



# Parent HANDBOOK

Early Head Start  
Programs of CCCCC, Inc.

**Parent Handbook**  
**Early Head Start Program**  
**of**  
**Clay County Child Care Center**

**Early Head Start &  
Administrative Office**  
1021 4th Street  
Clay Center, KS 67432  
785-632-5399

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Letter.....	3
<b>What To Expect</b> .....	4
My Rights as an Early Head Start Parent .....	4
My Responsibilities as an Early Head Start Parent .....	4
Early Head Start Professional Ethics .....	5
<b>Parent, Family, and Community Engagement</b> .....	6
Parent Involvement in Early Head Start .....	6
Policy Council.....	6
In-Kind.....	7
How can parents help with In-kind? .....	7
Volunteering .....	7
Siblings .....	7
Family Newsletter.....	7
Parent Concerns .....	8
<b>Education &amp; Curriculum</b> .....	8
Mental Health.....	8
Behavior Strategies (Conscious Discipline) .....	8
Children with Disabilities .....	9
Transition .....	9
Literacy Services.....	9
GED/ Adult Literacy.....	10
Attendance .....	10
<b>Health &amp; Nutrition</b> .....	10
Health/Dental Care.....	10
Vision/Hearing Screenings .....	11
Child Abuse or Neglect.....	11
Domestic Violence.....	11
Food Donations.....	12
<b>Transportation</b> .....	12
<b>Head Start Program Participation Agreement</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

# **EARLY HEAD START**

## **Clay, Cloud, Ottawa, Republic, & Washington Counties**

*Our mission: Enriching the lives we touch. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs of Clay County Child Care Center, Inc. strive to provide the very best environments for children, families, and staff to reach their full potential. As we practice excellence and integrity, we envision expansion of services, resources, and community partnerships.*

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to our Early Head Start family! Whatever their age, helping your child learn and grow a big, exciting job and I am grateful you trust us to partner with you and your child. Every parent can use some support. Our Home Visitors and Family Service Workers are here to support you.

Imagine your child two years from now, five years, ten years, as an adult. What do you want for them? What do you want them to learn? What kind of person do you help they'll be? Our Early Head Start program was designed to help you help your child reach these goals. Our program is a "whole family" experience, taking into account the child and family's health, social-emotional well-being, and family and community experience.

We believe in you and are here to support you! In this handbook, you will find more information about our services and how you can become involved in our program.

Respectfully,

Audrey Waid, JD  
Executive Director

# WHAT TO EXPECT

## **Home Based Program**

1. Your home visitor/family service worker will review and have you sign a Program Participation Agreement to get you officially.
2. Your home visitor/family service worker will schedule weekly home visits which will last 1.5 hours (90 min).
3. Educational activities for you and your child as well as community resource referrals.

## **Child Care Program**

1. Your new home visitor/family service worker will complete your paperwork with you during your first home visit to get you officially enrolled.
2. Your home visitor/family support worker will also schedule bi-monthly home visits which will last 1 hour (60 min), and bi-annual visits with you and the child care provider which will last 30-minutes.
3. The child care provider will offer educational activities for your child.

## **My Rights as an Early Head Start Parent**

1. To receive respectful and supportive services from program staff that will benefit my child's life and my life.
2. To receive quality child development information and activities that support me in my role as my child's best, first teacher.
3. To receive routine developmental services for my child.
4. To always be treated with respect and dignity.
5. To take part in the majority of policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program, as well as family socialization and parent meetings.
6. To be able to learn about the operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experiences needs by applicants to fill various staff positions.
7. To take part in planning and evaluation of all program.

## **My Responsibilities as an Early Head Start Parent**

1. To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
2. To accept Early Head Start as an opportunity that can help improve my life and my child's life.
3. To plan my visits with my home visitor/family support worker.
4. To welcome program staff into my home and to work together with them to best meet the needs of my child and family.
5. To work with the program staff and other parents in a cooperative, respectful way.

6. To provide parent leadership by participating in program planning and evaluation, and by being able to explain the program to other parents and to encourage their full activities.
7. To participate in activities, socialization and community programs designed to increase my skills in area of possible employment.
8. To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, child development and the improvement of family.
9. To receive assistance in the coordination of services with participation.
10. To guide my children in a loving and consistent manner.
11. To take advantage of activities, socializations, and community programs about child development, health, and safety, and my skills in areas of possible employment.
12. To become involved in community programs which help to improve health, education, and recreation for all.
13. To communicate with program coordinators to share successes or discuss concern.

