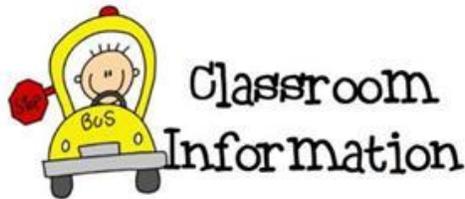


**York County Community Action Corporation
Children's Services**

Family Handbook

Pandemic Response



My Classroom is _____ Phone Number: _____

My Classroom hours are _____

My Teacher(s) are _____

My Family Service staff is _____ Phone Number: _____

My Cook(s) is/are _____

My Center Supervisor is _____ Phone Number: _____

My first day of school is _____

My drop-off time is: _____ My pick-up time is: _____

Administrative Offices
Early Head Start & Head Start
P.O. Box 72, 6 Spruce Street, Sanford, ME 04073
(207) 324-5762 1-800-965-5762 FAX (207) 324-4197

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Welcome to York County Community Action Corporation Children's Services

Thank you for choosing Children's Services! We are excited to welcome you and your child and have you as part of our Head Start/Early Head Start family!

We provide a complete child and family development program, for children ages six weeks to five years of age, and their families using a Whole Family Approach. We believe that families are the child's first and most important teacher. We encourage each family to participate in all aspects of the program.

Children's Services is funded through state and federal Head Start and Early Head Start funds. We operate in accordance with the Head Start Performance Standards and we are licensed by the State of Maine Child Care Licensing Unit in all locations.

Children's Services is one of the many programs of York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) which offers a wide variety of services to people in the community including Economic Opportunity, Energy Services, Housing and Economic Development, Health Services, Transportation and WIC services.

Children's Services does not discriminate against any child or family because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion.

The mission of **York County Community Action Corporation** is to alleviate the effects of poverty, attack its underlying causes and to promote the dignity and self-sufficiency of the people of York County, Maine.

Family Services:

Here at Children's Services we embrace the child's family as their first and most important educator; we work to build off of this philosophy by encouraging families to take part in their child's educational experiences here within our programs. Throughout the year Family Service staff will schedule times to meet with each individual family; at these meetings Family Service staff will help families create their own Family Partnership Agreement that identifies: strengths, interests, needs, wants, and goals. The Family Service staff member will also be available to provide support in taking steps towards achieving identified goals and needs; examples of ways Children's Services staff can help are:



- Assisting in referrals to other community resources
- Assisting you to get household needs and clothing
- Providing opportunities, which will offer training and education
- Contacting services to help with crisis situations
- Ensuring that your family receives all services to which it is entitled
- Linking your family to other YCCAC support services

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like more information please contact our Family Engagement & ERSEA Manager, 459-2980.

Parent and Family Engagement:

Family engagement is the backbone to our program. The success of our program comes from our commitment to building partnerships with families, and families committing to actively supporting their child(ren)'s learning. Within the first two months of your child's enrollment, and at the beginning of each school year, you will meet with your Family Service worker in order to start the Family Partnership Process. There are also many ways to partner with the program and support your child's education.

Here are some opportunities to get involved:

As things continue to evolve with COVID-19 the program will continue to offer Family Linkz, Policy Council and Family Engagement opportunities; however, we will follow the most up-to-date recommendations around social distancing. If there is a time that meetings and gatherings are not offered in person, we will have virtual options, and families are encouraged to attend.

Family Linkz meetings are a great opportunity for you to:

- Meet new people and have fun
- Share ideas, thoughts and feedback
- Give input to program decisions
- Plan activities for your child(ren) and their classroom
- Plan activities for your family and community
- Hear about Policy Council and other program updates



Policy Council is our governing body that helps to guide the direction of our program!

- Represent your child's classroom at a program wide level by becoming a Policy Council Representative!
- Share ideas for your classroom, home activities, the program in general and so much more.
- Represent your child's program

****Becoming a volunteer is simple. If you are interested in volunteering speak to your child's teacher or Family Staff member ****

Speak to your child's teacher or your Family Services Worker if you are interested in volunteering (see In-Kind section for examples of volunteer opportunities).

In-Kind

Federal funding requires Head Start & Early Head Start to show that 25% of our funding is matched by local in-kind sources. The hours that you volunteer make up the bulk of this match. Some other examples are: working on activities at home to support your child's individual goals; volunteering time at home to complete activities and classroom preparation; participating in meetings where program decisions are made or discussed; donating classroom materials and more! The time that you contribute benefits your child, your family and the Head Start Program.

Educational Services:

Curriculum and Assessment

YCCAC Children's Services values and appreciates the diversity and capability of all children, their families and cultures. We welcome all children at their own developmental level and support their growth in each stage, realizing that this is a unique and individual process for each child. We believe that growth occurs best in a safe, supportive environment where children are free to learn and explore their world, grow and develop through active learning experiences. We also believe that the parents are their child's first and most important teacher, and should be partners with teachers and children in this educational process.

CreativeCurriculum



The country's leading integrated online assessment, program planning, and reporting system for children *birth to age five*.

Our program follows Teaching Strategies: The Creative Curriculum (*Infants, Toddlers and Twos* and *Revised Preschool* Editions) which is a developmentally appropriate, research-based curriculum that supports children as active participants in their learning. Children learn from interest areas of the classroom through support and guidance from adults. All of our teachers have received intensive training on both planning and assessment, and receive ongoing support to best meet the needs of the children in their classroom. Our children and families benefit from a curriculum that fosters the development of children ages Birth to Five as they grow and develop.

Teaching Strategies: The Creative Curriculum is supported by Maine's Early Learning Development Standards, Maine DHHS Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities, and The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework Birth-Five.

