



**Cattaraugus & Wyoming
Counties
Project Head Start**
www.headstartnetwork.com



HEAD START PARENT HANDBOOK 2010 - 2011

Great minds begin at Head Start

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WELCOME

Welcome to the family of Head Start! Each and every child, each and every family, and each and every employee is very important to us.

Here is some basic information about Head Start – service and activities, policies and procedures, and our mutual responsibilities. We can't put everything into this booklet but we'll answer any question at any time. Please get to know us as it helps us get to know your children better.

Please take advantage of all that Head Start offers: read our newsletter Head Start Highlights; use the internet connected parent center computers; volunteer or be a substitute; participate in your parent committees; make decisions as a member of the Policy Council; participate in special parent activities like our exciting Health Care Institute and Exploring Parenting. Apply for any job for which you are qualified.

Head Start's purpose is to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children. Head Start believes that parents are the child's first and primary teacher.

Early Head Start is a program designed as a home based program for pregnant women and children ages 0-3 years old. Contact us to learn more about Early Head Start and the exciting opportunities it might have for you or someone you know.

We look forward to a bright yet very challenging future. Research has clearly shown that Head Start works!

All of our Head Start centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We are the only accredited centers in our area.

We wish you and your child a successful and rewarding Head Start experience. We believe that great minds begin at Head Start and the best is yet to come.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

First, let's explain Head Start. We offer two basic Head Start program options in Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties. Hours and days in session vary by location so check your Head Start calendar. Head Start first began in 1965.

The Head Start Center Based program(s) has centers located in Olean, Salamanca, Delevan, Franklinville and Warsaw. The Center Based teams consist of Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Program Aides, Family Support Assistants, Nutrition/Food Service Workers, Bus Drivers, Bus Monitors and Volunteers.

The Head Start Home Based Program operates only at our Warsaw Center, with children and families participating in weekly home visits and bi-weekly socializations.

Since 1998, we have also operated the Early Head Start Program in Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties. It is a Home Based Program Option, and serves pregnant women and children birth to 3

(before Head Start age). It is a year round program. Early Head Start provides weekly home visits that are 1½ hours each. Two socialization activities are provided each month.

All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are designed to provide children with activities that help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. Ours is a family focused program which has the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. Our program provides a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, literacy, health and mental health; nutrition and parent involvement.

Head Start has partnerships with five school districts for NYS Universal Pre-Kindergarten (NYS UPK) and collaborates with Early Reading First in our Olean classrooms. Head Start is a Success by Six agency.

FAMILY SERVICES

The wonderful and rewarding challenge of raising a family today demands more "know-how", thought, and patience than ever before. Head Start wants to help families grow stronger.

After the children are recruited and enrolled, your Family Support Assistant or Family Development Specialist and Teacher will arrange to visit your home. At this time, you can talk over your concerns about your family needs to plan to use your family's strengths to meet these needs.

You may access a list of community resources on our website located at <http://www.headstartnetwork.com> or by contacting your Family Support Assistant. Your Family Support Assistant will provide support, assistance and guidance throughout your Head Start program year.

A "Family Partnership Agreement" between the Head Start Program and each enrolled family will be formed to assist in achieving self-identified and realistic goals. The information you share in developing your "Family Partnership Agreement" is confidential and will never go outside the program without your permission.

If you find your community lacks the services your family needs, then Head Start will provide the support to get action on your family's behalf. Head Start staff is always ready, willing, and able to assist families. Do not hesitate to ask questions.

Your Family Support Assistant or Family Development Specialist is there to help you to connect to your Head Start family and many of the resources in our community. Your Family Support Assistant or Family Development Specialist shares your goals, wanting the very best for your child. They have a responsibility to work together with you and your family and to develop a relationship with you that only works if it is built on trust and respect. By developing a positive and respectful relationship with your Family Support Assistant, Family Development Specialist, teaching staff, bus staff, kitchen staff, etc., your child will have more success at school and in his or her own Head Start relationships.

NUTRITION

Nutrition at Head Start includes the child's intake of food, education about food – how it helps the body grow and function – and nutrition assessment partly through completion of growth charts for each child.

