts as an **in-kind** contribution. Below is a partial list of things that may be counted as **in-kind**.

- Volunteering your time at the center.
- The time you spend attending parent meetings, advisory committees, legislative events, hiring and selection committees, clerical work, Policy Council, etc.

- The value of items you donate to Head Start that are used as program materials (e.g. books, toys and games donated to the local program, etc., excluding clothes).
- Your time reading and preparing Head Start related materials (newsletters, Policy Council packets, copying, filing, etc.)

Please be sure to complete the **Parent Volunteer Survey**. There are many, many ways to participate!
*It is important to note that you may not count mileage or time for which you are paid by the program, as **in-kind**.*

****Please see a staff member for volunteer forms.**



XI. Policies and Procedures



Head Start has a variety of policies and procedures that have been created to ensure the best practice is implemented in our program. Some of the policies are included in this handbook. Please ask a staff person for other areas of interest.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

Policy:

The safety of children and the wellbeing of families are dependent on immediate intervention when abuse or neglect is suspected. **All Head Start employees are mandated reporters in the State of Vermont.**

Procedure:

- All staff will be trained in prevention, identification and mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect as part of the program's annual training. This includes prevention of child sexual abuse; in signs and symptoms of sexual abuse, sexual violence, and grooming processes; in recognizing the dangers of child sexual abuse in and close to the home; and other predatory behaviors of sex offenders.
- All staff must complete the Vermont On-line Mandated Reporter Training (150 minutes) with 30 days of being hired. The link is: **<http://dcf.vermont.gov/protection/reporting/mandated>**
- All teaching staff will be encouraged to design their curriculum and have conversations with children and their parents regarding personal body rights. These conversations and teachings will be done in a manner that empowers children to identify comfortable touch vs. uncomfortable touch; as well as being able to identify their body parts by actual name (i.e. penis and vagina). This can be done through books, anatomically correct dolls, (all classrooms have these dolls) or in casual conversation when a child/parent broaches a subject that would require appropriate conversation.
- **Any person (staff, volunteers, substitutes) who receives information from ANYONE (parents, children, staff, etc.) stating that a child has been physically/sexually abused or neglected, by another person, including another child or co-worker MUST report this accusation to the Department of Children and Families, their Site Director, and the Family Services Manager immediately. If the Family Services Manager is not available, contact another manager or the Director.**
- Any staff member who has reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected will fill out a **Suspected Abuse and Neglect Documentation/Reporting Form**, contact the Department of Children and Families by calling their reporting hotline (DCF: 1-800-649- 5285), and by faxing (Fax #: 1-802-241-3301) a copy of the written report, within twenty-four (24) hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed.
- This form is used for two purposes: 1) documenting staff concerns and 2) filing an actual report. *(Staff may have concerns regarding a child. A "gut" feeling or uncomfortable conversation or situation that doesn't actually "point a finger" at anyone, but makes you feel like something could have happened to the child. Use this form to document your concern and send a copy to the FSM. A report may be made and DCF will determine if an investigation is necessary).*
- The staff person completing the form will send a **copy** of the report to the Family Services Manager. The FSM will review the staff report and may contact the Family Partner to initiate support services, if applicable to the situation.
- Forms need to be signed by the person completing them, the Site Director and the Family Service Manager. (The Family Service Manager will place all forms in a Master binder, locked at the Managers office. The form in this binder will have the FSM signature).
- Keep **the original** suspected abuse/actual report in a binder designated exclusively for suspected or reported cases of abuse and neglect. ***This binder must always be in a locked cabinet and kept confidential. DO NOT put a copy in the child's file.***
- If a report is made, be sure to document the date, time and name of the intake worker.
- Families do not need to be told that a report has been made, however, in some situations staff may feel it is important to do so. For example: If a child shares with a staff member that while he/she was visiting

a neighbor something occurred, the parent may be unaware and needs to know to ensure their child is being kept safe. Together the parents and staff can make a report.

- DCF will determine if a report is “accepted” or “not accepted” in accordance with their policies and procedures (see Mandatory Reporter Training Material. All staff received this at orientation or upon being hired. There is also a copy in the documentation binder).
- If the report is accepted, it will be decided (by DCF) if it is “substantiated” or “not substantiated”.
- If DCF sends a staff person a follow up letter regarding their decision, the staff person will copy the letter and send it to the FSM and then file it with the report in the Abuse and Neglect binder.
- The Family Services Manager will review all reports on a monthly basis to ensure follow-up.
- Head Start staff will provide support to families and cooperation with services to ensure all children’s safety.
- Staff will not be discharged, demoted, transferred, receive reduced pay, benefits or work privileges, receive a negative work performance evaluation, or be subject to any other action detrimental because he/she filed a good faith report with the Department regarding suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child.

Addendum added to 2015/2016 program year:

Medical/Dental/Nutritional Neglect

- According to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), parents/caregivers who do not provide children with appropriate medical, dental or nutritional care, can be considered neglectful. If a Head Start staff person suspects that a child is not receiving medical, dental or appropriate nutritional care, we will discuss our concerns with the family prior to making any reports to DCF. Head Start’s philosophy is to support families

in the care of their child/ren, therefore, we will provide information, resources, referrals, transportation opportunities, or other supports as individually necessary to assist families in providing the necessary care for their children. If, after reasonable efforts of support have been provided, families do not follow-through with concerns that have been identified by staff or professionals who assist us with screenings, then Head Start staff

will make a report to DCF regarding the concern. All families are encouraged to contact any Head Start staff person for assistance with medical, dental and nutritional needs/concerns that they may have regarding their child/ren.

Neglect to Follow Through With Referrals to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

- If a Head Start staff person has spoken with a parent and received permission to send a referral to ECSE, but the parent does not follow up with ECSE providers to coordinate screenings with the child, staff will support the family to ensure a parent/guardian contacts ECSE. Staff will document conversations with parents regarding support in Case Notes and contact the Education/Disabilities Services Manager after these contacts have been made. Once three attempts have been made to support the family in making a call to ECSE, and parents have failed to call, staff will make a report to the Department of Children and Families of the parents’ inability to contact service providers regarding the care and success of the child.

Reference: Head Start Performance standard: 1302.47 & 1302.92 (b) (2)
VT Child Care Licensing Regulation 3.3

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Policy:

All children will be escorted in and out of the building by a parent or adult guardian. Parents must contact the

Lead Teacher when there is any change in family schedule that requires late arrival or early departure.

***Processes must also take place if a child is signed out of the classroom/building after the initial sign-in by the family or designated person (details at the end of procedures).**

Procedure:

- Parents bring children into the building and are encouraged if transporting by vehicle that vehicles are not left idling in parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. Children shall not be left alone in cars while dropping off or picking up.
- Parents **MUST** sign-in for the day on the classroom attendance sheet, as this is required by State licensing standards, and the information is used for USDA reimbursement for children's meals.
- Teachers greet parents and children and trade information about the day. Teachers will also complete a quick health check of the child and note any visible changes (runny nose, oozing eyes, bruises, etc.), and check off each child on the Daily Sign In Sheet. Teachers will document any changes in the notes section of the daily sign in. Changes in the child's routine are noted on the sign-in sheet, and parents provide a note documenting the changes.
- Late arrivals and early departures require contact with the family or its designee and needs to be indicated on the sign-in-out form.
- Teachers need to make sure breakfast; lunch (and snack for child care) is checked each day for each child.
- Parents pick up their children at the end of the program day.
- If someone other than who the parent has listed on the Child Registration form picks up the child, we will need written or verbal permission from the parent and photo identification of the person picking up the child. Staff will make a copy of the photo identification.
- If staff are not familiar with who is picking up the child, they will ask for photo identification to ensure the person is listed as an alternate pick-up.
- Parents **MUST** sign their children out of the classroom as this is required by State licensing standards and the information is used for USDA reimbursement for children's meals.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1302.16 (page 15 of the performance standards)

Policy:

All Head Start programs must:

- Track attendance for each child
- Implement a process to ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school. Staff must attempt to contact the parent to ensure the child's well-being, ***within 1 hour of the program start time. Example: If your program open's at 7:30 for childcare and a child doesn't arrive by 8:30, then you will call the family at 8:31.***
- Implement strategies to promote attendance by providing information about the benefits of regular attendance
- Support families to promote the child's regular attendance
- Conduct a home visit, or make other direct contact with a child's parent/parental figure, if a child has multiple unexplained absences (such as two consecutive unexplained absences)
- Within the first 60 days of the program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, use individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing ten percent of the program days per year.

Procedure:

Parents will be expected to call or send a note if the child cannot attend the program on a school day. The explanation will include why the child cannot attend and when the child will return (if known).

- Teachers are responsible for the Daily Sign In/Out forms and for the data entry from the Daily Sign In/Out forms.