Teachers use Teaching Strategies: Creative Curriculum materials/tools to design an effective learning environment and incorporate the 38 objectives for development and learning. Through authentic, on-going documented child observations, Teaching Strategies Gold (TS Gold) allows teachers a way to document observations of children and use those observations to guide, assess and extend learning experiences in helping all children succeed. TS Gold is an online system that connects parents to their child's progress in the classroom, giving meaningful ways to involve families, as well as to see weekly lesson plans and upcoming education activities.

Teachers will print reports, lesson plans and observations (some with accompanying photos) to share with families. Families can also have direct access to their child's information through the TS Gold parent portal where they can see their child's latest info, observations, photos and videos of their child's interactions. Families will receive guidance on how to access TS Gold, if they are interested, and ongoing support will be offered.

The Creative Curriculum Cloud offers two-way communication between home and school, the ability to share lesson plans and individual goals, that directly support the growth and development of the child. The Cloud offers an extensive resource library that includes videos and e-books. Teachers will share with families the activities and stories planned for the week, through the Cloud, for families to preview and conduct at home.

Teachers will also use the app, ReadyRosie, to help support the important communication between school and home. The ReadyRosie app allows teachers to real-time message with families. This app also allows teachers to share favorite activities, stories and music and movement songs that families can use while on the go.

We are excited to be using the Learning Genie Apps in our classrooms. These two Apps allow classrooms and families to connect on a whole new level, and engage in the child(ren)'s learning experience throughout their time here at EHS/HS.



Learning Genie provides two-way communication between home and school. Families receive instant updates on their child's day at school: pictures/videos, activities, mood, books, songs, school reminders and daily routines (diaper, meal, nap for our EHS classrooms).



Learning Genie's In-Kind Activity Tracking Tool enables families to access at-home learning activities assigned by teachers and log In-Kind time instantly with a few taps.

Families will receive **2 Educational Home Visits** from their classroom teacher to discuss School Readiness Goals, ideas and activities in the home to enhance school readiness. In our current situation, and as things evolve during the COVID-19 pandemic, our Educational Home Visits may be conducted in various ways such as Zoom or by phone rather than in person, as we will follow the most up-to-date recommendations for social distancing practices. During our visits, in whatever capacity they may be, we believe it is a wonderful time for the teacher, child and family to meet and get to know each other, and what the child's strengths are at both home and school. Teachers will also complete **2 Center Visits** throughout the year; these too may look different during COVID. As things evolve our teaching staff will be sure to keep you up-to-date in how these visits will be conducted. During these visits, teachers and parents can discuss classroom progress; discuss strengths, observations (both in the classroom and at home) and ways to plan together on how to best meet the child's goals for school readiness.

Data gathered by teachers and parents is used:

- To show growth of our classrooms in meeting School Readiness Goals program-wide.
- For reports to Administration, Policy Council and YCCAC Board of Directors
- To guide our program for continuous program improvement.

School Readiness

The Office of Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. The YCCAC Children's Services approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children, birth to age five. Children's Services established school readiness goals which were created with Policy Council, local School Districts, and program staff.

You and your teacher will plan your child's development plan based on the School Readiness goals at your home visits as mentioned earlier. A copy of the readiness goals will be provided at this visit and together you and your child's teacher will discuss and plan what is appropriate for your child.

For more information on Educational Services please contact the Early Childhood Education Manager at 459-2924.



Special Services:

Children's Services serves all children including children with disabilities and limitations. Teaching staff conduct developmental screenings within 45 days after your child starts the program. The developmental screenings teachers administer are called the ASQ, or Ages and Stages Questionnaire, and the Social-Emotional screening tool is called the DECA. These screenings are done in partnership between teachers and families. Your teacher will ask for your input and will ask you different questions referring to your child's development while administering the screenings. Occasionally a child may be identified for further screening or may need additional services. Teaching staff will work in collaboration with the family to complete a referral to Child Development Services. If you have any concerns, please talk to your child's teacher or speak with the Special Services Coordinator at 459-2972.

Behavioral Health Services:

Children's Services contracts with a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) to implement strategies to identify and support children with mental health and social emotional concerns, and assist teachers to improve classroom management and teacher practices. Strategies that include classroom observations and consultations are used to address teacher and individual child needs and create physical and cultural environments that promote mental health and social emotional functioning. With parent permission, individual child observations may occur. While we do not suspend or expel students, the LCSW in collaboration with the Teaching staff and the Parent/Guardian may create and implement a positive support plan, prescriptive program plan and/or a safety plan for a child that may need additional supports and strategies to be successful in the classroom.

Healthy social and emotional development in children is the cornerstone of success in school and in life. Mental health affects the relationship between children and parents and the relationships of everyone in our lives. Quality early childhood programs provide opportunities for children to develop social skills which lead to positive self-esteem and healthy relationships.

Children's Services staff help children learn to share feelings, build trust, problem solve, resolve conflicts and develop independence, as well as secure attachments. Community resources are also available and can be found by calling 211. Your Family Services worker is also available to support you.

Head Start Nap/Rest Time

All of our full-day Head Start classrooms allow children time to nap/rest each day. Classrooms operating four (4) hours per day will not be allowed nap/rest time. By following Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities for the State of Maine and also *Head Start Performance Standards*, children are supervised at all times by Head Start Staff.

When hours of operation permit nap/rest time, each child has their own cot for rest that is disinfected daily. To ensure physical distancing, cots will be placed 'head to toe'; keeping children's heads 6ft apart, when feasible. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, items from home, normally allowed during nap time, are not permitted in the classroom at this time.