For center based programs:

- 1.) Children are provided with nutritious meals while at Head Start. Meals are served on a schedule which may vary from site to site. Children in full-day programs are served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Expenses for meals are reimbursed through the Child and Adult Care Food Program which is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture.
- 2.) Six-week cycle menus are used. They are approved by a registered dietitian. Head Start makes every effort to serve heart healthy/nutritious foods, low in sugar, salt, and fat. Junk food is not served. Special diets are provided for children who need them. Documentation from a doctor is required.
- 3.) Meals are prepared in center kitchens by Nutrition and Food Service Workers at four Head Start sites: Olean, Salamanca, Delevan and Warsaw. Classes which are held in public schools are served breakfast and lunch meals which are provided by the food service staff at the school. The afternoon snack is provided by Head Start. Children at all centers eat in the classrooms where meals are served family-style. Parents are always welcome to volunteer in the classroom and eat with the children.
- 4.) Nutrition activities involving the children are completed in the classrooms on a regular basis. One of the activities is weighing and measuring each child, three times per year. The Head Start nurse then plots the information on growth charts. The charts are evaluated to assure that each child is growing at a healthy rate. Parents are informed of the results.

For home based programs:

- 1) Nutritious snacks are taken to the home on Home Visits.
- 2) Food is provided at Group Socializations.
- 3) Nutrition activities are completed during home visits. Growth charts are also completed. Nutrition at Head Start is educational and fun. We hope that each child will benefit from the heart healthy foods we serve.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN ANY FOOD. We cannot serve it. Due to various regulations, the **ONLY FOODS** we serve at our Head Start centers are foods which are purchased by Head Start and **PREPARED AT OUR HEAD START CENTERS.**

EDUCATION

HEAD START GOALS The program invites your active participation in your child's Head Start experience. Together we will strive to meet these goals:

- To welcome each child and develop a sense of trust and belonging.
- To provide an environment where children may explore, examine, experiment and discover in their own interest and strength areas.
- To assure each child has experiences that will help develop a healthy self-image by encouraging participation, displaying work, observing progress, planning for each child, and getting to know each one as an individual.
- To encourage the child to ask questions and to talk about experiences and feelings by being patient listeners and by asking as well as answering questions.
- To help the child develop self-expression, self-direction and responsibility by offering choices, and a variety of materials to "act on".
- To work together to establish limits and routines.
- To allow the children to use their own strengths and curiosity to build upon their unique experiences.
- To encourage and develop healthy habits and self-help skills.
- To help the child become accustomed to time schedules, planning and organization of materials.

A DAY IN A HEAD START CLASSROOM Every day in every class is different as we customize our program to each child's individual needs. Classroom times will vary by site. A typical Head Start day includes:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Activities</u>
❖ Welcoming the children and volunteers	Health checks, toileting, washing, attendance; orient volunteers
❖ Breakfast	Set tables, eat, clean-up
❖ Work Time	Structured play including free choice of activities in all learning centers; brush teeth, indoor and outdoor play
❖ Large Motor	Indoor and outdoor play
❖ Transition Time	Planned transition for clean-up, Wash-up, lunch preparation
❖ Lunch	Eat, clean-up
❖ Quiet Time	Nap
❖ Small Group Time	Stories
❖ Transition Time	Games, outdoor play, exploring
❖ Snack	Washing, prepare snacks
❖ Recap-Departure	Get ready to board bus

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT During the first few weeks of your child's Head Start attendance, we strive to learn to know each child as well as we can. We have developed an assessment process and we encourage you to assist in this activity when you visit the classroom. The information we collect about each child from the assessment and from talking with parents forms the basis for planning as partners for the children according to Early Childhood Development guidelines. Developmental Assessment is ongoing throughout the year.

MEAL and SNACK TIME Breakfast and lunch will be served to all children daily. A snack is provided to the full day classroom in the afternoon. Foods such as vegetables, fresh fruits, juice or milk, crackers and cheese are served daily to introduce the child to the importance and enjoyment of eating nutritious and various foods. Snack time may also be used to introduce ethnic or cultural foods.

FREE CHOICE OF ACTIVITY TIME A child may select the kind of materials or equipment with which to play or work. Children may decide to work alone, or be part of a small group activity. The staff carefully plans a variety of activities. Play is an important part of every child's growth and learning process. Play is how children represent what they know of the world. Later they will represent this knowledge through reading and writing. Play comes first and is essential to the development of reading and writing skills. The classroom space is divided into separate learning areas with changing, interesting materials, equipment and "props" for meaningful, expressive play. A large portion of each day is spent this way.

