



PARENT HANDBOOK

HEAD START & EARLY HEAD START
SERVING

CLAYTON & ROCKDALE COUNTY CHILDREN & FAMILIES

2024
2025

**CLAYTON/ROCKDALE COUNTY HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START
PROGRAM**

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Organizational Management Members

Rhonda Kindred	Executive Director
Eme Isok-Nsuk	Head Start/Early Head Start Director
Rhonda Price (Clayton)	Regional Project Director
Taneisha Levy (Rockdale)	Regional Project Director
Deborah Scott (Clayton)	Site Director-Phillips Dr.
Sandra Lemons-Arnold (Clayton)	Site Director-Brookwood Center
Vacancy (Clayton)	Site Director-South Ave. Center
Terri Abrams (Rockdale)	Site Director-Restoration Storehouse
Xavier Williams (Rockdale)	Site Director-West Circle Center
Wakina Nix (Rockdale)	Education Coordinator
Theresa Mensah (Clayton)	Education Coordinator
Michel Brown (Rockdale)	Mentor Coach

Organizational Management Members

**Tanya Jones
(Clayton)**

Mentor Coach

**Shawna Halley
(Clayton)**

Mentor Coach

**Equere Uboh
(Clayton)Coordinator**

Disabilities & Mental Health

**Sharonda Wright
(Rockdale)Coordinator**

Disabilities & Mental Health

**Malinda Malden
(Clayton)**

Health &Disabilities Services Manager

**Audrey Temple
(Clayton)**

Health & Nutrition Coordinator

**Ifetayo Simon
(Rockdale)**

Health & Nutrition Coordinator

**Keila Allen
(Clayton)**

**Family Community Partnership
Coordinator**

**Keith Barksdale
(Clayton)Coordinator**

Family Community Partnership

**Aprial Jackson
(Rockdale)**

**Family Community Partnership
Coordinator**

**Eric Revell
(Clayton)**

Program Officer

YOUR CHILD'S CENTER INFORMATION

Fill in the spaces below for important information about your child:

My child will be attending the _____ Center located at
_____ in Classroom _____

My child's Teachers are _____ and
_____, I can reach them at _____

My Family Service Worker is: _____, I can reach him/her
at _____.

My Early Head Start Coordinator is: _____ I can reach
him/her at _____.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Even very young children need to be taught pedestrian safety. Some things you should talk with your child about include:

- Remind your child(ren) to look for a crosswalk before crossing the street and to hold an adult's hand.
- When crossing the street, stop at the curb or edge of the road. Look left, then right, and then left again for moving cars before crossing. Keep looking left and right until you are safely across the street.
- If your area has sidewalks, teach your child(ren) to stay on them at all times.
- Remind your child(ren) to wait for the car to come to a complete stop before approaching the vehicle.



Head Start/Early Head Start age children should never cross a street without a grown-up.

WELCOME TO EARLY HEAD START/ HEAD START

Welcome to Head Start/ Early Head Start! We are excited that you have been selected to receive Head Start and/or Early Head Start services for your child. Early Head Start serves children from birth through age three. Whereas, Head Start serves children from the ages of three to five. Early Head/Head Start provides comprehensive, individualized early education experiences to enhance a child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive development, and school readiness. Early Head Start also provides pre-natal support and education services to families. The program strives to enable parents to be better caregivers and teachers for their children, as well as assist parents to meet their own goals, including economic independence. This manual is intended to provide you with specific information about the operating procedures for our Early Head Start/Head Start program. These procedures are based upon regulations that are dictated by the Department of Public Health-Division of Community Based Regulations, Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Bureau and are governed by the childcare regulations in the State of Georgia, National Association for Education of Young Children, Quality Care for Children, Bright from the Start and other applicable local and state laws.

About Early Head Start

The reauthorization of the Head Start Act in 1994 made it possible to establish Early Head Start as a program to serve infants and toddlers under the age of 3, and pregnant women.

Early Head Start provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and pregnant women and their families.

About Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded program for preschool children from low-income families. Acting on research findings that early intervention could strengthen the ability of children and families to cope with school and their environment, the federal government convened a panel of child development experts to draw up a program to help communities overcome the handicap of poverty. The panel report issued in 1964 became the blueprint for Project Head Start.