If a child doesn't nap, he/she will be encouraged to rest with books or enjoy a quiet activity to allow other friends to sleep. It is important for children's bodies to rest from a busy day of play and exploration, so nap/rest time for children to listen to stories on CD or enjoy soft music and snooze if needed. After, children can enjoy a tasty snack before end of day activities begin!

Nutrition Services: *Building for the Future*

This Head Start Program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a Federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children receiving care.

Each day more than 4.2 million children participate in CACFP at day care homes and centers across the country. Providers are reimbursed for serving nutritious meals which meet USDA requirements. The program plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for low-income families.

Meals: CACFP homes and centers follow meal requirements established by USDA:

Breakfast	Lunch or Supper	Snacks (Two of the five groups:)
Milk Fruit, Vegetables, or portions of both Grains or Bread	Milk Meat or meat alternate Vegetable Fruit Grains or bread	Milk Meat or meat alternate Vegetable Fruit Grains or bread

Participating Facilities: Many different homes and centers operate CACFP and share the common goal of bringing nutritious meals and snacks to participants. Participating facilities include:

- **Child Care Centers:** Licensed or approved public or private nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, and some for-profit centers.
- **Family Day Care Homes:** Licensed or approved private homes.
- **Afterschool Care Programs:** Centers in low-income areas provide free snacks to school-age children and youth.
- **Homeless Shelters:** Emergency shelters provide food services to homeless children.

Eligibility: State agencies reimburse facilities that offer non-residential day care to the following children:

- Children age 12 and under,
- Migrant children age 15 and younger, and
- Youths through age 18 in afterschool care programs in needy areas.

Contact Information: If you have questions about CACFP, please contact one of the following:

Sponsoring Organization/Center:
YCCAC Health and Nutrition Manager
York County Community Action Corp.
Head Start
P.O. Box 72
Sanford, ME 04073
(207) 324-5762

State CACFP Agency
Cindy Chase
Child and Adult Care Food Program
Maine DOE Child Nutrition
136 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0136
(207) 624-6842

All enrolled children in our program are served nutritious meals during their day. Children attending four (4) hours per day will receive breakfast and lunch, if attending five (5) hours or more will receive breakfast, lunch and snack. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and pour their own milk and water. Menus will be sent home to parents monthly, so you will be kept informed on what is being served to your children. If your child has any food allergies, or is unable to have certain foods for religious or personal reasons, please notify education staff so accommodations can be made. Personal preference accommodations may require medical documentation, prior to approval.

Parents and children will learn about healthy foods and good nutrition at Head Start through weekly nutrition activities and monthly newsletters. The WIC program helps to support our nutritional services throughout the county and is available upon request. When appropriate, children are involved with meal preparation and clean-up. **We welcome and encourage family involvement in menu planning.**

CACFP Non-Discrimination Statement

Federal

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.

State

The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin.

Complaints of discrimination must be filed at the office of the Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0051. If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, visit the Human Rights Commission website at <https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/file/instructions> and complete an intake questionnaire.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

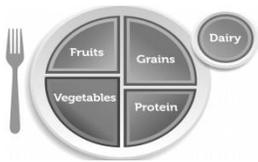
FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

“My child is on a special diet. She may not be able to eat the food prepared at Head Start. How will this work?”

The first step is to create a Special Diet Care Plan with the Health/Nutrition Manager, or qualified center staff. The Special Diet Care Plan identifies if the child has any food allergies, intolerances, or any other special diet needs due to medical, religious, or personal reasons. A physician signed medical statement stating the reason for a dietary restriction or accommodation, and substitutions/modifications, is needed for any child that has a special diet due to medical reasons.

Any food requested to be withheld because of medical, religious or personal preference must be listed as a dietary need on the Special Diet Care Plan form, and sign by you and the Health/Nutrition Manager, prior to implementation. After the Special Diet Care Plan form is completed the Health/Nutrition Manager will modify the menu and inform kitchen staff.

“I don’t think my child will eat the food at Head Start. Can I pack a lunch to send with him/her?”



Much of the learning for children takes place during meal times. Sometimes familiar foods are prepared in different ways or new foods are introduced. Children and adults talk about healthy eating along with likes and dislikes. Children are encouraged to try each food; however, they are never forced.

Children’s Services has a food policy that protects children and staff against food borne illness and allergies. Food cannot be brought in or taken home from Head Start centers. For more information please contact the Health/Nutrition Manager at 459-2948

Breastfeeding your child

The program accepts breast milk in ready to feed sanitary containers labeled with the infants’ name on them, and date it was expressed. It must be used within 96 hours or discarded. If you do not breast feed your child, formula is provided by the program. Only sanitized bottles (BPA free) will be used and will be provided by the program. Solids such as cereal will not be added to the bottle unless your doctor supplies written information and a medical reason for this practice. Bottles will never be warmed in the microwave oven, since it is a dangerous practice. Children will be fed bottles and food as it is introduced, on demand. Only formula or breast milk will be served up to the age of 12 months

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come in to breastfeed their child. Accommodations will be made for breastfeeding mothers to nurse in rooms outside the classroom. Contact will need to be made with the child's teacher or the Center Manager, prior to arrival, or a plan with determined times can be pre-arranged. A Health Screening will be required prior to site admittance.

Frozen Breast milk: Previously frozen, thawed breast milk, kept in the refrigerator, must be used within 24 hours. In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, frozen, labeled, and dated breast milk may be kept for 6 months in classroom freezer compartments. Frozen breastmilk shall be thawed under running cold water or in the refrigerator.

Transitions:

Starting at an early childhood center is a big transition for children! We find that, in most cases, children do adjust well to our program. If your child does have some difficulty, we will talk to you about it. We can work together to figure out ways to best support your child's needs.