MUSIC Children sing songs, experiment with rhythm instruments and whole body movements to music. They learn to express themselves creatively and to enjoy various types of music.

STORYTIME The teaching staff and volunteers read or tell stories. Children are encouraged to enjoy books. The selection changes to correspond with the weekly goals and plans, and the children's interests. Flannel boards, story records and cards, and tape recordings are also frequently used.

REST TIME A short quiet time when the children rest encourages them to relax. A change of pace helps children move from one activity to another. Accommodation and flexible timing are important for preschool children. They are learning about "time".

LANGUAGE and COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT Plans always include activities to help the children gain expressive skills. Many basic concepts are explored as the children learn about themselves and the world around them. This is done through stories, walks, and field trips to community points of interest and through a lively, interesting, inviting classroom design and actively involved adults. Conversations are a very important part of every day at Head Start. Conversations can be about anything that interests those talking together.

HOME VISITS The Teachers plan to visit you at your home at least two or three times during the year to share information about your child and make plans with you. Two parent conferences will be scheduled at school during the year, as well.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL Parents are expected to put their children on the bus at the scheduled time and take them off the bus when they arrive home. If you bring your child to school,

be sure the Teacher knows he or she has arrived. If your child is to be picked up at the classroom by anyone other than you, or anyone you have not already granted written permission to, you must notify the Teacher in writing. You are welcome to ride the bus to the center to volunteer or visit at any time.

In the event your child is not picked up by you as scheduled (self transported) or met by you at the bus when arriving home, Head Start will continue to supervise the child (on the bus, by the bus driver or by the staff at the center) until the contact people you have listed for emergencies or escort are able to assume care for your child. If we are unable to reach you or the contact people after a reasonable period, then Head Start will consult with the authorities to arrange for continued supervision.

When your child rides the bus, he/she is expected to remain in the seat. Head Start requires that all children 3 or 4 years old must be buckled in a Q-vest at all times. It is important to have your child ready when the bus arrives at your home. The driver will try to keep on schedule as much as possible, but during bad weather times may vary. If you know your child will not be riding the bus, please call the bus driver or the center as soon as possible.

ACTIVE TIME Weather permitting, the children will spend some time each day outdoors. Fresh air and exercise help the children grow and stay healthy. On bad weather days, games, marching, dancing, or exercises are done indoors.

SPECIAL EVENTS Field trips, trips on the bus to interesting places like farms or fire stations are taken frequently. Parents are encouraged to come. You can also help plan special events in collaboration with the teacher.

CLOTHING Washable clothes, in which the children can freely play, are best. They should be designed so children can easily care for their own toilet needs. Because the children are encouraged to learn self-help skills, boots should be large enough to slip over shoes or sneakers easily and snowsuits or jackets should be large enough to go on easily. Please dress your child warmly in cold weather. Please send a change of clothes. Bus times will be announced. Please be ready. Generally, staff is available 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After hours, contact the administrative office if necessary.

HEALTH AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Head Start provides a comprehensive health program to assist the child's physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. This includes many health screenings which are not only required by the program, but also provide valuable insight into your child's development and physical well being. Parents are asked to take an active part by accompanying your child on these health visits.

1. Before your child attends Head Start he/she must have a physical examination including blood pressure, blood test and lead test, to insure that he/she is in good health, free from communicable disease, and that all immunizations are up to date. Your Family Support Assistant, Teacher (Home Based) will provide you with a schedule of required immunizations and a physical examination record form to take to your doctor on the health

intake home visit before your child starts school. Your child will not be able to enter the classroom or attend a group activity until we have received the physical examination and immunization records, which have been brought up-to-date, and proof of a lead test. All parents who plan to visit and volunteer in the classroom regularly must also have a recent tuberculin test.