Why Early Head Start and/or Head Start?

Powerful research evidence tells us that the period from birth to age five is critical to healthy growth and development and to later success in school and life. All children need and deserve early childhood experiences that provide love, warmth and positive learning in a safe environment.

The Goals of Early Head Start/ Head Start

To provide safe and developmentally enriching care giving which promotes the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of infants, toddlers, three- and four-year-olds, which prepares them for future growth and development. Objective for children's learning and skill growths, including children with disabilities, are aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five. (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework>)

- To support parents, both mothers and fathers, in their role as primary caregivers and teachers of their children, and families in meeting personal goals and achieving self-sufficiency across a wide variety of domains.
- To mobilize communities to provide the resources and environment necessary to ensure a comprehensive, integrated array of services and support for families.
- To ensure the provision of high-quality responsive services to family through the development of trained, and caring staff.

The Principles of Early Head Start/Head Start

These principles are designed to nurture healthy attachments between parent and child (and child and caregiver), emphasize a strengths-based, relationship-centered approach to services, and encompass the full range of a family's needs from pregnancy through school age.

They include:

- **An Emphasis on High Quality** which recognizes the critical opportunity of EHS/HS programs to positively impact children and families in the early years of development and beyond.
- **Prevention and Promotion Activities** that both promote healthy development and recognize and address atypical development at the earliest stage possible.
- **Positive Relationships and Continuity** which honor the critical importance of early attachments on healthy development in early childhood and beyond. The parents are viewed as a child's first, and most important, relationship.
- **Parent Engagement Activities** that offer parents a meaningful and strategic role in the program's vision, services, and governance.
- **Inclusion** strategies that respect the unique developmental trajectories of young children in the context of a typical setting, including children with disabilities.
- **Cultural competence** which acknowledges the profound role that culture plays in early development. Program also recognizes the influence of cultural values and beliefs on both staff and families' approaches to child development. Programs work within the context of home languages for all children and families.

- **Comprehensiveness, Flexibility and Responsiveness** of services which allow children and families to move across various program options over time, as their life situation demands.
- **Transition planning** respects families' need for thought and attention paid to movements across program options and into—and out of—Early Head Start program, and into—and out of—Head Start program into public school.
- **Collaboration** is, simply put, is central to Early Head Start/Head Start program's ability to meet the comprehensive needs of families. Strong partnerships allow programs to expand their services to children and families beyond the door of the program and into the larger community.

Cornerstones

1. **Child Development:** Programs must support the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development of each child. Parenting education and the support of a positive parent-child relationship are critical to this cornerstone.
2. **Family Development:** Programs must seek to empower families by developing goals for themselves and their children. Staff and parents develop individualized family development plans that focus on the child's developmental needs and the family's social and economic needs. Families that are involved in other programs requiring a family service plan will receive a single coordinated plan so that they experience a seamless system of services.
3. **Community Building:** Programs are expected to conduct an assessment of community resources so that they may build a comprehensive network of services and supports for pregnant women and families with young children. The goal of these collaborative relationships is to increase family access to community supports, make the most efficient use of limited resources, and effect system-wide changes to improve the service delivery system for all families in the community.
4. **Staff Development:** The success of the Early Head Start/ Head Start program rests largely on the quality of the staff. Staff members must have the capacity to develop caring, supportive relationships with both children and families. On-going training, supervision, and mentoring will encompass an inter-disciplinary approach and emphasize relationship-building. Staff development will be grounded in established "best practices" in the areas of child development, family development, and community building.

What services you can expect from Head Start / Early Head Start:

- quality early education in and out of the home, including home visits
- ongoing child development screening
- family support for all families
- parent education, including parent-child activities
- comprehensive health services, including services to women before, during and after pregnancy, assistance with well-baby and well-child check-ups; immunization tracking; dental screening
- nutrition education
- mental health services and referrals
- ongoing support for parents through partnership development focusing on family and individual goals, referral to agencies in the community to meet specific needs and peer support groups

Clayton/Rockdale County Early Head Start /Head Start Mission

The Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Head Start / Early Head Start program provides quality comprehensive services to low-income families with children age birth to five, including children with special needs. We empower families to become self-sufficient to achieve their life goals; and we promote school readiness, family literacy, social competency and parent engagement.