## **Early Head Start Professional Ethics**

We want to provide high quality and fair services to all enrolled families and require our employees to maintain professional ethics throughout their employment as follows.

1. Staff may not share any information on any enrolled family or family member with anyone not employed by Early Head Start/Head Start without a written release of information by the family. Families may not ask a staff member to share any information on any friends, family or acquaintances they may think or know to be enrolled in program services.
2. Families may reach staff at their place of work, during work hours. Staff will return any message promptly.
3. Families and staff may not exchange money or gifts.
4. Staff may not purchase anything for families with their own money.
5. Staff may not offer legal or medical advice; staff will make referrals to appropriate legal agencies, nurse, doctors, dentists and mental health counselors. Staff will be required to make the appropriate referrals to families and obtain follow up information on those referrals.
6. Families and staff may not provide child care for one another.
7. At no time will a staff member be left to care for children (even for a few minutes) when on a home visit.
8. Staff and families will not socialize at each-others homes or for personal activities.
9. Staff and families may not purchase anything from each other (cookies, make-up, cookware, plastic-ware, etc.)
10. Staff may not impose their personal values on families (except where they may affirm research-based information or program outcomes).
11. Staff may not accept food or drink from families, except water.
12. Families will not use staff for references on job, housing or other applications. With a written request from the parent/guardian, the program can provide an actual summary of participation (history of keeping appointments, date enrollment began, etc.).

13. Early Head Start staff may not attend birthday parties, graduations, weddings or other events of enrolled families. Staff are encouraged to spend time with their own families.
14. Staff may not receive personal e-mails from EHS families.
15. Early Head Start strives to maintain fairness and excellence in services to families.

## **PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) is the process where program staff and families, family members, and their children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. Home Visitors have access to, and know a lot about, community resources. You will develop a “**Family Partnership Agreement**” together with your Home Visitor/Family Service Worker. The Family Partnership Agreement will identify your family’s goals, strengths, concerns, and/or needs. Together you will plan how to achieve your goals, and establish links to needed resources in the community. Your Home Visitor is trained to help you, but they rely on you to identify your challenges. Your Home Visitor will help you achieve your goals. Any information you share with your Home Visitor is treated as confidential and is not available to any other agency without your permission.

### **Parent Involvement in Early Head Start**

We want parents to participate in all aspects of Head Start. Especially in these areas:

1. Your weekly home visits.
2. Our Family Socials and Parent Meetings; family activities with meal provided.
3. Working with you children at home in cooperation with staff and agency curriculum.
4. In decision-making about the design and operation of the Early Head Start program.

### **Policy Council**

Policy Council is the parent’s decision-making body of the Head Start & Early Head Start Programs. Are you interested in helping determine how this program operates? Would you like to help make decisions that will affect your child? Then Policy Council is for you! Volunteer to represent your child’s classroom in this important capacity.

- Meets monthly
- Attend in-person or virtually
- A meal provided for people who attend the meeting in person
- All of your expenses for your in-person attendance at the monthly meeting are paid for by the agency (e.g. transportation provided from Clay Center, mileage reimbursement for other counties and a stipend for child care).

For more information, contact:  
Doniella Eubanks, Admin/Program Assistant

785-632-5399

Kathy Crimmins, Parent, Family & Community Engagement & CCP Coordinator  
785-632-5399

## **In-Kind**

### **What is In-Kind?**

Volunteers are important to our program. We have to have \$20 of in-kind services for every \$100.00 of grant money we get. In-kind services includes the time families or community members spend volunteering for our program and other donated services and goods. Our agency has to have more than \$500,000 in in-kind service!

### **How can parents help with In-kind?**

1. Sign up for volunteer training. This free training qualifies you to be an agency volunteer in several different capacities.
2. Serve on Policy Council, on Health Advisory Board or School Readiness Committee, and/or other opportunities we will announce as the year progresses.
3. Participate in your child's School Readiness activities.
4. Participate in your child's home activities!
5. Encourage your friends or local businesses to get involved in helping children through Head Start.