For Early Head Start (EHS) Children: The EHS Program is designed and funded to serve children from birth to three. Starting 6 months prior to your child's third birthday the transition process will begin. This will include Family Support staff and Classroom Teacher having a conversation with you to discuss our Head Start Program options. Steps for transition include:

- Conversation with your child's teacher and your Family Support staff to develop a plan.
- Re-verify income to determine income eligibility if you wish for your child to attend HS -please know that income eligible families have priority to enter HS.
- If you are not interested in having your child transition into a HS classroom, or are not income eligible for HS, your transition plan will include having conversations around program options in your community. Your Family Support staff and teacher will also discuss a date in which your child will end their enrollment in EHS – this date will be on, or around, your child's third birthday.

Kindergarten Transition: Heading off to kindergarten is a big transition for children. We will support you and your child through this process. Our program offers a multitude of strategies and activities to help support everyone during this process. The process of transition may look different for each child due to the school district and your child's/family's individual needs. We will partner with you in this process. Some of these transition activities may include:

- Receiving information about registration and screenings
- Sharing your child's educational and assessment information, only with your permission, to the public school
- IEP meetings, if your child has an identified disability
- Visiting your child's new school
- Kindergarten Teachers coming to your child's classroom
- Kindergarten screenings

Health Services:

Our goal is good health for your child and your entire family. We work with you to get the Health Services you and your family need. Head Start provides the following screenings as needed: hearing, vision, height, and weight.

Head Start requirements – All children must have on file

1. Immunization (shot) Record

Maine State Licensing requires that every child has up-to-date immunization records. Children who do not have immunization records received by the program, or proof of exemption may not be able to attend school after 30 days, and may be in jeopardy of losing their slot. If an immunization record is received, but child is not up to date based on their age; documentation showing child is on a ‘catch-up’ schedule will be required. *Yearly Influenza vaccine is required.

2. Physical Exam Record

Records for the most recent physical exam for every child will be obtained.

3. Dental Exam Record

We will request dental records if available. If a child needs a dentist but does not have one, we will help find available dental providers in the area. * A clinical oral exam is recommended at the eruption of the first tooth, and no later than 12 months.

Early Head Start requirements – All Children must have on file

1. Immunization (shot) Record

Maine State Licensing requires that every child has up-to-date immunization records. Children who do not have immunization records received by the program, or proof of exemption will not be able to attend school after 30 days, and may be in jeopardy of losing their slot. If an immunization record is received, but child is not up to date based on their age; documentation showing child is on a ‘catch-up’ schedule will be required. *Yearly Influenza vaccine is required.

2. Age-appropriate Well Child Check (including height, weight, and documentation of lead test results at 12 months and 24 months) will be obtained. *Well Child Visit exams will be requested at pre-determined intervals based on the child's age throughout the program year.

3. Dental Exam Record

We will request dental records if available. If a child needs a dentist but does not have one, we will help find available dental providers in the area. * A clinical oral exam is recommended at the eruption of the first tooth, and no later than 12 months.

All Children

- Parent/Guardian, will be asked to sign a release of information. This release lets our staff talk with your child’s doctor or dentist’s office and to request necessary documentation, so that they remain up to date throughout the school year.
- If you do not have a doctor or dentist for your child, or lack of insurance, then our staff will help you and your family. We will support you through the process of obtaining MaineCare services. If MaineCare or other resources are not available, and there are no other means of payment, we will pay for the initial physical and dental exam, if you are enrolled in HS or EHS.

Staying Safe and Healthy

Teachers and parents can work together to help children understand different ways of keeping their bodies healthy and safe. Healthy eating, getting medical and dental checkups, taking medicine and learning the difference between good touch and bad touch are some of the topics that will be shared with children.

During Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19)

The health, safety and wellbeing of our children, families and staff is our number one priority. YCCAC Children's Services is taking the necessary steps to protect staff, children and their families from the spread of Covid-19, through creating health and safety protocols that have been implemented, utilizing guidance from our local health officials, child care licensing boards, and the Center for Disease Control and Preventions- guidance for schools and child care programs.

Health and Safety Protocols include:

- Drop Off, Pick Up
- Daily Health Screenings
- In Case of Illness
- Classroom Environment and Activities
- Food Prep, Meal Service
- Vulnerable, High Risk Adults, Children

Each of these protocols include measures in place for:

- Revisions to Daily Practice
- Physical Distancing Strategies
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Cleaning and Disinfecting; Handwashing
- Staff Training
- Family Communication

Individual protocols will be discussed with families, prior to children starting in the classroom and are available for review at any time. They are not included in the handbook as they are fluid documents that are subject to change as continual guidance related to COVID-19 is received.

General Health and Safety

To keep germs away –

- Wash hands often with soap and water
- Cough/sneeze into sleeve or use a tissue
- Avoid contact with others who are sick
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth where germs will enter



Emergencies:

- Our teachers are CPR and First Aid certified
- We will provide emergency First Aid and call 911, if needed
- We will call you at home, school or at work. If you are not available, we will call an emergency contact that you have listed on your *Emergency form*. This form must remain updated, please tell us when phone numbers for you or your emergency contacts, doctors or dentists change. This form also states that your child may be treated in a hospital in case of serious injury or illness when we are unable to reach you or your emergency contacts.

Illness:

- **Please remember to keep children home if they are sick.** When your child is not feeling well, it is sometimes difficult to decide if he/she should go to the center or stay home. If your child has any signs/symptoms related to COVID-19 or as stated on the 'Exclusion' criteria below, they must stay home.
- If there are any family members in the home, or in close contact, experiencing symptoms of Covid-19, they must stay home.
- Please call your child's teacher if your child is going to be absent. Reasons for absence must be documented, prior to child's return to the classroom.
- If your child is exposed to anything contagious at school, the staff will notify you with instructions to follow.