2. The Family Support Assistant, or Teacher (Home Based) will also provide you with a dental health record form for you to take to your dentist so that your child's teeth can be examined, cleaned and appointments set up for any restorative treatment, if needed. Head Start encourages on-going dental care. The child will be provided his/her own toothbrush to use each day at Head Start and will be encouraged to use good personal care and proper diet along with professional care for good oral health. Set up an appointment with your dentist as soon as possible, if you have not yet done so.
3. No treatment to children, other than first aid in the event of accidents, can be given by Head Start staff. For this reason it is very important that we have all phone numbers where you can be reached so that your child can be returned home. We also need your physician's name and the name of someone to call in case you cannot be located in the event of illness or injuries. Also, no medication can be given to your child by us without written orders from a physician. If your child is taking medication, we need to know this, as it could explain a change in his/her performance while participating in Head Start activities.
4. Observe your child carefully on a daily basis before sending him/her to Head Start for any of the following symptoms:
 - A. Flushed face, chills, or other signs of abnormal temperature
 - B. Runny nose, cough, sneezing, nasal or chest congestion, inflamed eyes
 - C. Skin rashes, peeling sores
 - D. Sores around the mouth and nose
 - E. Sore throat or enlarged glands
 - F. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - G. Fatigue or unusual paleness
 - H. Earache
 - I. Contagious disease (such as: measles, mumps, and chicken pox)
 - J. Parasitic disease (such as head lice)

If your child displays any of these symptoms, he/she should be kept home and away from other children. Your Family Support Assistant or Teacher (Home Based) will provide you with a booklet on "Keeping Your Child Healthy" which describes the first signs of illness, which normally appear for many contagious diseases. If any communicable disease is diagnosed by your doctor, please let Head Start know about it immediately as his precaution may avoid an epidemic. Also get a note from your child's doctor (or public health nurse) as required, stating that your child can return to school.

5. Screenings provided by Head Start for all children include:

Audio – The initial screening must take place within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not do well on the initial screening are referred for a complete audio evaluation, which can more accurately measure a child's hearing or be referred to a physician for evaluation.

Developmental- This screening will take place within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not do well will be referred for further testing or to a physician for evaluation.

Speech and Language – The initial speech/language screening coincides with the developmental screening – also within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not pass the initial screening are then referred for an evaluation after which speech and language therapy must be recommended.

Vision – The vision screening will also take place within 45 days of enrollment. Those children who do not pass the screening satisfactorily are retested or referred to an eye doctor.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to schedule a dental exam within 90 calendar days of the child's enrollment with Head Start. Each child also needs blood work and a lead test within 90 calendar days of enrollment.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION

"Mental health in simplest form is the capacities to love, work, and play. All people need to feel that they have:

- The ability to form meaningful relationships and have positive self-esteem.
- The ability to be and feel productive and know that they contribute to society.
- The ability to play, relax and use leisure time in a manner which renews energy.

“Mental health is the capacity to cope with all of life's circumstances, the highs and the lows, and the joys and the sorrows. We all experience good days and bad days; the difference is how we get through them and our ability to continue building successful life management skills.” These passages are taken from the book Mental Health in Head Start: A Wellness Approach.

The mental health needs of children, families and staff are impacted by our rural location, the inherent poverty levels, isolation, and need for expanded mental health services.

Acknowledging this uniqueness, we at Head Start aim to provide a holistic range of mental health services to promote and sustain the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, occupational and spiritual wellness of children, families, and staff.

With the emphasis on prevention, through the cooperation and integration of all components and community resources, we will strive to enhance the self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and independence of each individual. Our aim is to provide a safe, caring, nurturing environment so that each individual may develop mental wellness skills, abilities, and strategies which will sustain him/her throughout life.

The goals of the Mental Health aspect of the Head Start Program are:

- A. Provide a comprehensive mental health services program for children, families and staff.
- B. Promote a program whose primary focus is on prevention.
- C. Provide the means for identification, referral, and treatment of mental health concerns.
- D. Provide families and staff with the necessary skills, insight and links to mental health services to ensure comprehensive care after leaving the Head Start program.
- E. Ensure that all aspects of Head Start are appropriately involved in the integration of the holistic approach to mental health.

Your Family Support Assistant, Family Development Specialist or Teacher (Home Based) will be available to explain the varied services available. Head Start will assist you in accessing them in a confidential, caring and timely manner.

TRANSPORTATION

We have a limited number of buses to work with and a timeframe we must follow. Once you're on the bus run it is very hard to change it. If you move or change babysitters we may not be able to provide transportation. We also cannot continue to change pick-ups and drop-offs on a daily basis. We need everyone to establish regular pick-up and drop-off points.