## **Volunteering**

Most of the in-kind requirement for Head Start programs is met through volunteers. That is why volunteer participation is so important for our program. Volunteers can be professionals, nonprofessionals, parents, members of the community, board members, and people who serve on policy and advisory groups.

All volunteers will receive training, and information which will give them a better understanding of the Head Start program philosophy, curriculum, goals, and confidentiality requirements. Volunteers will need to meet licensing requirements.

## **Siblings**

We enjoy meeting all of your enrolled child's siblings. Siblings can help each other learn.

## **Family Newsletter**

A newsletter is sent home monthly to keep families informed of upcoming activities, events, our monthly menu, and nutritional information. Articles and ideas about parenting and family life are also included in the newsletter.



## **Parent Concerns**

Parents who have a complaint regarding the Head Start program are invited to register that complaint with their Home Visitor or the PFCE & CCP Coordinator.

All complaints may also be addressed to the Executive Director, if your Home Visitor or the PFCE & CCP Coordinator can't resolve the issue. Issues that the Executive Director cannot resolve will go to the Grievance Committee.

Information regarding a complaint will be kept confidential and shared only with those involved in responding to the complaint. We value your input, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you see any way in which we can improve our program. If a complaint is not resolved appropriately after going through the steps listed, contact your Policy Council Representative.

## **EDUCATION & CURRICULUM**

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners; to encourage children to be active and creative explorers, to try out ideas and to think their own thoughts. We want children to become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We are teaching them how to learn. The way we organize our visits, select toys and materials, and talk with children are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum.

### **Mental Health**

Head Start recognizes that positive mental health is the foundation of a child's development. We support mental health by promoting healthy emotional development. At the start of each child's enrollment parents are asked to fill out an Ages & Stages Social/Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ/SE). This questionnaire provides the Early Head Start staff with information that helps them understand your child and provide for their mental health needs. Counseling services are available to children and their families. Your Home Visitor/Family Service worker will be able to refer you to the right place to help you obtain services or get information regarding the mental health of your child or family.

### **Behavior Strategies (Conscious Discipline)**

Conscious Discipline imbedded within our Frog Street Curriculum. Conscious Discipline teaches children strategies to help them manage their emotions. It helps children learn skills to effectively manage live tasks such as; naming their emotions, effectively communicating their feelings, being sensitive to others feeling and getting along with others. Daily routines help children succeed in these areas however, in the event that we need to take further steps to handle behavior we have a Positive Discipline and Disruptive Behavior Procedure within our agency, which will be followed.

## **Children with Disabilities**

Our program believes in inclusion, a family learning together. During your home visit, parents agree to fill out the Ages & Stages Developmental Questionnaire (ASQ). From the parent input, home visitor observation(s) and assessment, it may be decided your child needs a Special Education evaluation.

Parents will be given information about the process that they will need to follow to get their child screened by the appropriate Special Education Learning Cooperative. Staff will help guide parents in setting up an appointment and attending the evaluation.

If it is determined that your child will need an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), the Special Education Cooperative will contact the parent and set up a time for an IEP meeting. Head Start teaching staff will be included in the IEP meeting as well. This will allow the teaching staff to help the parents navigate the process as well as learn the details of the IEP in order to incorporate the IEP goals into the child's lessons at Head Start.

## **Transition**

In Early Head Start, we want to support our parents in their child's next school experience. Preparing our students and parents for the transition to Head Start or another preschool is part of our School Readiness. From the first home visit until your child turns 3 years old we are planning lessons and activities designed to prepare them to be successful students long after their time at Early Head Start is complete. These activities are designed to help them achieve both academic and Social/Emotional success. As their time in our program nears completion, we provide your preferred preschool with a wide range of information about your child's academic abilities as well as information to help ensure their success. If you are moving out of our area, we will be happy to provide you with information to pass on to your child's new school.

## **Literacy Services**

We have a resource library that includes books on disabilities, siblings, grief, nutrition, and many other topics. Your home visitor/family service worker can help you check out a book. Our family literacy services are defined as services that integrate all of the following activities:

- Literacy activities for parents and their children that foster the love of reading and learning within the family.
- Training for parents on how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- Age-appropriate educational experiences to prepare children for success in school.
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency and/or encourages parents to be adult learners.