COVID-19 Exclusion Policy

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have

COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (body temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Rash
- Sore throat; or
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Congestion
- Runny Nose (in conjunction with other symptoms)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

A child may also show signs of (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19 which has similar signs and symptoms above: (MIS-C symptoms are usually seen several weeks after the initial COVID19 infection)

As general signs of illness such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, sore throat, coughing, shortness of breath, lethargy are also COVID-19 related symptoms, all children that present applicable symptoms will be treated as follows:

- During Daily Health Screening:
 - They will need to leave the premises immediately.
- During the school day:
 - The child will immediately be isolated from other children and any adults not necessary for care.
 - The child's parent/guardian will be called to pick them up immediately (within 30 minutes).
 - The child will be supervised by a staff member donning full PPE until a parent/guardian can pick them up.
- In both instances, in case of emergency, call 911 for guidance/assistance.
- The Health and Nutrition Manager should be notified.

- Children with symptoms will be excluded. Depending on the symptoms presented, Parent/Guardians will need to contact their medical provider for determination about exclusion and return. This is not at the discretion of school staff. Documentation of medical determination will be required. If testing for COVID-19 is not recommended for the child based on medical judgement, the child may return to childcare after they are symptom free for 24 hours, with no fever reducing medication. If COVID-19 testing is negative, with proof of negative outcome, the child may return after they are symptom free for 24 hours with no fever reducing medication. If COVID-19 testing is positive, CDC guidelines should be followed for isolation, and the child cannot return until isolation is complete. These guidelines are subject to change based on the level of community transmission. Children’s Services has a written contract with a physician to provide consultation as needed on policy and questions, but cannot consult on individual patients.

General Exclusion Policy

Temporary exclusion is recommended when the child has any of the following conditions:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- The illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- A severely ill appearance—this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash.
- Fever over 100.4– See COVID Exclusion Policy (*COVID-19 Symptom*)
- Diarrhea: Stool frequency is more than 2 times in a program day: for diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper and toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing “accidents” – (*COVID-19 Symptom*)
- Vomiting: More than two times in the previous twenty-four hours unless known cause is not by an infections condition and child can be kept hydrated - (*COVID-19 Symptom*)
- Abdominal pain: That continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- Rash: With fever or behavioral change, until the primary care provider has determined that the illness is not an infectious disease. (*COVID-19 Symptom*)
- Mouth sores: With drooling that the child cannot control unless the child’s primary health care provider or local health department authority states that the child is noninfectious.
- Active tuberculosis: Until the child’s primary health care provider or local health department states child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Impetigo: Only if the child has not been treated after notifying family at the end of the prior program day. Exclusion is not necessary before the end of the day as long as the lesions can be covered.
- Streptococcal pharyngitis: (i.e., strep throat) until the child has 2 doses of antibiotic (one may be taken the day of exclusion and the second just before returning the next day).
- Head lice: Only if the child has not been treated after notifying the family at the end of the prior program day. **Note:** Exclusion is not necessary before the end of the program day.
- Scabies: Only if the child has not been treated after notifying the family at the end of the prior program day. **Note:** Exclusion is not necessary before the end of the program day.
- Chickenpox (varicella): Until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after onset of rash and no new lesions have appeared for at least 24 hours).
- Rubella: Until 7 days after the rash appears.
- Pertussis: Until antibiotic treatment is complete.
- Mumps: Return date is at the discretion of the CDC.

- Measles: Until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Hepatitis A: Virus infection, until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice if the child’s symptoms are mild or as directed by the health department. **Note:** Protection of the others in the group should be checked to be sure everyone who was exposed has received the vaccine or receives the vaccine immediately.
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

YCCAC Children’s Services are required to follow the Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities. Section 17.1.3 states: “In the event of a disease outbreak, children not vaccinated for medical reasons must be excluded from the program until the outbreak no longer exists or until the child received the necessary immunization.”

Head Lice

Head lice are common in settings where large groups of children come together, and is not a sign of poor hygiene. Transmission occurs by direct contact with hair of infested people and less commonly by direct contact with personal items of infested people. Head lice survive less than one to two days if they fall off a person and cannot feed. **Head lice are not responsible for the spread of any disease, only the discomfort of infestations.** Both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) advocate that “no-nit” policies that require a child to be free of nits before they can return to schools should be discontinued.

Should live lice be found on a child:

- Parents/guardians of affected children will be notified of their presence. It will be left up to the discretion of the individual family whether the child is picked up early, or at the end of the day.
- Parents/guardians will be informed the child can return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.
- Upon returning to the classroom, the child must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or emergency contact for a recheck to ensure treatment has occurred and no live lice are present. Rechecking of children will be done outside of the classroom in a private setting.
- Reaching out to the child’s primary physician for guidance on appropriate and effective treatments will be encouraged. Lice kits can be provided upon request.

Taking Medication

If at some point during the program year, your child may be taking a prescription for a short-term illness. If this happens, please plan with your child’s doctor to give your child the medicine before and/or after the school day whenever possible.



If your child regularly takes medication for ongoing health needs, **an Individualized Health Plan must be written with the Health/Nutrition Manager.** Your input is required at this meeting. No medication can be given at Head Start without a current Individualized Health Plan and signed directions from your child’s doctor. Please talk with the staff at your center to arrange a meeting, if necessary. The staff will give you more information about the Medication Policy which needs to be followed.

Over –The- Counter Products and Medication

In accordance with “Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities” York County Community Action Corporation’s Children’s Services cannot administer any non-prescription medications to a child without written, signed and dated parental permission naming the medication and dosage.