Daily Sign In/Out Form

1. Signatures of the person dropping off the child and the person picking up the child are required.

2. If the child is absent, the reason for the absence will be indicated on the Sign In/Out Sheet in the notes section. Instead of the signatures the Teacher Team will write A=Absent
3. After each unexcused absence, the parents will be contacted by the Teaching Team, **soon after one (1) hour of the program start time**, to find out why the child was absent. If the parent is reached, teaching staff will emphasize the necessity of notifying the Teacher's if the child is going to be absent. If the family cannot be reached, the teaching team will make two more attempts to contact the family on that day (*document efforts in case notes*)
4. If a child has **two** or more unexcused absences, the Teaching Team will request the Family Partner to contact the family. If the family partner cannot reach the family by phone, email or text, he/she will conduct a home visit to ensure the child is safe. If the parent is home, the Family Partner will emphasize the necessity of notifying the child's teacher. If the family is not home, the family partner will leave a note on the door requesting the family to call Head Start (*document efforts in case notes*).
5. Teaching staff in each classroom will enter the attendance information into GoEngage, from the sign-in/sign-out sheet, on a weekly basis, by the **end of every Friday**. Please be sure to follow the GoEngage format for excused and unexcused absences, including the reasons, if known. **reason options are at the bottom of the attendance form in GoEngage, in a drop-down box.*
6. All Attendance forms are sent to the Health & Nutrition Manager at the end of each month, so the CACFP monthly Claim can be submitted accurately. The Attendance records are filed with the CACFP monthly paperwork and stored for seven years, as required for CACFP.
7. If a child begins to have patterns of missing more than half of the month, even with excused absences, staff will make all efforts to reengage the family.
8. Supports may be assisting families in finding transportation or explaining how our curriculums flow from one day to the next and opportunities are missed when children miss a lot of time.
9. If a family does not respond to contact by staff, and misses two consecutive weeks, then the Family Service Manager will send a letter to the family explaining the importance of attendance and give the family two weeks to begin regular attendance or the slot will be considered open for another child.
10. If the family calls and partners with staff to create a plan to begin attending, we will allow for the plan to work. However, if the child begins missing time again, then we will consider withdrawal.
11. The teacher needs to let the FSM know if the family has contacted the center to resume attendance, or to withdraw the child. If the family has decided to withdraw the child, the teacher needs to send the family a withdrawal form and request that they complete it and return it to them. (Please document this effort in the Family Case Notes) **See WITHDRAWAL Policy.*
12. If there is no contact from the family to the center by the date stated in the letter, the Teacher can consider the child withdrawn. (Please try to have the family complete a withdrawal form). **Document this in the Family Case Notes.**
13. Absence patterns will be reviewed and tracked by the Administrative Assistant in GO-ENGAGE to ensure that the monthly daily attendance doesn't fall below 85%. This information is shared with the FSM during weekly Manager Meetings.
14. Overall attendance is shared with the managers each month to show the total percentage for each classroom and the overall program. If the program falls below 85% of the required level, Managers examine the reasons and develop plans to ensure compliance for the future months.
15. The Director reports the funded enrollment numbers, each month, to the Office of Head Start (OHS) through the Head Start Enterprise System
16. All children, including homeless children, will be allowed to attend Head Start and childcare, without initial immunization and other records, to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. The Health Manager will work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible in order to comply with state licensing requirements.

17. If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program facility, the program must utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.

18. Vacancies will be filled according to the Enrollment Policy

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 1302.16, VT State Licensing Regulations 3.4.3

ATTENDANCE CHILD CARE POLICY

Policy:

All Head Start programs must:

- Track attendance for each child
- Implement a process to ensure children are safe when they do not arrive at school. Staff must attempt to contact the parents to ensure the child's well-being, ***soon after one (1) hour of the program start time.***

Example: If your program open's at 7:30 for childcare and a child doesn't arrive by 8:30, then you would call the family starting at 8:31 or soon after.

- Implement strategies to promote attendance by providing information about the benefits of regular attendance
- Support families to promote the child's regular attendance
- Conduct a home visit, or make other direct contact with a child's parent/parental figure, if a child has multiple unexplained absences (such as two consecutive unexplained absences)
- Within the first 60 days of the program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, use individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absences that put them at risk of missing ten percent of the program days per year.

The Child Care Program is funded by child tuition and child care financial assistance, with each family responsible for a weekly tuition rate. This is a guaranteed rate and includes full pay for holidays (Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, day before Thanksgiving day, Thanksgiving Day, day after thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Civil Rights Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day) and days your child is absent and/or sick.

****See Child Care Tuition Contract****

It is very important that children are dropped off by 8:00am in the morning so that they are a part of the morning activities and breakfast. This cuts down on disruption to the child's routine and classroom routine.

Procedure:

Parents will be expected to call or send a note if the child cannot attend the program on a school day. The explanation will include why the child cannot attend and when the child will return (if known). *This is a requirement.* Teachers are responsible for the Daily Sign In/Out forms and for the data entry from the Daily Sign In/Out forms.

Daily Sign In/Out Form

1. Signatures of the person dropping off the child and the person picking up the child are required.
2. If the child is absent, the reason for the absence will be indicated on the Sign In/Out Sheet in the notes section. Instead of the signatures the Teacher Team will write A=Absent
3. After each unexcused absence, the parents will be contacted by the Teaching Team **within 1 hour of the program start time** to find out why the child was absent. If the parent is reached, teaching staff will emphasize the necessity of notifying the Teacher's if the child is going to be absent. If the family cannot be reached, the teaching team will make two more attempts to contact the family on that day (***document efforts in case notes***)
4. If a child has **two** or more unexcused absences, the Teaching Team will contact the Child Care Services Manager by email or a phone call.

5. The Child Care Services Manager will contact the family, and the importance of regular attendance will be discussed, and appropriate family support procedures will be initiated. If the attendance becomes regular, then no further action is necessary.
6. If the family does not call a staff person or begin bringing the child to school after one week from the first day that the Child Care Services Manager initiated contact, then the Child Care Services Manager will send a letter to the family explaining the importance of attendance and give the family one week to begin regular attendance or the slot will be considered open for another child.
7. All efforts by Teachers and the Child Care Services Manager will be documented in the Family Contact notes.
8. If the family calls and creates a plan to begin attending, we will allow the plan to work. However, if the child begins missing time again, then we will consider withdrawal. (The Teacher needs to communicate with the Child Care Services Manager what is occurring. The Child Care Services Manager will share with Managers at their weekly meeting.
9. The teacher needs to let the Child Care Services Manager know if the family has contacted the center to resume attendance, or to withdraw the child. If the family has decided to withdraw the child, the teacher needs to send the family a withdrawal form and request that they complete it and return it to them. (Please document this effort in the Family Contact Notes) **See WITHDRAWAL Policy.*
10. If there is no contact from the family to the center by the date stated in the letter, the Teacher can consider the child being withdrawn. (Please try to have the family complete a withdrawal form).

Document this in the Family Case Notes.

11. Vacancies will be filled according to the Enrollment Policy Child Care Attendance Tracking Form
 1. Teachers will record the total number of hours in attendance for each child every day for the specified two-week period.
 - a. P=days the center is closed
 - b. C=days the child does not attend (illness, absence, vacation)
 2. At the end of the specified two-week period, teachers will send this form to the Child Care Services Manager.

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 1302.16 (page 15 of the performance standards)

CLASSROOM SAFETY

Policy:

All staff will maintain a safe environment for children and adults. Managers will ensure that safety procedures are clearly explained and implemented consistently by all staff and visitors. A safe environment also includes constant supervision of children.

Procedure:

- All staff working with children will have a current First Aid and CPR certification, provided during Pre- Service Week, and again in February. All staff are required by Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations to have infant and child CPR and pediatric First Aid within (3) three months of beginning work in the program and remain currently certified.
- Auxiliary Staff (not counted in staff/child ratios) employed by Head Start, but who do not work directly with children (Managers/Coordinators, Food Service Providers, Family Partners, Maintenance Coordinator) are not required to be trained but will have the option annually during pre-service.
- There will be a First Aid Kit and postings of emergency procedures in each classroom. These will be readily accessible to staff and out of reach of children. (TEACHING STAFF are responsible for replenishing first aid supplies when they are used, by contacting the Health Services Manager.)
- All rescue medication (for children, staff and volunteers) will be stored in the first aid kits (*see medication policy*).
- Kits will be taken on field trips and to the playground during outdoor time.

- The location of the First Aid Kit will be marked by a sign with a RED cross on it and placed in the location of the kit.
- A diagrammed evacuation plan will be posted near the exits in each room and office.
- Fire drills/Evacuation drills will be conducted in under three (3) minutes at least once per month at each site by the Center Manager/Site Director and recorded on the monthly report to the Head Start Director. All records will be kept for two (2) years.
- At least one (1) evacuation drill every 365 days shall be conducted while children are sleeping or resting.
- Exits are clearly marked with visible, approved EXIT signs.
- ABC All Purpose Fire Extinguishers will hang in each classroom and are inspected annually, and all staff will be trained in the appropriate use of a fire extinguisher annually.
- Staff will inform the Head Start Director (HSD) immediately of any fire in the program that requires the use of a fire extinguisher and/or the services of a fire department. The HSD will notify the state in writing (through BFIS) within forty-eight (48) hours of the incident (CBCCPP Regulation 3.2.3).
- All electrical outlets will have protective caps in place when not in use.
- All toxic materials will be stored away from children in unlicensed space in the basement or sheds.
- An emergency light source, flashlights and fresh batteries will always be available.
- Staff will report on any equipment, materials or environment they believe to be unsafe to the Safety/Maintenance Coordinator.
- Safety checks of classrooms will be conducted monthly by the Center Lead/Site Director. A copy of that report will be part of the Safety/Maintenance Coordinator's monthly report. This is a separate report from the Center Lead/Site Director Report.
- All staff and visitors will sign in and out in a designated notebook (Communication Binder). Children shall wear closed-toed shoes with backs in order to play safely in the classroom and on the playground
- Staff may request a short and immediate break when they are unable to perform their duties.