## **GED/ Adult Literacy**

We support parent efforts to improve basic math and reading skills, to obtain a high school diploma through the GED program or other high school equivalency program, or to pursue education beyond the secondary level. Free reading and math classes and preparation classes for the GED program are provided in Concordia; similar programs are available within driving distances for the other counties. Also, GED on-line study options are available for those who qualify. Information about these and other educational programs can be obtained through your Family Service Worker. Head Start will pay the GED testing fee for any parent with a child currently enrolled in the program (ask for details!) We also provide research and assistance with finding resources in areas of interest to young families. Be watching for literacy opportunities throughout the program year for both children and/or parents.

## **ENROLLMENT, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ELIGIBILITY, AND ATTENDANCE**

Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility, and Attendance (ERSEA) governs how programs determine eligibility, enroll children, and track attendance. ERSEA staff meet with parents during the application process and work with other staff to make sure your child is placed in the best home visitor/family service worker for your child.

### **Attendance**

We want you to keep your weekly home visit appointments, but we understand life happens. Please let us know how we can help support you if regular attendance becomes a problem. It is important that you call your home visitor/family service worker to cancel or reschedule due to illness or vacation.

## **HEALTH & NUTRITION**

### **Health/Dental Care**

When you enroll your child in Early Head Start you will need to obtain a physical and dental exam for your child and also obtain any immunizations that may be needed per our licensing requirements. If you have neither insurance nor a medical card, Early Head Start may pay for these exams and immunizations **IF** you can prove that you applied for a medical card and were denied. Early Head Start staff have the necessary forms and can help you with the medical card application.

If you do not have a medical or dental provider, staff will assist you in finding one. The Health Services Coordinator or your home visitor/family service worker can also help you with transportation to medical services and in obtaining any follow-up care that may be needed.

## **Vision/Hearing Screenings**

Vision and hearing screenings are performed by Early Head Start as needed; if you have concerns you may request that your child be screened. Tympanometry and Oscopic inspections are also available. Anytime your child is tested, the Health Services Specialist will notify you of the results and any recommendations.

## **Program Safety**

Our employee safety is very important. If we are informed of any potentially dangerous situations, violent activity or threats made toward our employees, all program services could be terminated. Each situation will be reviewed to decide the best course of action.

## **Child Abuse or Neglect**

Early Head Start is a parent-support agency. We believe in parents and will help parents find alternate ways to handle difficult situations with their children. At the same time, all Head Start agencies and staff, as required by local, federal and state law, are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. We MUST report suspected abuse or neglect to Department of Children and Families and or police department.

“Abuse”— means any act or failure to act that results in death, physical harm, mental or emotional harm, or sexual abuse to a child under the age of 18.

“Neglect”— Failure, by those responsible to provide for the care, custody and control of the child, to provide the proper or necessary supports, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child’s well-being.

For more information on abuse or to talk to someone who understands call:

- THE PARENTS HELPLINE 1-800-332-6378
- Department of Children and Families to report abuse call: 1-800-922-5330

Head Start is very involved in the prevention of child abuse in three ways.

- Identification: We report all known or suspected child abuse cases immediately...it is the law!
- Prevention: We screen all prospective employees and volunteers for child abuse or child neglect.
- Education: We provide training and information:
  - Staff receive a training on child abuse and neglect upon employment.
  - Parents are provided resources upon request
  - Children are exposed to the “Happy Bear” program in the classroom and talks to them about good touches and bad touches.

## **Domestic Violence**

Because we are a family program, we also know there can be a problem with domestic violence. For additional help in this area call:

- THE CRISIS CENTER, INC. (MANHATTAN) 1-800-727-2785 or

- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSOCIATION (DVACK) IN SALINA 1-800-874-1499

## **Nutrition**

Good nutrition is important for you and your child. Your home visitor/family service worker will share information on meals that are appealing, balanced, and nourishing.

## **Food Donations**

Early Head Start CANNOT accept home-processed, home-canned foods, or home baked products. Early Head Start centers CAN accept bulk donations of fresh fruits and vegetables, commercially canned or frozen 100% fruit juice, and prepackaged foods from community sources.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is available by program staff on a limited basis. Your home visitor/family service worker will connect you to community services that provide transportation for medical appointments. Each family is responsible for trying all other options before calling the program for transportation.