Over-the-counter products (petroleum jelly, non-medicated lotion for dry skin, lip balm):

- All products supplied by the family must be:
 - In their original container
 - The manufacturer of the product must have an established Material Safety Data Sheet.
 - Products must only be used for their intended use.
 - Clearly marked with child’s name

Topical products that contain “active ingredients” (including diaper cream) will be considered “medicated”. In Accordance with York County Head Start Policy and Head Start Performance Standard 1304.22(c)(3), A facility must “obtain physician’s instruction and written parental or guardian authorizations for all medications administered by staff.”

- Staff will obtain a signed Over the Counter Application Form from the child’s parent/guardian.
- Doctor’s instructions (for prescription topical medication) and parental consent (for non-medicated over-the-counter products) must be obtained before administration of any medication.
- If product is provided by the parent, it will be labeled with the child’s full name and stored in a locked cabinet.
- Over-the-counter products will be applied in accordance with the label instructions at all times.
- Staff will record the application of over-the-counter products on the “Over the Counter Application Form”.

Health Emergency Information

Child Health and Safety are important both in the home and at our program. Each classroom has emergency policies, procedures, evacuation routes and local emergency phone numbers posted. Staff and children practice monthly fire drills using alternative routes. You can contact your Center Supervisor for more information about your center’s Emergency Plan, as well as for more information on Child Care Licensing, Pesticides and the Health Care Plans. If parents are interested in developing their own plans for their home, please let your center staff know. For any questions, concerns or information regarding our health services please contact the Health/Nutrition Manager at 459-2948.

Use of Pesticides

Pests can pose significant problems to people, property and the environment. Pesticides pose similar risks. Children face greater potential for health effects resulting from pest and pesticides exposure. By reducing reliance on pesticides and practicing low risk control options, everyone will benefit. When it is determined that pesticides must be used, the least hazardous materials and methods of application will be chosen. All pesticides will be handled by professionals, following State and Federal law and all parents will be notified. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your teacher.

Policies and Procedures:

Early Head Start Classroom Policy

Early Head Start (EHS) hold high standards for the provision of a safe, sanitary setting for infants and toddlers. EHS encourages the development of all children by providing a nurturing environment in which little ones are able to explore their surroundings. Which means that at this age, children are often on the floor. Therefore, only shoes worn exclusively at the center (indoors), or slippers may be worn inside the classroom. Infants and toddlers may wear socks or be barefoot, but others cannot be due to OSHA regulations. This policy applies to anyone entering the classroom, with the exception of enrolled children. Booties will be provided.

Sleeping Policy

Infants and toddlers have unique needs. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep in accordance with Safe Sleep, as well as having no stuffed toys or soft objects in the crib. Children must never have their faces covered by blankets. Each child up to 18 months will have a crib available; toddlers will have a mat available. Individual care will be given each child's sleeping patterns. Blankets are not permitted in cribs; however, sleep sacks are available for each child. To help ensure physical distancing, cribs will be placed 6ft apart, when feasible.

Pacifier Policy

Pacifiers may only be used with written permission and instructions from parents/guardians. Pacifiers will be used in accordance with Caring for our Children Standards. Should you want your child to use a pacifier during program hours, please request a copy of our Pacifier Policy for further information.

Diapering

The program will provide diapers and wipes for children enrolled in our program. We use Up & Up and Members Mark brand diapers and Pampers brand wipes. If your child has an allergy to the brand that the program uses and medical documentation is provided we will accommodate doctor's recommendation.

Toilet Training

Teacher's always follow the parent's lead. We can help you look for signs that your child is ready to try the toilet.

Children who will be toilet trained need extra underwear and clothes at school. Please talk with your child's teacher about the use of training pants and pull-ups.

Tobacco-Free, Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Environment Policy

The purpose of the Tobacco-Free, Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Environment Policy is to remove exposure for children, staff and families in the Children's Services program. Smoking is banned within a 50-foot radius of our buildings; this includes spaces used by the program, outdoor play areas and vehicles. *When we come to your home please consider the staff member's health by not smoking during the visit and keeping pets secured until the staff member has left.* **It is against the law to smoke in a motor vehicle when a minor under 16 years of age is present. The law applies even if the windows are open.**

Weapons Policy

In accordance with York County Community Action Corporation's policy, deadly weapons, including concealed firearms, are prohibited on YCCAC premises.

Professional Boundaries

Staff have professional boundaries and are not allowed to participate in your personal life, including, but not limited to:

- Providing childcare
- Attending non-work-related functions
- Engaging in romantic relationships
- Writing letters regarding child custody issues
- Social Networking Websites
- Providing personal contact information

Transportation Agreement

In our Pre-K collaborative classrooms, at JFK Elementary School, bus services are provided by the school department.

Child Arrival & Pick Up

When you bring your child to and from the center, please remember the following.

- Obtain specific times for arrival and departure from the Teacher or Family Service staff.
- When entering a classroom Parents must **wash their hands**, put on shoe covers (Early Head Start classrooms) and let one of the teachers know that their child is there.
- At Drop off, each child must participate in a Daily Health Screening.
- You, or the person picking up your child, must sign your child in and out every day.
- It is important for each child to participate in our full day routine and transitions. In order to support your child we discourage late arrivals and pick-ups.
- During drop off and pick up: time to communicate information may be limited; alternative ways/times parents can communicate necessary information regarding their child can be discussed and planned with their teacher.
- Chronic tardiness to pick up or drop off will result in a need for an attendance plan.

You must notify the center of any changes in who is authorized to pick up your child and ensure that these changes are reflected on the **Emergency Contact and Parent Authorization Form**. In a situation where someone else needs to pick up your child, you must notify the teaching staff ahead of time.