Also our buses require regular maintenance so there will be some self transport days. We will work hard to keep this to a minimum, but as you know buses have moving parts and they do break down, when this happens someone will call you as soon as possible so that you can make other arrangements for that day. If you have any questions, please call your center and the staff there will know how to get a hold of the coordinator.

Parent and children should become familiar with “**Rules for Buses.**”

- A. Every child is to be in a Q-Strait system until the bus has completely stopped.
- B. Noise level should be at a minimum.
- C. Child will be informed they have reached their home.
- D. Everyone on the bus must know all emergency exits. Adults must know other safety procedures. i.e. Fire Extinguishers.
- E. No food or toys are allowed on the bus.
- F. Bus Driver will check all seats after children have departed from the bus both at school and on field trips.
- G. Parents will walk child to and from the bus – Monitor will help child on or off the bus.
- H. Monitor will cross all parents and children.

All rules must be observed and followed by anyone transported on Head Start vehicles. If your child does not comply with the bus rules, parents will be notified of the problem and bus privileges (riding) may be suspended for a few days. Should a child's behavior on the bus become a problem or a safety concern the following steps will be taken.

1. Parent will be notified.
2. If behavior persists, parent will be responsible for having an adult accompany the child on the bus.
3. As a last resort, bus privileges may be suspended for a few days or longer if necessary.

Please remember not all vehicles stop for the flashing lights of the school bus so caution should be taken at all times.

In the Case of a Bus Emergency

If main EXIT door cannot be used then use either;

- A. The middle exit for those seated from driver to middle exit.
- B. Emergency door at rear for those seated from middle exit to rear of bus.
- C. If these exits cannot be used, then the roof and window exits will be used.

Bus Drills

There will be monthly bus drills and parents help will be appreciated with this.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A HEAD START PARENT

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.
2. To help develop adult programs which will improve daily living for me and my family, accepting Head Start as an opportunity through which our lives can be improved.
3. To be welcomed in the classroom at any time as a planner, observer, volunteer worker or paid employee, and to contribute my services in whatever way I can toward enrichment of the total program. There is no need to inform anyone before hand.
4. To choose whether or not I participate without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
5. To be informed regularly about my child's progress in Head Start as well as make regular inquiries.
6. To be always treated with respect, dignity, and as an individual.
7. To expect guidance for my child from Head Start employees which will help his/her development.
8. To be able to learn about the operation and administration of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
9. To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skills in areas of possible employment. To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge about child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.

10. To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education and the improvement of family life.
11. To provide parent leadership by taking part in Head Start elections, to explain the program to other parents and encourage their full participation.
12. To welcome Head Start employees into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their children's development at home in relation to Head Start experience.
13. To work and plan with the Head Start employees and other parents in a cooperative way.
14. To guide my children with firmness which is both loving and protective.
15. To offer constructive criticism of the program, to defend it against unfair criticism and to share in evaluating it.
16. To make a good faith effort to inform Head Start if I am unable to keep an appointment or attend. Head Start will make a good faith effort to notify me of any center cancellations.

NOTES ABOUT PARENT PARTICIPATION

PARENT COMMITTEE Every parent is a member of a parent committee. Monthly meetings for center based, or Home Based may be held independently or jointly. The meetings may be held in Parent Rooms at Head Start centers. More information will be provided when your child begins Head Start. You'll have a chance to make new friends and share ideas with other parents. Parent committees decide what they'd like to do together during the year. Plan to attend! Your good ideas are needed to make the year exciting, fun and worthwhile for all.

FIELD TRIPS The children can learn a lot about the community we live in by visiting places of interest in our area. Parents are needed to help plan and carry out these special experiences. Be sure to let your child's Teacher know if you'd like to help on field trips or have a good idea about places to visit.

POLICY COUNCIL The Policy Council meets regularly in the evening to help give the program direction, make decisions and evaluate how things are going. The Policy Council is made up of persons from the community who represent agencies serving children and families or who are past parents, and current Head Start parents and from each Program Option. You will learn more about becoming a Policy Council representative during October Parent Committee Meetings.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS Head Start will be offering programs such as First Aid, Smoking Cessation, Nurturing, Computer Training, Internet, Parenting Workshops, and basic skills.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER Current and past Head Start parents who have volunteered regularly are eligible to become paid substitute staff. Details will be discussed as the year progresses.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER The time you spend in the classroom is very important. It shows your child that you care and this makes him/her want to learn. Suggestions to help volunteers are included in this booklet.