Reference: Head Start Performance Standards Section 1302.47 safety practices
Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations, 3.2.3, 3.7.2, 7.1.2

CONFIDENTIALTY

Policy:

SEVCA Head Start respects the privacy of all children and families served and each employee shall hold in strict confidence all information obtained in the course of delivering services, regardless of the source or format of that information. Employees shall not disclose any information about SEVCA clients (children and families), including whether or not they are clients, to anyone in SEVCA who doesn't need to know in order to assist them or isn't otherwise to know (e.g., supervisor, DM or ED, state officials) or to anyone outside of the agency unless permission for release of information has been signed by the client/parent as part of the process for receiving the receipt of services.

Head Start Staff maintain the confidential information contained in a child's file (paper or digital, i.e., GoEngage). All staff, parents and volunteers must sign the SEVCA Head Start Confidentiality Agreement.

Head Start employees must also sign the SEVCA Confidentiality Agreement, which is specific to the SEVCA agency. The information in children's records, or family files, is confidential but is immediately available upon request to: administrators and teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records; the child's parents or legal guardians; regulatory authorities (see *Access to Records* form, located in the Intake Section of the child's file).

Procedure:

- Staff will maintain children's records; family's files, and keep information confidential at all program

levels.

- ALL actual “paper” family and child files or stored in individual binders and are kept in locked cabinets when not in use.
- Teachers will prohibit parents and volunteers from viewing records other than their own.
- Parents may view their child’s file in the presence of a staff person and request copies of any needed documentation. Requests must be in writing and will be made available within five (5) business days of receiving the request.
- Staff will obtain written permission from parent(s) or guardian(s) for the release of information to outside agencies. Copies of permission notes and forms will be stored in the appropriate section of the child's file.
- Appropriate conversations about children and their families will occur at appropriate times out of earshot of children, parents, and visitors. Discussing children or families in inappropriate or disrespectful manners will result in Corrective Action and/or immediate dismissal.
- All staff, volunteers, and parents sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon entering the program. Violation of this agreement will result in immediate dismissal.
- All “paper” files of children and families are stored for three years and then shredded.
- Digital files are contained in the GoEngage website. Each staff is assigned a password upon hire and is granted access according to their position. Passwords are updated regularly throughout the year to ensure information is not accessed by someone other than the assigned user,

Reference:

Head Start Performance Standards 1302.90 Personnel policies (c)(1)(iii), 1303.20 Establishing procedures.

Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations 3.8

SEVCA Personnel Policy 10.1

DISCIPLINE POLICY & PROCEDURE:

PHILOSOPHY

The SEVCA Head Start program believes the best insurance preventing behavior problems in the classroom is to do a good job of planning the daily activities. However, no matter how well planned a day is, conflict may erupt. Discipline problems are handled in a matter-of-fact way that encourages children to develop inner controls. SEVCA Head Start teaching teams redirect or distract a disruptive child in a **firm, calm, positive** manner. Sometimes sitting down near a child and engaging him or her in conversation helps. When all else fails, and children continue to be disruptive, the use of the Peace Area may be used to assist the child with calming down, and to stop and think. It is helpful, and consistent with developmentally appropriate practice, to include children in the rule-making process. If children have input into the rules, they are more likely to follow and help enforce them. Each classroom has rules which are developed by teaching staff and the children at the beginning of the year. Too many rules confuse children. They are more likely to respect rules when they understand the reason behind them. Program staff will be informed of this policy at their new hire orientation. Parents of enrolled children will be informed of this policy at Parent Orientation, and it will be covered in the Parent and Staff Handbook. Parents are consulted and have input into developing policies/procedures regarding discipline and guidance by serving on the Head Start Policy Council, through monthly parent meetings, and during parent conferences.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE APPROACHES IMPLEMENTED BY STAFF

- Anticipate and plan ahead so that you can head off problems
- Look for reasons why a child is misbehaving. Discuss the situation with the Education/Disabilities Services Manager & the child’s parent(s)
- Focus on child’s behavior, not on the child’s value as a person

- Help children understand the consequences of their actions
- Explain the choices available
- Help children use problem-solving skills to develop solutions
- Help children refrain from dwelling on mistakes so they can learn to move on
- Watch for restlessness

Positive Approaches - Acceptable Methods of Guidance

Children who receive continual personal praise learn to direct their own behavior at a faster rate than children who are spoken to only when they misbehave. Guidance, therefore, is not simply a method used when a child responds positively to directions or shows progress in self-direction. If a problem behavior arises because staff are not responding to the needs of the children, it is unfair to punish the child. It is the staffs' behavior that should change.

ACCEPTABLE CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE METHODS

Judgments concerning acceptable methods of corrective discipline will have to be made daily by Head Start staff, and these decisions will be subjective in many cases. Staff persons should select a method of corrective discipline they feel will be effective with a particular child and situation. If a staff person has doubts or concerns about the acceptability of a discipline method, the Education/Disabilities Services Manager must be consulted before the method is implemented.

The following items must be considered by SEVCA Head Start staff before using any type of corrective discipline with children:

- (i.) The rules established in a center or group socialization situation must be right for the children in attendance. Young children are active, busy, curious, and always moving. Move the children in small groups, **not** straight lines. Plan activities that include movement, because sitting is not natural for young children. Young children are noisy. They learn by talking and working actively together. Being quiet is not natural for them.
- (ii.) Children must have a clear understanding of what the rules are, why they must have them, what the logic behind them is, and what good they serve. In other words, the rules should make sense to the children. Rules established for young children must respect their individuality and freedom of choice. Children must be encouraged and not forced to participate in activities. Children should feel safe and not guilty, tense, or unaccepted when they do not participate.
- (iii.) Children should not be placed in or confronted with situations with which they can't cope. Staff persons must be aware of each child's needs and developmental level. If a rule is broken by a child, staff should investigate the reasons. Maybe hunger, fatigue, or physical difficulty is the cause.
- (iv.) Appropriate behavior should be modeled for the children by staff at all times.
- (v.) Classroom rules should be reviewed throughout the year.

Criteria for Acceptable Corrective Discipline

When a child's behavior warrants the use of corrective discipline, the method used must contain all of the following elements:

- (i.) The method is appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.
- (ii.) The method is not more severe than the behavior warrants. For example, if a child is running, you would not make him or her sit in time-out.
- (iii.) The discipline does not humiliate or frighten the child.
- (iv.) The discipline is not potentially dangerous, either physically, mentally, or emotionally. (See definitions of abuse/neglect.)
- (v.) The method is likely to cause the problem behavior to stop and serves the function of developing self-direction in the child. In other words, if a discipline method is used and the child's behavior does not improve in a reasonable amount of time, the method is not appropriate.
- (vi.) The discipline immediately follows the occurrence of inappropriate behavior.
- (vii.) The discipline is not used as a substitute for adequate and/or appropriate staff supervision and/or

organization. For example, you don't place a child in "time-out" because you don't "feel like" showing them the appropriate way to do an activity.

THE CHILD(REN) SHOULD:

1. Be asked to stop the behavior and given an explanation of why.
2. Be given a demonstration of appropriate behavior through modeling and guidance.
3. Be spoken to in an "authority voice," that is, with a firm tone, but non-threatening. The staff should identify for the child the inappropriate behavior and the appropriate way to behave.
4. Be given a diversion. An example of positive diversion: "Johnny, I need you to help me wash the tables."
5. Be given an option of going to a "soft corner" Gently lead the child by the hand and say, "Let's go to a place where you can rest and feel better."
6. Be given the option of water/sand play. Water and sand play is soothing. You can ask the child to "stir up soap bubbles for me," or to "try coloring the water."
7. Be asked to visit the Peace Table and use the Red/Green Behavior cards or chart to review appropriate behaviors and ones that are not appropriate.

THE TEACHER(S) SHOULD:

1. **Use teamwork.** If a child continues with the inappropriate behavior, then you may have to remove the child from the group. If you cannot remove the child, then remove the group from the child. Send them outside with the other teacher or at least to another part of the room until you can calm down the child with the inappropriate behavior.
2. **Use Redirection.** As you get to know the children in the classroom, you will recognize their interest and realize that they have various interests in the classroom. Talking to the child and convincing them to move away from the activity that he/she is having a problem with will allow him/her to get out of the situation, move to another area and continue to have fun.
3. **Use the Peace Area.** The Peace Area should be part of each classroom and set up so that teachers can view children that are visiting the Peace Area from all angles of the classroom. This space should have markers and paper for the children to draw a picture or "write" how they are feeling. The Red/Green Behavior Cards should also be here for children to sort and help remind and reinforce GREEN behaviors. The Chart of what did they do, what could they do next time should also be at the table to help children have a visual reminder and form of explaining what behavior they demonstrated that lead them to be sitting at the Peace Area and what they could do differently the next time. The last two processes will need to be supported by the teacher in order for this to be successful. The Peace Area is not viewed as a punitive place, but a place where children can go to pull themselves together and regain control of themselves.
4. **Peace Area for Problem Solving.** When two children are having a disagreement, teachers can help facilitate the use of talking/listening by using this area. The children are allowed to take turns explaining the problem. This will promote both verbal and listening skills while giving the children opportunities to learn negotiation skills.

USE OF ANY INAPPROPRIATE CHILD DISCIPLINE METHODS WILL BE GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.