- We will only allow a child to leave the center with authorized person listed on the **Emergency Contact and Parent Authorization**. If the authorized person picking up your child is unfamiliar to the staff he/she will be asked to please show a valid photo identification before the child is released; they will also be asked to sign your child out.
- Children will only be allowed to be release to adults over **18** years old.

Occasionally, a situation may arise in your schedule that changes your child's pick-up time; under such circumstance, please let classroom staff know in advanced when possible. In this case, it is an expectation that you will arrange for someone else on the emergency list to pick up your child.

Late Pick up Policy

Upon enrollment into the program, YCCAC Head Start staff will inform you about your classroom closing time. All children need to be picked up by this time. If your child has not been picked up by classroom closing time, parents will be charged a late fee of a dollar (\$1.00) per minute after five minutes of the classroom closing time. Late fees will be determined by your classroom clock.

- You will be notified by classroom staff that you will be receiving a late fee. Your Family Service staff member will then be in contact with you to further discuss the reason for the late pick up and you will be given a Late Fee Notice. You must pay your Late Fee **within 5 days** of receiving the notice. (cash payments only). This can be given to your child's classroom teacher or Family Service staff member.
 - *Payment plans may be arranged on a case-by-case basis*
- If late pick-ups continue, the Family Service staff member will set up a meeting with you to discuss if the program option is appropriate. They will develop an Attendance Improvement Plan with you in order to come up with strategies for improved attendance and to assist you in deciding on what other options may be available for your family if this program does not meet your current needs. **Please note, that if there is no improvement with attendance issues, your child may be dropped from the program.**

**Regarding Twins, Triplets, etc.: There will be one late fee for the family.*

If your child has shortened classroom hours based on a plan that was put into place by the Head Start team, your late fee will begin at the pickup time established by the plan.

THE FOLLOWING STEPS WILL BE TAKEN WHEN A CHILD IS NOT PICKED UP AT CLOSING:

- Two staff will remain with the child.
- Attempts to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) will be made. If parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contact numbers will be called.
- If parent/guardian or emergency contacts cannot be reached within 30 minutes, the staff will call the police and DHHS. After the child has been picked up a second call will be made to update DHHS and the police.

Absences and Attendance

During the time of COVID – 19 we are asking families to pay special attention to our Exclusion policies (noted earlier in this handbook). If your child is exhibiting symptoms outlined in these policies your child must be kept home, and your child's teacher should be notified that he/she will be absent. Teachers are required to ask follow-up questions around why your child is absent. Keeping your child home for these reasons will not jeopardize your child's enrollment in the program. Your child's teacher and/or your family liaison will follow-up with you should they not be notified of your child's absence in order to ensure you and your child are well and safe.

With the exception of the information outlined in the above paragraph, families are encouraged to have their child(ren) maintain regular attendance and maintain ongoing communication with staff around your child's enrollment in the classroom.

Regular attendance ensures that your child is participating in a consistent, quality early education environment. Consistent attendance helps in the development of strong social-emotional skills with their peers as well as all

other school readiness goals. Regular attendance also helps you and your family to establish a regular, daily routine. Maintaining an 85% attendance average is a requirement of our program as stated by Head Start Performance Standards. Our staff will work closely with your family to help overcome any barriers that may be hindering the adherence of meeting this requirement and will develop Attendance Improvement Plans with you as appropriate.

Field Trips

In keeping with our program's philosophy: all families need to be included in our programs and everything that takes place during the day; field trips will be planned with staff and families so that the curriculum and activities are enhanced by bringing community experiences into the classroom. You will be kept informed how COVID-19 Safety Protocols may impact Field Trips..

Cancellations and Delays

Due to the COVID – 19 pandemic, the program may close unexpectedly. We will have communication with families, notifying them of an expected/unexpected closure as soon as possible, and will continue to have ongoing communication regarding a re-opening date, should a closure occur.

It is our goal to keep classrooms operating daily, however, we will not compromise the safety of children or quality of care that we provide. We are required to meet Maine State Childcare Licensing Regulations and Head Start Performance Standards therefore, there may be times that due to staffing challenges we will have no choice but to close a classroom. We will do all that we can to ensure that classrooms are running daily. Please know that we understand that closing a classroom may be an inconvenience to families.

If York County Community Action Corporation, Children's Services and the school system in your area is cancelled due to bad weather, Children's Services will also be cancelled. If YCCAC is closed, and your school district is open, the classroom will also be cancelled. For classroom delays and/or early releases due to inclement weather we will follow the same protocol: if the school system in your area has a delay and/or closes early – your child's classroom will do the same. If YCCAC has a delay or closes early – your child's classroom will do the same.

Celebration and Diversity

Holidays/Birthdays are not celebrated as part of our program, but you and your child may celebrate other special events. These are events that all children and families are able to take part in despite any differences there may be in religious, ethnic, and cultural beliefs. Some of these special days may include changes in the seasons, colors, celebration of children and families, and many more.



Children's Services celebrates the uniqueness and diversity of all families in following with these principles, our program will honor the importance of celebrations. By working together, staff and families will create an environment of including everyone, by respect and appreciation for each child's family, culture and life style.

Dual Language Learners

For dual language learners who participate in our programs, every effort will be made to support the development of the child's home language and stress the child's connection to their family as well as their learning of the English language. Staff members working with dual language learners will be supported in locating and using resources based on the needs of the child and those of their family. Resources may include

but are not limited to: translators from community agencies; volunteers and/or family members who can translate; written materials translated into the primary language; training opportunities in topics such as language development and instructional strategies, etc. Teaching staff create a classroom environment that is inclusive of dual language learners home language and culture.