HEAD START TRAININGS When finances allow and as may be appropriate, parents may be invited to attend out of town Head Start workshops. Care should be taken to dress comfortably and appropriately on these occasions. Confidentiality and discretion must always be practiced when parents express opinions and exchange ideas between programs at these workshops. Transportation may be provided for Policy Council, Policy Council Committees, parent meetings and trainings.

ACCEPTANCE Our biggest responsibility is to help children learn and feel good about themselves and learning. We do this by accepting each child and respecting him/her for what he/she is. We set examples through words and actions. When we are consistent, the children are secure and happy.

VOLUNTEERING

Parents are very much needed as volunteers. The Head Start program could not operate without them. We look forward to this partnership with parents to help us to know the children better.

We invite you, as parents, to take part in all areas of Head Start. It's a great learning experience for you and your presence will make your child very happy. Here are some ways you can volunteer:

At the Head Start center:

A. Classroom:

- Help with all classroom activities
- Help at meal and snack time; also plan/prepare cultural ethnic foods
- Help in the kitchen; help plan menus
- Go on field trips

B. Outside the Classroom:

- Workshops and discussion groups (e.g. discipline, self esteem)
- Parenting sessions
- Adult classes -be a participant or share a talent with the group (music, craft, hobby)
- Monthly parent committee meetings
- Help in the office when asked
- Help monitor children while on the bus
- Be an active member of your center parent committee
- Policy Council
- Newsletter Committee -writing and/or collecting news items
- Component Advisory Committee

In your home:

- Actively participate in home visits
- Make home made games and read with your child
- Repair toys/materials
- Collect "beautiful junk" for use by children or parent crafts
- Sew doll clothes

We welcome your input and help in all areas of Head Start as well as with activities that come up during the year. Just let us know what you like to do and we'll find a place to use your skills. Child care for siblings may be provided at the center during parent activities.

WHAT IS IN-KIND AND WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

When you become part of our program, one of the words you begin to hear is in-kind. What is it? Head Start and Early Head Start programs are funded by the federal government but only to a certain point.

We must raise 20% of our funds through community support-that support is known as in-kind. In-kind can be actual cash, donated goods or donated services. The 20% requirement is mandatory. If we don't raise it, federal funds decrease as well. When you volunteer, it is considered in-kind.

The time you spend helping Head Start not only benefits you and your children but the over all program since it is considered in-kind. You'll have fun, make new friends, expand on your skills, and most of all show your child that you care about her/his education and well being.

PROGRAM POLICIES ... JUST A FEW KEY ONES

ATTENDANCE POLICY Because we are a federal program, we are required to maintain attendance in our classrooms. More importantly, when your child misses school or home visits, he/she is missing out on valuable experiences and services. You must notify your home visitor or classroom staff if your child is going to be absent or miss a home visit. Please give the reason for the absence and the return date. Consistent attendance is essential to your child's success. If you do not contact us regarding absence(s), a staff member will contact you to discuss it. Please keep us informed of illnesses or emergencies that will prevent your child from attending school.

CONFIDENTIALITY ...WHAT YOU HEAR HERE, LET IT STAY HERE You may have a time when you feel that your personal affairs need to be discussed with your child's Teacher, or your family support assistant. We are under strict rules that nothing you tell us can be discussed with anyone outside the agency unless we ask your permission. We expect that parents will also respect rights of others in this manner.

CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT Under the law, we must report any case of suspected or actual child abuse, maltreatment and neglect. At the time of enrollment you signed a statement which explained the law regarding our responsibilities. If you have questions regarding this policy, please discuss it with your Family Support Assistant or Teacher (Home Based). At the time of admission, copies of "Think about Child Care- Choosing the Right Care for Your Kids" and "Say No! Protecting Children Against Sexual Abuse," are available at the center or by asking Head Start staff.