These behaviors are prohibited at all times in any circumstances:

- a. Corporal punishment, including hitting, slapping, spanking, beating, shaking, pinching, jerking, squeezing, biting, excessive tickling, pulling of arms/hair/ears, and other measures intended to induce pain or fear;
- b. Requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time;
- c. Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
- d. Abusive or profane language;
- e. Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment, name calling, ridiculing; and

- f. Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, frightening, or isolating a child.
- g. Latched/locked time out.
- h. Withholding affection.
- i. Face in lap. (This procedure, or similar positions in which the neck is forced beyond its normal structural limitations should never be used due to the high risk of neck and spinal injuries. This is especially critical in pupils in Downs Syndrome who may have a congenital abnormality in the neck which predispose them to becoming more easily injured.)
- j. Bad tastes/smells.
- k. Use of blindfolds.
- l. Ridicule, screaming, sarcasm, or other derogatory remarks.
- m. Physical intimidation or threats given verbally, physically or through body language.
- n. Fluid squirting of any kind.
- o. Isolation time out with doors.
- p. rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping of any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

SUSPENSION/TERMINATION POLICY DUE TO DISCIPLINARY ISSUES:

The decision to suspend or expel a child from SEVCA Head Start will be very limited and will only be an option after all possible solutions are considered, including the guidance of the Mental Health Consultant. This decision must follow Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17, as well as expulsion criteria as defined in the Childcare Licensing Regulations (6.2.8.4). A conference will be held with the parent(s) to discuss the policy, issue(s), and to develop a behavior support plan for the child (See Behavior Support Plan Policy). Designated staff will be responsible for implementing positive, appropriate discipline methods on a consistent basis, evaluating outcomes, making modifications, & communicating with parents on a daily basis. If there is no improvement within set timelines then a staffing will be held which will include both Head Start center & Management staff, including the Education/Disabilities Services Manager. A recommendation will be made & presented to the SEVCA Head Start Program Director. **Only** the Head Start Program Director can make the decision to suspend or expel a Head Start child due to disciplinary issues. If the decision is made to expel the child, SEVCA Head Start will work with the family to find alternative placement that best meets the needs of the child. If a child is suspended or expelled from the program, the Education and Disabilities Services Manager must complete the Vermont Agency of Education Public/Private PreK Suspension and Expulsion Incident Form within 5 calendar days from the date of the incident and send it to the school district/union Preschool Coordinator. This policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

Techniques for the Prevention of Inappropriate Behavior

1. Act as a role model.
2. Greet the children with a smile.
3. Speak to the children at eye level.
4. Be aware of how you are feeling, and that this will affect what and how you teach the children.
5. Provide a comfortable/nurturing atmosphere.
6. Make sure that the children know that they can have some effect and "say-so" over their environment. Encourage independence. Give choices.
7. Be aware of the expectations you are placing on the children and that they will strongly affect what the children expect of themselves. Acknowledge each child as a unique individual.
8. Be aware of **what and how** the children learn. Do careful planning; have activities and schedules appropriate for the children, where they can experience success.
9. Set clear, reasonable limits. Give children the reasons for the limits. Let them participate in rulemaking.

10. Enforce limits consistently and fairly.
11. Have a few rules. Make sure that all children know the rules and why they exist. The rules should be constantly reviewed and re-enforced. Rules should be worded positively: Walking Feet, instead of No Running.
12. Emphasize the "can do," or positive reinforcement in the classroom, rather than the "can't do," or negative reinforcement.
13. Supervise effectively. Use the "eyes in the back of your head" approach.
14. Warn and prepare children of upcoming activities and transition times.

See the following resources:

Head Start Program Performance Standards, 1302.17

Vermont Agency of Education Memorandum 9/13/18

Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulation 6.2.8.4

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Policy:

Staff are responsible for keeping children safe at all times. In times of catastrophic events that present unsafe conditions to remain in the building, the following steps will be taken to ensure the children's safety, and the Emergency Response Plan will be put into place.

Procedure:

- When an event occurs that staff feel makes the building unsafe, they need to do the following:
 - Locate your cell phone and make sure it is with you.
 - The Center Lead (or another staff if not available) needs to contact the Head Start Director or a Manager to let them know what is happening.
 - Ensure that you have accounted for all the children that attended for that day, gather the emergency contact information folder and proceed to the designated place. (This will usually be by walking.)
 - The Lead Teacher of each classroom will make sure to take the "To-Go-Bag" when leaving the classroom. This will contain the Emergency List of all children enrolled in the classroom, emergency blankets, flashlights, first aid kit, books, activities to keep the kids busy).
 - Once at the designated place, confirm that you have all of the children accounted for, and assure them that they are safe. Keep parents informed of when of when children can be released. (**ALL STAFF** will know what the Magic number is for their classroom.)
 - Then start making calls to all parents and let them know what is happening. Ask parents to come and pick up his/her child as soon as possible. Management staff can assist in this step.
 - Each center will have an emergency evacuation procedure posted on the wall which will indicate where to go when the building has been deemed unsafe to remain in. Parents will be informed of this information during the Parent Orientation, and a copy will be in the Parent/Staff Handbook.

Emergency Evacuations Locations for the Centers:

In the event that buildings need to be evacuated, centers will go to the following locations: PLEASE contact the Main Office to let Managers know when the building needs to be evacuated. If a plan changes from what is normally expected to happen, please notify management.

Chester

(Chester Community Preschool)

Children will go to the Endless Creations Pottery building right next door to the Head Start building.

Springfield

(Pine Street Preschool (Daisy and Willow Rooms))

Children will walk with staff up Myrtle Street to the Greek Orthodox Church, on Park Street. Family Partner has the key.

Children and staff will wait here for further instructions.

After an event/situation occurs:

After a situation or traumatic event occurs at a center, Management will follow up with staff as soon as possible, to discuss and debrief what happened, what worked well and what needs improvement. Management will make the necessary changes to policies and practices to ensure the safety of all staff and children is continued for any future events/situations. Any changes made will be shared with all staff, so they are familiar with the new policy and procedure. The Mental Health Consultant will be contacted to discuss the best way to handle the situation/event with children, staff and families. This may include sending out literature to families on how to talk with their children about what happened, staff meetings as a group or individually with the Mental Health Consultant to debrief and process the situation/event, and whatever further follow-up may be needed.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Policy: All teachers are responsible for making sure parents have signed a permission form when children leave the center. The permission form will state where the class is going, what time they are leaving, and what time they are returning. Parents are welcome to attend field trips.

Procedure:

- All parents are asked to sign a multiple permissions form, which allows teachers to schedule field trips that are within walking distance of the Head Start classroom. This might include such places as the library, fire station, police station, post office, etc. Teachers are still responsible for letting parents and other staff know where they are by leaving a note on the door stating where they went, the time they left and the time they would return and a contact number if possible.
- Any time a teacher plans a field trip that requires transportation, parents will be asked to sign a specific field trip permission form which will state the destination, the expected time of leaving for the field trip and the expected time of returning from the field trip. The permission form must be completed and signed in order for children to attend. All permission slips will be taken on the field trip by the teacher. The teacher will also bring the child's Emergency Registration information in case of an emergency.
- A Special Events Request form needs to be completed and sent to the Education Services Manager for approval at least two weeks prior to the field trip date. The Education Services Manager will pass the Special Events form on to the Head Start Director for final approval.
- All parents are encouraged to help out on field trips and join their child for a day of fun!
- There are 3 forms, located in the Policy and Procedures Book that accompany this policy: Multiple Permissions Form (for walking field trips), Special Events Request Form, and Field Trip Permission Form (for field trips that require children to be transported).
- When children and staff travel away from the center, staff shall carry basic first aid supplies, a first aid manual, emergency information for the children, and a cell phone.
- For field trips that require transportation to and from the center, parents will be responsible for transporting their child or can work with another family to transport their child(ren). If all children enrolled do not have transportation for the field trip, then the class will not be able to attend, as we must provide services for all children enrolled.
- All meals must be eaten at the Head Start site, unless prior approval has been granted by the CACFP administrators. If a classroom is planning on taking a bagged lunch, the Health Manager must be notified prior so they can contact CACFP and make a request for bagged lunches to be provided. Meals will only be provided to enrolled Head Start children. If a bagged lunch is approved by CACFP and the Health Manager, all requirements of the meal must be met, including 1% milk. All record keeping of the meal must be completed as well, including, but not limited to, production records and point of service counts. Remember, this MUST be approved by the Health Manager as well as CACFP Administrators. Please give plenty of time to get approvals prior to the field trip date.

FOOD and NUTRITION POLICY

Policy:

SEVCA Head Start provides a variety of wholesome and nutritious foods which meet Head Start, Child Care and CACFP Guidelines. We lead by example in promoting healthy eating habits in all center-based and group experiences. Food Service Providers, employed or contracted through Head Start, serve foods low in fat, sugar and salt and high in nutrients to meet nutrition standards as described through the USDA recommendations. Breakfast is served at 8:15am in Chester & Springfield. Lunch is served at 11:15am in Chester and Springfield. All centers serve an afternoon snack to children who attend 6 hours or more. Snack is served at 2:30pm in Chester and Springfield.