Behavior Policy

The Head Start program uses an approach to discipline and guidance that emphasizes respect for each child; developmentally appropriate expectations of children's behavior; and the use of positive discipline and guidance strategies.

Our staff members strive to create a relaxed, positive environment that enables children to explore and experiment while remaining safe and feeling well-supported. Through positive guidance strategies and modeling social skills, staff helps children learn pro-social behaviors, build confidence and self-esteem, and develop greater respect for others' rights and feelings, as well as a sense that they are themselves respected.

Discipline concerns are handled by staff in a way that encourages children to solve problems and develop a sense of inner self-control. Children are given authentic choices and the opportunity to be an active part of decision-making in their environment, thus fostering a sense of personal responsibility. Staff helps children to understand the reasons for rules and limits and to feel good about the choices they make.



Outdoor Activities and Dressing for School

Children will spend at least **60 minutes** each day outside.

Make sure that your child:

- It is requested that sunscreen be applied to exposed skin before coming to class. (Permission forms to have sunscreen and/or bug spray applied at school are available if needed).
- Wears comfortable play clothes that are easy to wash - we do lots of messy activities inside and outside!
- Dress for the weather. This includes hats, mittens and boots.
- Has two extra sets of clothes to be left at the classroom with their name clearly marked. The clothes can remain in the classroom and be laundered onsite.
- Wears shoes that are safe for running, climbing and playing.

Please note that we will make all attempts to go outside each day. If your child is too sick to play outside we ask that you keep your child at home until they are feeling better.

Pedestrian Safety for Your Child

Set a Good Example

- Cross streets at a corner. Use signals and crosswalks when they are there.
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them.

- Look left, right and left again before crossing. Keep looking as you cross.
- Walk across streets. Don't run.
- Walk on sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks, face traffic and stay left.
- Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.

Rules for Kids

- Teach kids all of the safe walking rules to follow.
- Never allow kids under age 10 to cross streets alone.
- Tell kids never to run into the street for any reason. They shouldn't chase a ball, a pet or anything else.
- Make sure kids use direct routes with the fewest street crossings.
- Teach kids to cross 10 feet in front of the school bus, never behind.
- Make sure kids play in safe places like yards, parks and playgrounds. Kids should never play in the street.
- Hold kids' hands in parking lots and while crossing the street.

Being Seen

- Keep kids from walking alone when it's hard to be seen. That includes dawn, dusk, the early evening and rainy and foggy weather.
- Make sure kids wear retro reflective materials. They bounce back light so the wearer can be seen. Retro reflective materials are found on clothes, shoes, stickers and arm and leg bands.

Car Seat Safety

Children's Services staff is required by both policy and Maine State law to assure that children are secured correctly in the vehicle as they arrive and depart from the center. When a staff person sees that lack of or improper use of a restraining device threatens a child's safety, that person is to follow these guidelines:



- Provide you with educational materials and resource information, including where to get free or low-cost devices and a car seat inspection.
- Remind you that proper use of a child restraint is the law. Staff members are directed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to notify the police when a child is not properly secured in a vehicle. This offense is reportable to DHHS.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

There are laws in place for the safety and protection of your child. If any Children's Services staff has reasonable cause to suspect that any child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected, staff are mandated to report their concerns to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This includes cases of domestic violence. If a report is made, either by our program or an outside source, our staff will assist you through the process. Together we will work with you and Child Protective Services.

Domestic Violence and Order for Protection from Abuse

Children's Services recognizes that domestic violence affects not only the victim, but also children and other family members. As part of Head Start's family focus belief, we are committed to supporting children and families in achieving safe, self-sufficient lives free of family violence and to promote a zero tolerance for domestic violence. Our commitment includes being informed of and adhering to any Order for Protection from Abuse.

This will ensure that:

- Children do not have contact with any person prohibited to be around them at any Children's Services center/function.
- Children enrolled in our program are not released to any person who is prohibited from having contact with them as ordered by the court.

- When staff is aware of any violation of an Order for Protection from Abuse, **either in the home or at the center**, they are responsible to report it to their immediate supervisor and that person will determine the next step.

As stated above, domestic violence is reportable to DHHS. This policy is consistent with the written agreement between DHHS and York County Community Action Head Start.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness and Fire Safety are an important part of our curriculum. By following Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities for the State of Maine and also *Head Start Performance Standards*, each center will practice monthly fire drills and biannual evacuation/lockdown drills. Families will be notified before our first evacuation/lock down drill and teachers will have conversations and lessons with the students to help prepare them before these happen. All of our center’s doors are locked at all times, but it is important to practice and prepare for any emergency situation that could arise.

Confidentiality

Families participate in our program in many ways; we ask that as you participate, you respect the privacy of the children, families and staff, both here at the center and in your conversations out in the community. Sometimes specific child or family information, shared in an innocent exchange, may be hurtful or damaging (example: a conversation in the grocery store about a child who attends the center when his/her family does not want that information shared.) While at our centers, if you should hear or see something that causes you concern, please ask to speak to the teacher privately and share your concern with them immediately. **We appreciate your sensitivity to the rights and needs of our Children’s Services community.**

Staff members are also bound by confidentiality and are unable to discuss any information with parents and volunteers about other children and families in the program.

To ensure confidentiality, the program will:

- Keep all records in locked file cabinets.
- Not release any information verbally or in writing to anyone outside of YCCAC Children’s Services unless the parent/guardian has given written permission.
-
- Only disclose records without written permission, if ordered by the court or in the case of reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.



Welcome to our Children's Services Family!

We hope this handbook serves as a guide, and provides you with an overview of Children's Services and all we have to offer.

We look forward to embarking on this journey with you and your family!