DAY CARE REGULATIONS The Head Start Director, Mr. Ira Katzenstein (716-373-2447), is responsible for the administration and overall operation of Head Start. He may be reached by contacting the administrative office. The Buffalo Regional Office of the New York State

Department of Social Services, 545 Ellicott Square Building, Buffalo, NY 14203, (716-847-3828) may be contacted about violations of statutory and regulatory day care center requirements. Day care regulations are available at each center and on line. Our day care license is posted.

DISCIPLINE Head Start staff is trained in how to work with children. We guide behavior of children for their protection and growth, and to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the age and development of each child. Among the techniques used are redirecting a child to alternate activity, rewarding acceptable behavior, encouraging children to talk about their feelings and providing an example for children by speaking and interacting with children in a positive manner.

FIELD TRIPS When planning field trips, parent groups shall consider the health and safety of the children at all times. Field trips should be opportunities for children to expand their immediate experiences. They should be meaningful and developmentally appropriate. Trips shall be subject to the approval of the Education Coordinator. Plans for trips shall comply with the following criteria:

1. The length of travel time needs to follow appropriate guidelines for ages of children.
2. Trips shall not start before 8:00 a.m. and shall end no later than 4:00 p.m.
3. Members of the staff shall be designated to carry out assigned duties and to see that all children are accounted for.
4. A Refreshment Committee shall be established. Food service plans should insure at least one nutritious meal and snack.
5. Availability of eating facilities must be checked in advance.
6. A Comfort Committee shall be established to check available toilet facilities and first aid items in advance. Also provide extra clothing (for accidents), wet and dry cloths for face and hands.
7. Groups shall be responsible for leaving the trip site in a clean condition.
8. No trip will be approved unless there is ample parent participation to ensure adequate supervision of the children.

SEX OFFENDERS It is the policy of Cattaraugus and Wyoming Counties Project Head Start to not allow any level 1, 2 or 3 sex offenders contained on the NYS Office of Sex Offender Management Sex Offender Registry into the Head Start centers. Parents or legal guardians who are sex offenders may be allowed into the center but must have a staff escort at all times and only for extenuating circumstances such as child illness or injury or as required by day care regulations. These regulations state that “the parent of a child receiving care must have: unlimited and on demand access to such child; the right to inspect all parts of the building used for child day care or which could present a hazard to the health or safety of the child whenever the parent requests at any time during the hours of operation of the child day care center.”

PARTIES/INVITATIONS In the past, some parents have requested that we send home birthday party invitations in their child’s classmates’ backpacks. Please keep in mind that this does not mean that Head Start is affiliated in any way with the particular celebration or birthday or is in any way encouraging you to send your child to the party, etc. Only you know what is in the best interest of your child. If you do not wish invitations to be sent home with your child in this manner, please inform your child’s teacher.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS/AUDIOS In order that we may protect the privacy of Head Start children and their families, parents/visitors are asked to obtain permission from a Head Start teacher prior to taking photos of their child or other children either in the center, on the bus or during field trips and other outings. Photos are usually permitted for special occasions or group celebrations. However, in certain situations parents may be asked to refrain from obtaining photos/videos/audios during these ceremonies. Should this become necessary, staff will provide families with a separate location designated specifically for photo taking opportunities.

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT There is to be no smoking in any building, on any grounds, or in any vehicle, used by Head Start or Early Head Start.

MISSION STATEMENT We are dedicated to improving the quality of life, particularly the lives of the families in our communities. In providing a broad range of services to young children and their families, we strive to excel. There is a total commitment to treat everyone as an individual with dignity and respect, and to nurture families to promote their growth.

To foster and promote dignity and respect, we must acknowledge that Project Head Start is recognized as much for its image as for its service. Staff, parents, and visitors at all program sites have responsibility for representing Project Head Start. Our conduct while on program sites as well as in the community reflects on Project Head Start. We must show consideration and respect for everyone with whom we have contact. To ensure a safe, healthy environment for Head Start children, families, and staff, appropriate behavior and/or language will be displayed at program sites, on vehicles, on home visits, or while participating in any Head Start activity.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

- ❖ If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
- ❖ If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
- ❖ If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to feel shy.
- ❖ If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
- ❖ If a child lives with tolerance he learns to be patient.
- ❖ If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
- ❖ If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
- ❖ If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
- ❖ If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
- ❖ If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
- ❖ If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