Procedure:

To help us achieve this we will perform the following:

- Food related activities in the classroom and Family Style Meals* will be provided to offer opportunities for the development of positive attitudes toward healthy foods.
- A variety of foods will be served in order to broaden each child's food experience.
- Parents will be invited to participate in all nutrition activities including planning menus, assisting with classroom nutrition projects and becoming a substitute to cover for the cook in his/her absence.
- All safety and sanitation guidelines (Hand-washing, wearing gloves, no cross contamination, appropriate clothing, etc.) will be followed by any staff or parents.
- Staff will plan three monthly nutrition projects for each classroom. Teachers will submit the ingredients needed on the **"special events food request form"** to the Education Services Manager and who will approve or disapprove of the project. If it is approved, the Education Services Manager will notify the Food Service Provider so that the supplies can be purchased. Children will be closely supervised to ensure safety and sanitation while handling food, when participating in nutrition projects.
- Food served to children in the program will be provided by or contracted with Head Start in order to meet CACFP guidelines and avoid any liability issues (**food prepared at home or purchased from stores by families will NOT be allowed**)
- No leftover food will be sent home with the children.
- Consumption of non-menu food/drink items in front of children is not permitted unless food is part of prescribed special diet to meet medical needs. This includes, but is not limited to, staff, parents, volunteers and support staff from outside agencies.
- Food allergies of children will be posted in the kitchen and classrooms so that food service providers, teachers, substitutes, and volunteers are aware. All allergies must have a note from a doctor confirming the allergic reaction. We will make accommodations for children with allergies only when supported by the child's physician.
- Other accommodations may be made for children on an individualized basis, with conversations being held with the parents, teachers of the child, the Health Manager and Early Childhood Special Education staff, if needed, prior to.
- **Staff are not** allowed to drink coffee/soda or eat other food related items in the classroom in front of children. They can do this on their breaks.
- Each classroom may have a non-food birthday celebration planned for each child. This may include special jobs, birthday crowns, certificates or books. Children whose birthday falls on a weekend, during a vacation or over the summer will celebrate their birthday on an "unbirthday day". The cook can plan on baking one cake per classroom per month to celebrate all birthdays for that month **by teacher's request**.
- Children arriving after breakfast has already been served, will be offered breakfast that will include all the CACFP required components (if the regular served breakfast is no longer available) if they have not already eaten at home.
- Children must eat on site during the centers scheduled meal times.

Food prepared in the classroom is not only fun but a learning experience as well. Parents are encouraged to think of appropriate food items for classroom projects using low sodium/low fat/low sugar guidelines of the Head Start nutrition philosophy. Parents are welcome to prepare food in our kitchens unique to their cultures. Parents who would like to do this need to give the **teachers and** food service staff a two week notice so they can pick up the needed supplies.

***Family Style Meals:**

All meals are served family style, which means each table gets the food from the menu served in a bowl which is passed around the table so each child can take a serving size portion and put it on their plate. This can be quite the ordeal at the beginning of the school year, as many children are not used to serving themselves and some meals require lots of serving bowls, so it can take a while for everyone to get all of the food on their plate. Children also pour their own milk. Children are asked to wait until everyone is served before they begin eating, otherwise, some children may be ready for seconds, when some children may not have been served yet. Children are asked to put all of what's being offered onto their plate. For items that they think they do not like, we ask that they put a "no thank you" serving on their plate, just in case they change their mind and want to try the food. Children are given at least 30 minutes for each meal; breakfast time is extended to offer breakfast to children who arrive late. After they are finished eating, they are asked to clear their own plate by scraping uneaten food into the compost bucket, and to place the plate, utensils and cup into the bucket indicated by the teacher. Children help set the tables for meals and also help wipe up the tables after meals, if this is one of the jobs teachers choose to have on the Job Chart. Mealtimes are a great time for conversation amongst staff and children. You never know what children are going to share!

***Family Style Meal Service at SEVCA Head Start**

What is Family-style Meal Service?

Family style meal service is a type of meal service in which children and adults sit together to eat. Children and adults serve themselves from common dishes of food. This approach allows children to be introduced to foods in a low-key, positive manner. The child maintains control over how much he or she will eat at any given meal.

How Does it Work?

Before the Meal:

Tables should be far enough apart to permit walking between them and allow for quiet conversation. The Teacher enlists 2 or 3 children as "helpers" to wash and set the table with adult's assistance. The Adult demonstrates correct place setting. (Make model place setting glued to poster board which can be moved around the table to assist children in setting the table themselves with ease and success.)

While helpers set the tables, other children are in quiet activity. Begin toileting and washing hands when tables are all set. Children then go directly to the tables.

During the Meal:

Children and adults begin serving as soon as they are seated. Leisurely mealtime pace (30 minutes). Children pass serving bowls and serve themselves. All food is served at the same time, including "dessert", which is usually fruit. Adults eat the same food as the children and take a child-size serving initially. Adults can demonstrate a "fair share" serving so that everyone gets at least one serving of everything on the menu. Encourage children to taste everything being served, but do NOT force them to eat it. Don't make an issue of eating all the food on the plate. Food is not used as a punishment or reward. If children want a second helping, and everyone has had an initial serving, allow seconds (use your judgment to make sure seconds are distributed fairly). Adults model good hygiene, safety practices, and manners. Conversation is encouraged; food does **not** have to be the focus of talk.

Food spills are common and are not a big deal; the spiller cleans it up (with adult assistance if needed).

After the Meal:

Individuals leave the table when finished (where possible); then clean up and engage in quiet self-directed activities. Children clear table, scrape plates, dispose of silverware in appropriate bucket. Children brush teeth in small groups.

Children With Special Feeding Needs:

Children that have been identified as needing documentation of or feeding support with daily meals will have an Individual Health Plan completed by the family and the Health Services Manager. This plan will document the individual procedures needed for each child.

If a child is identified as needing support with feeding, or documentation of food intake due to diabetes, over/underweight, or a medical condition, staff will document the type and quantity of food the child consumes. Documentation will be provided to the child's family daily.

HEAD LICE

Policy

Our expectation is that all children, staff, and volunteers found to have head lice, or nits, will go home, have appropriate treatment, and not return to the building until they are completely louse *and* almost nit free (10 or less). Lice are a nuisance, not a health hazard, however, excessive exposure can create irritation to the scalp that can result in infections from scratching.

Procedure

- Staff will be trained to do head checks for head lice and nits.
- Teachers and teaching assistants will check children on Monday mornings of each week, or the first day that a child returns to Head Start after any absence.
- Head checks will be done when children arrive, **with their parents still in the building**. If a child has lice or nits, they need to go back home with their parents for treatment (see booklet).
- Children may be checked whenever there is a suspicion of head lice or nits.
- If a child comes to Head Start with lice or nits in their scalp, the parent or one of the persons on the emergency consent form will be called to come and take the child home as soon as possible.
- Children with live lice will wait away from other children, discreetly, until their parents arrive. **Ask another staff person to wait with the child in another room, if possible.*
- Parents of affected children will be given a Head Lice Handbook with strategies for making their home lice free. (bagging up stuffed animals, washing bedding, vacuuming home, carpets, couches, etc., cleaning child's car seat, and combing, combing, combing, remembering to treat all homes in which the child visits regularly)
- All families will be notified, and a fact sheet will be sent home.
- Children who have been sent home with head lice must be checked when they return to Head Start.
- All centers have a washer and dryer that families may use for laundering items.
- The Health Manager may provide supplies and support for families who are unable to get the appropriate treatment for their child.
- ALL Staff will provide support and guidance to families who have repetitive occurrences with head lice.
- Teachers and Teacher Assistants must thoroughly vacuum classrooms and wash washables (housekeeping clothes, stuffed animals, shared coats, hats, etc.).
- Staff will work with the Health Manager and Health Consultants to ensure that parents, staff, and volunteers receive the most current and safest information regarding the treatment and elimination of head lice.

NOTE: *Families whose children have chronic issues with head lice and nits will be offered additional support i.e. family visits, supplies to treat entire family, help combing all family members, other support as individually determined. If after extra efforts are reported; children are still continually being sent home because of lice and nits, which is in turn resulting in chronic absenteeism, then Head Start must consider following the attendance policy, which may result in withdrawing the child from the program.*

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION POLICY

Policy:

SEVCA Head Start bases its operation on developmentally appropriate practices and the Creative Curriculum, in conjunction with the Head Start Performance Standards and Vermont Early Learning Standards. The children and families in our programs come from varied cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Teachers may recognize diversity within the classroom in support of the families as they develop their celebration traditions, as well as the children developing a sense of self and independence.

Procedure:

Classroom celebrations should:

- Be optional as determined by classroom with family input via conversations with the parents at the beginning of each program year
- Be reflective of and relevant to the ethnic composition and interests of participating children and families
- Be respectful of diverse families, traditions, cultures, and ethnicities
- Enhance child learning
- Relate to The Creative Curriculum and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework
- Include family participation
- Foster community interactions

In addition to holiday celebrations, we will celebrate children's accomplishments and milestones in our children's lives; the birth of a sibling, the ability to tie shoes for the first time, losing the first tooth, and preparing for Kindergarten. When we plan experiences for children in the Head Start programs, we will choose things to celebrate that are meaningful, developmentally appropriate, and healthy for them.

Families are encouraged to share with all children their customs and traditions in developmentally appropriate ways. Children can share a book about a holiday in their home; families can share a cooking experience related to their holiday tradition; or a family member can talk to the children about an event and how they honor it in their culture.

Celebrations (including Heart Jar Celebrations) could include a brief recognition through a story, song, language experience, a food experience, or a guest visitor. When longer observances are appropriate, a learning center, study trip, or special event may be included. If food is involved, it must be of sound nutritional value that is consistent with Head Start nutrition policies. The Special Event Food Request form will be filled out for any foods that need to be purchased for the nutritional project. Head Start will provide food for certain functions, which families can help prepare, but it must be done at the Head Start facility.

IMMUNIZATION

Policy & Procedure:

Vermont State Licensing Regulations require that all children must have a copy of their immunization record in the Health section of the file. ***Children cannot be enrolled until immunization information is collected and documented.*** The immunization form must attest that the child has been immunized in accordance with the schedule of immunization determined by the Vermont Department of Health, or a statement which attests that:

- ☐ The child has not been immunized because the immunization is medically contraindicated, or

- ☐ The child has not been immunized because doing so would interfere with the child's religious beliefs, or (this form must be updated yearly)
- ☐ The child has been immunized according to the schedule except for specifically named

immunizations listed in the statement. The statement shall attest that these immunizations will be given within a reasonable stated period of time. A child cannot receive services at Head Start after the stated period of time has lapsed unless there is a written statement that the child has received all immunizations required by the schedule.

Children with an immunization exemption may be excluded from the classroom if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs. The length of time a child is excluded will vary depending on the disease and can range from several days to more than a month. (See VT Department of Health Religious/Medical Immunization Exemption Form, and NAEYC Standard 5A.14).

The Health Manager can obtain immunization records from Vermont Immunization Registry with parent consent provided physician has entered information.

LATE FEE POLICY FOR CHILD CARE

Policy:

Hours of the full day child care program are from 7:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Teachers will remind families of the late fee if they are late picking up their child. If a parent is consistently late to pick up their child (**on the third occasion**), the following late fee and procedure will take place. For up to the first 15 minutes that the parent is late, a charge of \$10.00 and \$1.00 per minute after the first fifteen minutes will be expected to be paid at the time of pick up, or prior to the child attending the child care program again.

Procedure

1. Teachers will notify the Child Care Services Manager of the days and times past 4:30pm that the parents are late. The dates do not need to be consecutive, but overall, for each contract year.
2. The Child Care Services Manager will track all parents that have been late, so teachers will be aware of who is in jeopardy of needing to pay a late fee.
3. If the family does not pay the late fee the day it is incurred or prior to the child attending the child care program again, then the parent risks losing the child's space in the child care program. The child can still attend the Head Start part of the day (8:00am-2:30pm).

LATE PICK UP:

Policy:

Children will be released at 2:30 pm. Non-compliance with this policy puts our license and insurance coverage at risk. In addition, staff wear many hats. They often times need to leave soon after dismissal for meetings or trainings.

Procedure:

- The Late Pickup Policy will be included in the Parent/Handbook.
- Parents are expected to call and let staff know when they will not be picking up their child at the designated pick-up time.
- Staff will attempt to contact parents when it is apparent that they will be late and a call has not been received. If parents do not answer, then whomever the parent has listed as the alternate pick-up person will be contacted to pick up the child.
- If someone other than who the parent has listed on the Child Registration form picks up the child, we will need written or verbal permission from the parent and photo identification of the person picking up the child. Staff will make a copy of the photo identification.
- If staff are not familiar with who is picking up the child, they will ask for photo identification to ensure the person is listed as an alternate pick-up.

- If the alternate pick-up person is not available to pick up the child, staff will continue to try to contact the parent. If the parent or alternative pick-up person cannot be reached, staff will stay until the last staff person in the center needs to leave for the day (which could be as early as 2:30 for a meeting or training). At this time, the police will be called to assist us with reaching the parents.
- If families are continually late picking up their child, then it may result in the withdrawal from the Head Start program because Head Start cannot meet families' needs of leaving a child past his/her scheduled hours.
- Staff will document late pick-ups in the Case Notes section of the file. These notes will assist staff in helping the family to be on time for pick up. The notes will also assist management with the possible decision to withdraw a child who is continually left past their scheduled Head Start hours.
- The above Policy also holds true for Child Care. For any child that is not picked up by 4:30pm and an alternate pickup person cannot be reached, the parent will be charged an additional \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$1.00 per additional minute past the scheduled pickup time. The local police may be contacted, and the child may be withdrawn from the program if it becomes repetitive.

LEAD TEST INFORMATION

FROM Vermont Department of Health: May 2019

108 Cherry Street • PO Box 70 • Burlington, VT 05402 • HealthVermont.gov

Lead Poisoning in Children

Lead poisoning is a serious but preventable health problem. Lead is a highly toxic metal that has been commonly used in many products—such as paint, solder, batteries, brass, car radiators and pottery. Too much lead in the body, or lead poisoning, can cause serious and permanent health problems. Lead can hurt the brain, kidneys and nervous system. There is **no** safe level of lead in the body.

Lead is most dangerous to young children who can come in contact with lead in a number of ways.

Lead Paint

Dust from lead paint is the major source of lead poisoning. In 1978, lead was banned from house paint. Most homes built before that time are likely to contain lead. Children can be exposed to lead during renovation projects or from chipping, peeling or cracked paint. Lead dust can be breathed in or swallowed.

Lead in Soil and Drinking Water

Soil may contain lead from lead paint that flakes off the outside of buildings and from exhaust when there was leaded gasoline. Lead can get into drinking water as it moves through older lead pipes, plumbing fixtures or solder.

Other Sources of Lead

Children can get lead poisoning from other sources that may contain lead.

- **Lead in workplaces or on parent's clothes:** construction and renovation work, auto repair and work with batteries, plumbing, welding and soldering.
- **Lead in pots and dishes:** glazed pottery and metal pots with lead solder.
- **Lead in antiques, vintage and salvaged goods:** older furniture, building materials and other items, even if they look bare.
- **Lead in products:** toys and jewelry made in other countries, imported candy (especially from Mexico), imported cans of food, spices and spice mixtures (especially if they come directly from other countries), metal keys, imported make-up and home remedies.
- **Lead in crafts and sports:** stained glass, bullets, fishing sinkers and artist's paints.

Prevent Lead Poisoning

Prevent lead poisoning in children by maintaining your home in good condition, cleaning in a lead-safe way, and eating healthy foods.

- Wash children's hands before eating and sleeping, and wash toys often to remove invisible lead dust.
- Serve snacks and meals for children at the table or in their high chairs.

- Repair chipped, peeling or cracked paint. Keep children from these areas until fixed.
 - Wet mop floors, and wet clean surfaces with disposable towels, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter and vacuum slowly.
 - Use lead-safe practices during renovations, such as wet sanding and wet scraping, and do not use a belt sander or heat gun.
 - Plant food gardens in lead-free soil that is at least three feet away from buildings and busy roads.
 - Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking soil that may contain lead into the house.
 - Test your water. Order a \$12 Lead in Drinking Water Test Kit by calling 800-660-9997.
- For more information about lead hazards and lead poisoning, call 800-439-8550 or visit healthvermont.gov/lead.

LEAD Information for Head Start Centers:

All Head Start classrooms will or have been tested by the State of Vermont Department of Health to ensure the safety of the water. If the head Start program is in operation at the time the testing occurs, then parents will be informed when the testing is happening and what the results are. General information and a link to the summary of school or child care results and remediation, are online (NOTE: If your child's preschool or after school program is located at a school, the results will be listed under the school's name.):

- Schools: healthvermont.gov/school-drinking-water

Child Care Programs: healthvermont.gov/childcare-drinking-water

To learn more about lead hazards and lead poisoning prevention, visit healthvermont.gov/lead.

MEDICATION

Policy:

The proper administration of medication by designated and trained staff safeguards the health of children, staff and families. Parents should administer all routine medications at home when possible.

Procedure for Children:

- Parents of center-based children will plan the administration of medication before leaving home in the morning and upon returning home in the afternoon.
- Head Start staff will not administer any medication on a routine basis, unless it is absolutely necessary, and requested by the child's physician.
- ALL routine medications given at school may NOT be discontinued without a note from the prescribing doctor or a specific date is noted on the SEVCA Head Start Medication Administration Record under "End Date."
- If a medication has been discontinued, staff should note that on the "Staff Use" section of the SEVCA SEVCA Head Start Medication Administration Record, stating the date the medication has been discontinued and whether it has been replaced with another medication or if no replacement medication is needed and dates must be noted. Discontinued medications must be returned to the parent/guardian.
- ALL changes in medications MUST be documented and a new SEVCA Head Start Medication Administration Record must be filled out ***completely*** and signed by doctor and parent.
- ALL changes must also be shared with the Health and Nutrition Services Manager as they occur.
- ALL teaching staff will receive a VT State Licensing approved Medication Training for Child Care, before any medication is administered to any child. If a staff member has not received this training, they MAY NOT administer medications. A yearly refresher course will be required after the initial training, provided at preservice.
- New staff coming into our program during the year will be trained as soon as possible and will NOT administer any medications until they have received the approved Medication Training.
- **Any medication, prescribed or non-prescription, that staff is asked to dispense, must have a signed**

request from the child's physician (see attached).

- Parents will be required to give the first dose of the medication to their child at home, so they are able to monitor the child for possible reactions.
- In the case of an emergency or allergic reaction, staff will administer medications that have been ordered by a physician and that they have been trained to dispense. EPI-PENS and inhalers do not require special training, or certification, however, staff should become familiar with the procedure to use an EPI-PENS or inhaler if there is a child who may need this form of first aid. This training is usually provided during the First Aid training offered during Pre-Service. If a child enters the program and may need a rescue medication at some point, the staff person needs to let the health manager know that he/she needs training to administer the medication.
- Medication may only be given to the person for whom it is prescribed.
- Labels should be verified for name of child, amount of dosage, time of dosage, prescribing physician, pharmacy and expiration date.
- Parents must hand you the medication before leaving.
- When receiving the medication, you **MUST** do a medication check: this includes checking to ensure that the medication is for the child in your care, if the medication is in a box, remove the medication, ensure that the medication in the box is the medication that is on the label and dosing is appropriate. Then check to ensure you know how to store the medication, that the medication has not expired and that there is actually medication in the container. **ALL THIS MUST BE DONE BEFORE THE PARENT LEAVES!** A Receiving Medication form must be completed at the time of receiving the medication and signed by the person who received the medication and did the check of medication.
- Any occasion that requires dispensing medication during program hours will be recorded on a medication log (see attached), and kept in the child's file on site and sent to the Health and Nutrition Services Manager. Records will be kept for 365 days from the date the medication was first given (however, child files are kept for 3 years as required by Head Start).
- All medications, ***EXCEPT FOR RESCUE MEDICATIONS SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, EPI-PENS AND INHALERS** will be stored in a locked area.
- Staff will report to parents and Health Manager immediately if there are any changes to a child's behavior when a medication is given or a dosage changed, and updates recorded on a medication status form.
- All classrooms have a timer which will be set to "go off" at the time the child needs the medication, so in case the classroom gets busy, this will be another verbal reminder for the teacher to dispense the medication to the child. It is the responsibility of the lead teacher to set the timer each day, **BUT** if the teacher is out, then the teacher associate would be responsible for setting the timer. Staff need to be responsible and **NOT** lose the timer. Please store it in a safe place away from children! The timer can be set for up to four children to remind staff of when medication needs to be given.
- If a medication is given incorrectly a Medication Incident Report must be completed and the Health Manager or other manager if Health Manager is not available, must be notified.

Procedures for Staff:

- It is recommended that any staff member who takes routine medication, list the medication and the reason for the medication on the **Staff Emergency Contact List**. This information is kept confidential in the **Center Binders for staff use only**.
- Staff are also asked to list any allergies on the **Staff Emergency Contact List**, and the procedure for rescue if reaction occurs. ***RESCUE MEDICATION FOR A STAFF PERSON SHOULD BE IN AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE PLACE, AWAY FROM CHILDREN.**
- Staff should plan to take all medications at home, during non-work hours. If a staff person needs medication during work hours it must be stored away from children.

- Anytime a staff member has a new medication or change in dose, it is recommended they date and document the change on the **Staff Emergency Contact List** in the **Center Binder**, and send a copy to the Health Manager. Even if they are temporarily on a medication for a couple of weeks, date the day of change and when it will end.

- It is recommended that Managers keep a **Staff Emergency Contact List** at each site.

NOTE: The sole purpose of having documentation of medication for a staff is in case of an emergency. If staff choose not to give information, others will contact 911 at their discretion. Typically, emergency rescue asks if the person in question has any allergies or is taking any medications.

According to OHS – B – 016, Rescue medications do not need to be locked up, however, they must be kept out of children’s reach and accessible to staff at all times, including when children are on the bus, playground or on a field trip. Any staff person administering rescue medications, whether in the classroom, on the bus, on the playground, or on a field trip, must be trained in the administration of such medications.

REST TIME POLICY

Policy:

In accordance with the Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations for Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs, children that are in care for more than five hours shall have the opportunity for sleep or rest. Children should not be required to sleep, and those who do not sleep shall be provided with space and equipment for quiet play. Children should be supervised by at least one staff person during rest time, if *all* children are resting quietly.

Procedure:

- Children will have the opportunity to rest, laying down on mats, for at least thirty minutes each day.
- If after thirty minutes of resting, dependent on the individual needs of children, children may be allowed quiet activities on mats or at tables.
- **Placement of children’s nap mats:** Staff must ensure that nap mats are away from any objects with ties or strings, like window blind pulls, curtains or electrical cords. Ensure that items that a child might be able to pull onto himself are not in reach.
- Staff will allow children to sleep/rest in whatever position they choose on their mat.
- Any child that does not sleep must not be made to remain on their mat after thirty (30) minutes. He/she shall be permitted to get up and do quiet activities at a table.
- Children that sleep will be offered no more than two hours of rest time.
- If children fall asleep during rest time, staff will gently rouse sleeping children once rest time is complete.
- If *all* children are resting quietly, there need be only one staff person supervising the children by sight and sound during rest time. Once children are permitted to get off their mats for quiet activities, at least two staff members must be in the room supervising by sight and sound.
- Staff are encouraged to *gently* rouse children from sleep after two hours.
- Children will be allowed to bring their own pillows, blankets, and cuddly toy, although the center will provide mats, sheets, and blankets for all children.
- Staff will wash all sheets and blankets weekly, or as needed.

SIBLING DISCOUNT POLICY (CHILD CARE PROGRAM)

Policy:

At times there may be siblings enrolled in the Child Care Program, and therefore parents are paying double the amount in child care tuition. To help offset the costs for our families, we are offering the following sibling discounts.

Procedure:

- If a family is paying privately with no financial assistance from the state, a reimbursement of \$25.00 dollars will be credited to the weekly bill for tuition.
- If a family receives financial assistance from the state for child care, a discount of twenty percent will be credited to the weekly bill for tuition.

TOBACCO POLICY

Policy:

SEVCA Head Start recognizes its responsibility to promote the health, welfare and safety of students, staff and others on Head Start property and at agency sponsored activities. In light of scientific evidence that tobacco use is hazardous to health, it is the intent of Head Start to establish a tobacco-free environment, and to engage in coordinated tobacco prevention activities. Consequently, tobacco use, by staff or others on agency premises, at agency sponsored events, in agency owned, rented, or leased vehicles, or otherwise while on duty is prohibited.

- In recognition of the importance of modeling healthy behaviors, tobacco use by employees, parents, and volunteers is prohibited in any area (on-site or off-site) that is within sight of Head Start participants.
- Program staff, volunteers, and others must avoid bringing clothing that smells of smoke into the classroom, center or onto the playground. Staff may request that parents do not smoke during home visits. Parents will be informed of the smoke-free request prior to the home visit.

Definitions: (for the purposes of this policy)

Tobacco is defined to include any lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette and any other smoking product, including e-cigarettes or other vaping devices, and spit tobacco in any form. Spit tobacco is also known as “smokeless”, “dip”, “chew”, or “snuff”.

Procedures: Tobacco Prohibitions.

1. Tobacco use is prohibited on the premises of all Head Start property.
2. Head Start staff, parents, volunteers, and contracted employees will not engage in tobacco use on Head Start premises, in Head Start vehicles, or during Head Start activities.
3. Clothing, bags, hats and other personal items used to display, promote, or advertise tobacco products are prohibited on Head Start premises, in Head Start Vehicles, or during Head Start activities.
4. Age-appropriate tobacco prevention messages shall be incorporated into classroom teaching.
5. Staff violations of tobacco prohibitions will lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
6. Violations by others will result in appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by Head Start

Procedures:

Tobacco Prevention Activities.

- The Health Services team shall ensure that appropriate tobacco messages are incorporated into classroom instruction, and staff and family services education and resource materials.
- The Health Services team will collaborate with agencies and groups that conduct tobacco use prevention activities and education in Windsor County.
- The Health Services team will promote cessation resources to staff, volunteers and parents- and offer these as possible alternatives to discipline for violations of tobacco use policies.

Procedures: Facility Signs and Program Communication

Head Start Administration will post signage in facilities and vehicles to communicate the no tobacco use policy. Staff will be informed of this policy through such means as the Procedures Manual and orientation and training provided by supervisors. Parents, families and others will be informed through such means as the parent handbook; signs posted on parent bulletin boards; announcements during parent orientation, parent meetings, and Policy Council training; and explanations of the policy attached to fieldtrip and home visit notifications.

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 1302.46(b)(1)(i)

How can parents access information about Vermont State licensing?

- ✓ Internet access is available at any Head Start center, just ask Head Start staff for assistance.
- ✓ Type the following web-site address: www.dcf.state.vt.us (this will bring you to the Vermont Department of Children and Families).
- ✓ You will be able to "click" on Child Development Division. This screen will give you access to finding child care programs for your area, simply by clicking on the highlighted in blue "child care".
- ✓ By clicking on the first box on the left-hand side, CHILD CARE, this will take you to another screen where you would "click" on Licensing and Statutes. This will provide you with the Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations for the State of Vermont, which a copy can also be found at each center.
- ✓ You may also call Child Care Services Division at 1-802-241-3110 or 1-800-649-2642.
- ✓ The Child Care Consumer Concern Line telephone number is: 1-800-540-7942.



United States Department of Agriculture

NOTICE TO BENEFICIARIES AND PROSPECTIVE BENEFICIARIES

Name of Organization: SEVCA Head Start

Name of Program(s): Pine Street Preschool and Chester Community Preschool

Contact Information for Program Staff: Jessica Parmenter, 802-674-8008, jparmenter@sevca.org

Because this program is supported in whole or in part by financial assistance from the Federal Government, we are required to let you know that:

- (1) We may not discriminate against you on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice;
- (2) We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or

proselytization) that are offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary;

- (3) We must separate in time or location any privately funded explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) from activities supported with direct Federal financial assistance; and
- (4) You may report violations of these protections, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by contacting or filing a written complaint with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, Program Complaint Division by mail, fax, or e-mail at:

Mail:

United States Department of Agriculture
Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

Fax: (202) 690-7442

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

- (5) If you would like to seek information about whether there are any other federally funded organizations that provide these kinds of services in your area, please contact Child
and Adult Care Food Program Coordinator, Rebecca Bogart.
Phone: 802-828-1610, Email: Rebecca.Bogart@vermont.gov

This written notice must be provided to you before you enroll in the program or receive services from the program, unless the nature of the service provided, or exigent circumstances make it impracticable to provide such notice before we provide the actual service. In such an instance, this notice must be provided to you at the earliest available opportunity.

SEVCA Head Start Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

Individuals and groups are never discouraged from submitting a complaint of discrimination. Complaints may be written or verbal. Complaints may be anonymous. The **SEVCA Head Start** instructs program participants to send complaints of discrimination directly to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR). The complainant must file within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination. The superintendent or appointed designee is responsible for implementing the Civil Rights Complaint Procedure. The complainant can file on their own directly with the USDA or report the complaint to the School Food Authority (SFA) or sponsor.

The contact information is found on the “And Justice for All” posters which are prominently displayed in all required areas.

1. All complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), or disability will be forwarded to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights immediately.

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

fax:

(202) 690-7442; or

email:

program.intake@usda.gov

Complaints should be put into writing, by the complainant, using [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint), (AD-3027), (AD-3027) found online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>.

This form is available in English and Spanish.

- English version:
<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>
 - Spanish Version: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027s.pdf>
2. In the event that a complainant makes the allegations verbally or in person and refuses or is not inclined to place such allegations in writing, the person to whom the allegations are made must record the details of the complaint for the complainant. Every effort will be made to have the complainant provide the following information:
 - a) Name and contact information for the complainant.
 - b) The date(s) during which the alleged discriminatory actions occurred or, if continuing, the duration of such actions.
 - c) The specific location and name of the entity delivering the service or benefit.
 - d) The nature of the incident or action that led the complainant to feel that discrimination was a factor.
 - e) The basis on which the complainant feels discrimination exists within any of the protected classes.
 - f) The names, titles, and business addresses of people who may have knowledge of the discriminatory action.
 3. If the USDA determines that a civil rights complaint warrants an investigation, it will occur based on established FNS policy and procedures and then finalized into a report. They will investigate the complaint, and this is the sole responsibility of the USDA.
 4. In addition to submitting the complaint to the USDA, the SFA will keep a Civil Rights Complaint Log on site. Maintaining confidentiality is crucial. As much information as possible will be documented, including:

- Name and contact information of complainant
 - Description of incident including date, time, location, and persons present
 - Relevant Protected Base(s)
 - Name of organization and individuals alleged to have engaged in discrimination
 - Date of referral to USDA
 - The findings of any investigation conducted
 - Description of the final disposition of the complaint including any corrective action planned or taken
5. The SFA will also notify Child Nutrition Programs at Vermont Agency of Education of any complaints of discrimination. The State Agency maintains the information in a confidential database with limited access. Child Nutrition Programs does not investigate complaints of discrimination, but ensures complaints are received by the USDA and will cooperate in the tracking, processing, and resolving of complaints of discrimination.
 6. The Vermont Agency of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, marital status, sex, disability, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities. Complaints alleging discrimination related to the Vermont Agency of Education protected bases of religion or martial/civil union status, will be sent to Emily Simmons, General Counsel, at emily.simmons@vermont.gov or (802)-828-1518.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an

alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

XII. Community Resources



EMERGENCY SERVICES

FIRE.....EMERGENCIES ONLY 911
POLICE.....EMERGENCIES ONLY 911
AMBULANCE.....EMERGENCIES ONLY 911

HOSPITALS

Bellows Falls Urgent Care.....463-3903
Dartmouth –Hitchcock Medical Center.....603-650-5000
Springfield Hospital885-2151
Mt Ascutney Hospital & Health Center.....674-6711
Valley Regional Claremont, NH..... 603-542-7771

WOMEN’S SUPPORT SERVICES

Women’s Freedom Center 24-hour crisis line.....885-2050
AcORN WRJ.....800-816-2220
Women’s Crisis Center/Brattleboro.....support line.....1-802-257-7364
24 Hour crisis line..... 1-802-254-6954

RUNAWAYS.....229-9151

Parents Anonymous Hotline.....1-800-639-4014
Parents Assistance Line.....1-800-727-3687
Planned Parenthood.....885-4701

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Statewide Number.....800-649-5285

Red Cross.....223-3701
AIDS Hotline.....800-639-1053

DENTISTS

Chester Family Dental..... 802-875-2878
Children’s Dental Care..... 603-357-6385
Community Dental Rutland..... 802-774-5050
Dr. Fauver 802-885-3191
Just Kids Pediatric Dentistry..... 802-649-5210
Larkin 802-885-4140
Montshire Pediatric Dentistry- Claremont, NH..... 603-543-0455
Montshire Pediatric Dentistry- Keene, NH 603-354-3895
Springfield Family Dental..... 802-885-4581
Upper Valley Pediatric Dentistry..... 603-790-8130
Wolfe Dental Care 802-885-2205

DOCTORS

Alice Peck Day	603-448-3122
Brattleboro Primary Care	802-258-3905
Charlestown Health Center	603-826-5711
Chester Family Practice.....	802-875-2546
Community Health Rutland	802-773-3386
Dartmouth Pediatrics.....	603-653-9663
Grace Cottage Family Health	802-365-4331
Ludlow Family Medicine.....	802-228-8867
Mt. Ascutney Pediatrics.....	802-674-7337
Mountain Valley Health Center	802-824-6901
Partners in Family Medicine.....	802-886-8900
Rockingham Health Center.....	802-463-9000
Springfield Pediatrics	802-886-8990
Valley Primary Care	603-542-6700
White River Family Practice	802-295-6132

EDUCATION

Adult Basic Learning.....885-5502 or learning@vermontel.net

Futures.....800-322-4004

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

 Springfield: Courtney Dextraze-Wiese.....885-5242

 Chester: Laurie Cloud.....875-2146

 White River Junction: Chelsea Gray

Windsor: Katie Ahern.....436-2755

College Information:

Community College of VT.....885-8373

Champlain College.....860-2700

Johnson College.....635-2356/828-4045

Goddard College.....454-8311/800-468-4888

Norwich University.....485-2001/800-992-3777

VT Technical College.....728-3291

Vermont College Adult Admissions.....828-8500

VT Department of Education.....828-3135

VT Student Assistance Corp (VSAC).....800-642-3177

Woodbury College.....800-639-6039

HOUSING/EMERGENCY FUEL

Springfield Housing Authority.....885-4905

Springfield Supportive Housing Program.....885-3034

VT State Housing.....828-3295

Tenant's Right's

Farmers Home Administration.....229-0371

Habitat for Humanity

[74]

White River Junction.....800-288-4421
The Haven –White River Junction.....295-6500
Southeastern VT Community Action(SEVCA).....1-800-464-9951
Springfield/Windsor.....885-6153
WRJ.....295-5215

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Lawyer Resource & Referral.....800-639-7036
Probation & Parole.....479-9393
VT Legal Aid.....885-5181

HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH

Dr Dynasaur.....800-250-8427
HCRS.....886-4567/Crisis Line 800-622-2146
WRJ HCRS.....295-3031
Springfield Counseling.....885-1904
Windham Center for Psychiatric Care463-1346
VT Supported Living.....295-9100
VT Health Access Plan (VHAP).....800-250-8427

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Alcohol & Drug Treatment.....885-6060
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention (ADAP) general info.....479-4250
Vocational Rehabilitation.....885-2279
Alcoholic Anonymous
Springfield.....885-8281
WRJ.....295-7611

STATE OF VERMONT

Department of Health
Springfield.....885-5778
WRJ.....295-8820
Department of Economic Service.... CALL CENTER1-800-479-6151
(All areas in Windsor County)

Department of Employment & Training
Springfield.....885-2167
White River Junction.....748-3177
Office of Child Support.....800-786-3214

RESOURCE CENTERS

Family Place.....649-3248
Springfield Parent Child Center /Child Care Financial
Assistance.....886-5242
Springfield Family Center885-3646
Windsor Resource Center.....674-2900
Chester-Andover Family Center.....875-3236
Child Development Division Waterbury.....241-3100

LENDING LIBRARY

A lending library is available for parents to borrow books (both hard copies and on tape/CD) from. A wide range of topics will be available for selection, such as health, nutrition, parenting, allergies, autism and behavior strategies to mention a few. Each center will have a list of available books and parents can check them out via a Family Partner. We think this is a great resource that families will take advantage of.



Additional Important Numbers

Head Start Management Team
(Located at the Office in Windsor, VT.)
4 Dunham Ave, Windsor, VT 05156

Lori Canfield 802-674-8415
Head Start Director

Jodi Farashahi 802-674-8417
Education/Disabilities/Child Care Services Manager

Morgan Leichter-Saxby 802-674-8416
Mental Health Services Manager/Practice-based Coach
At PSP: 802-460-1292
At CCP: 802-460-0192, Ext.3501

Lindsay DeCell 802-674-8419
Family Services/ERSEA Manager

Jessica Parmenter 802-674-8008
Health/Nutrition Services Manager

Front Office 802-674-8418

****PLEASE NOTE:** If your child is going to be absent, please call your child's teacher (AT THE NUMBER BELOW) to let them know, as we are required to track all absences.

Head Start Centers

Pine Street Preschool 802-460-1291
15 Pine Street, Springfield, VT 05156

Chester Community Preschool 802-460-0144
42 Maple Street, Chester, VT 05143

Family Partner, Michohn Parmenter 802-460-1285
15 Pine Street, Springfield, VT 05156

Family Partner, Angi Russell 802-460-0297
42 Maple Street, Chester VT 05143

Facilities Coordinator, Chris Zappala 802-460-1293
15 Pine Street, Springfield, VT 05156

SEVCA Numbers: 802-721-1012
Joshua Davis (Exe. Director) Ext. 1102 Jennifer Jacobs (HR Director) Ext. 1113 Jon Hoover (Finance) Ext. 1111