Clayton/Rockdale County Early Head Start /Head Start

Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Head Start / Early Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program for low-income children and their families. Our Early Head Start program is funded to serve 136 birth to three-year-old children and families. Our Head Start program is funded to serve 488 preschool children and families. At least 10% of our enrollment opportunities are made available to children with disabilities. Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Head Start / Early Head Start program determines eligibility based on the guidelines in the Head Start Program Performance Standards. In general, eligibility is based on family income at or below the poverty level. Families with other situations including homelessness and children in foster care are also eligible. Due to limited government funding, there are not enough spaces for all eligible children across Clayton / Rockdale Counties. Families are placed on the waiting list if there is not a space available. For those families enrolled we want children and families to make the most of this educational opportunity by having good attendance and involvement in all program opportunities.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for enrollment Head Start/Early Head Start include the following:

- **EARLY HEAD START CHILD (REN)**
 1. Must be an infant or a toddler younger than three years old.
 2. Family Service Worker will check birth certificate provided it does cause a barrier for child enrollment.

- **HEAD START CHILD (REN)**
 1. Must be at least three-years old by September 1 of the enrollment year; or if below the federal government poverty guidelines may enter at his/her 3rd birthday provided a vacancy exists.
 2. Family Service Worker will check birth certificate provided it does cause a barrier for child enrollment.

- **PARENT (S)**
 1. Must provide proof of income for the past 12 months for the family of the child they are registering for Early Head Start/Head Start.
 2. Must proof that you reside in Clayton/ Rockdale County:
 3. Must complete a pre-registration form and if scheduled for an appointment, must complete all enrollment forms.
 4. Are requested to attend Parent Orientation and participate in Parent Committee meetings at the center level whenever possible.

CHILD HEALTH

In order to follow the Head Start Program Performance Standards, staff will partner with you to ensure your child receives all necessary health services. Such as: Determining the family's access to health care and insurance coverage, **Required Health Screenings-** Occasionally you may receive a notice that your child will be screened. Head Start / Early Head Start is required to track height, weight, hearing, vision, nutrition, anemia, developmental and speech/language screenings. It is your responsibility as a parent to review the results for your child and follow-up with any necessary referrals or appointments for your child as requested by Head Start /or Early Head Start.

Physical Exams - Well child checkups are to be performed as follows: 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, and annually beginning on or after the child's third birthday.

Dental Exams- Dental exams are required at age 1 year and every 6 months after. Parents are responsible for providing a copy of this exam to Early Head Start/Head Start Office and complete all follow-up appointments.

Immunizations -Immunizations must be current for child to attend school.

Individualized Health Care Plans- Clayton County Early Head Start/ Head Start does not exclude children from participating in the programs based on health care or medication requirements unless it poses a risk to the child or others in contact with the child. Children who require an individualized health care plan must have one in place prior to first day of attendance in the classroom in the classroom. The individualized health care plan provides clear guidance for program staff by specifying procedures and clarifying responsibilities. All staff who need to know are informed of the child's health care plan. A family meeting must be scheduled to ensure all documentation, training. And other requirements are in place to ensure the well-being of the child prior to their attendance.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CURRICULUM

Children can benefit most from a comprehensive program that provides them with learning skills. Head Start prepares children to be successful in any kindergarten program.

We encourage your child to learn by doing. Based on your child's age and skill level he/she will develop skills in the following areas:

- Language & Literacy Development
- Cognitive & General Knowledge
- Physical Development & Health
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning

We provide your child a learning environment that will support social, intellectual, physical and emotional development. For infants and toddlers, we promote relational learning and include individualized and small group activities that integrate appropriate daily routines into a flexible schedule of learning experiences.

For preschool age children, include teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, active and quiet learning activities, and opportunities for individual, small group, and large group learning activities. The program provides age-appropriate equipment, materials, supplies, and physical space for indoor and outdoor learning environment. Necessary accommodations are provided to make the space, equipment, and materials accessible to children with disabilities. Physical activity is important to learning and teachers plan movement and physical activity into daily activities and routines to support health and learning both indoors and outdoors. Physical activity is not used as reward or punishment. The use of play pens, baby swings, bouncing chairs and other "restrictive" equipment that don't allow children freedom of movement are not appropriate in the Early Head Start.

HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START CURRICULUM

The curriculum used is **Creative Curriculum**. This curriculum is based on the sound principles of early childhood education and developmentally appropriate practices. Teachers look at other resource materials for ideas for activities and concepts to be developed according to each child's stage of development and individual needs. To individualize the Curriculum to meet each child's developmental stage and areas of interests, a number of screening and assessment tools are utilized. Ongoing assessments are conducted by teachers for each child throughout the program year to support individualization of

curriculum activities. The teachers use anecdotal observations and other helpful instruments throughout the year to gather information about the child(s) strengths and needs to plan activities for large group, small group and for individualization within each classroom. The instruments might include the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), or other developmental screening tools. Various speech and language screening tools, hearing, articulation, as well as, mental health and dental evaluations may be utilized. Staff also uses classroom observations, and the information given by parents in interviews, home visits, and conferences to plan curriculum activities and events around the interests and needs of the children. Lesson plans are prepared each week by the teaching staff.

DAY TO DAY OPERATION – CLAYTON COUNTY

EARLY HEAD START HOURS OF OPERATION

Brookwood Site 7:30am to 2:30pm

Phillips Drive Site 7:30am to 2:30pm

South Avenue Site: 7:30am to 2:30pm

HEAD START HOURS OF OPERATION

Brookwood Site: 8:00am to 2:30pm

South Avenue Site: 8:00am to 2:30pm

DAY TO DAY OPERATION – ROCKDALE COUNTY

EARLY HEAD START HOURS OF OPERATION

Restoration Storehouse Site: 7:30am to 2:30pm

West Circle Site: 7:30am to 2:30pm

HEAD START HOURS OF OPERATION

Restoration Storehouse Site: 8:00am to 2:30pm

West Circle Site: 8:00am to 2:30pm

****NOTE: Due to the different hours of operation in Early Head Start and Head Start, early care will be offered to the Early Head Start siblings at the Brookwood and South Avenue centers. Please speak with your Site Directors for more information**

PLEASE NOTE: ALL CHILDREN MUST BE PICKED UP AT 2:30 at DUE TO INSURANCE LIABILITY.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

To ensure your child's safety, they must be escorted to the building, and you must accompany your child to their classroom and sign him/her in. When you pick your child up in the afternoon, you must sign him/her out. Please make sure your child does not arrive until the assigned arrival time and is picked up by the closing time as noted above. Your child will not be allowed to enter or exit the center without an escort and the center will not permit your child to enter or exit the center without an escort. If you are consistently late bringing your child to the center, you will need to meet with your Family Service Worker so that they may assist you with options to get your child to school in a timely manner. A pattern of picking up your child late is unacceptable, upsetting to your child and difficult for the staff that needs to go home and attend to their own families. If you are consistently late in picking up your child, your Site Director or designated staff will schedule a conference to assist you with developing strategies in picking up your child in a timely manner.

ENTERING/EXITING BUILDING

All parents and visitors must enter and exit the Early Head Start/Head Start centers through their Main Entrance. Children may not be dropped off or picked up from a rear entrance. It is our policy that all parents sign their child in and out of the center. If someone else is going to pick up your child that is not on your pick-up list, please contact us in advance or give written authorization. If we are unfamiliar with the person picking up your child, we will ask him/her to show us a picture ID. If the person does not have written authorization or is not on your pick-up list, we WILL NOT release your child to that person. Persons signing children in and out of the Head Start Centers MUST be at least 18 years of age.

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES

Good attendance is a habit that children form early. Therefore, we want to maximize the number of days your child attends. The teaching staff will contact parents on the 2nd consecutive day of an absence then, after three (3) consecutive days, the Family Service Worker will contact the parent. If your child is absent for 4 consecutive days, has a pattern of absences and you have not made contact with your FSW, he/she will attempt to contact you via telephone. If unsuccessful, then a home visit and conference will be scheduled with the Site Director or designated staff for problem-solving solutions. If your child continues to remain absent, then he/she WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE ACTIVE ROLL and placed on the waiting list. After thirty (30) days your child WILL BE TERMINATED FROM THE PROGRAM. We know that children who attend on a regular basis have a better outcome. Therefore, we want to maximize the number of days your child attends.

Please note the following attendance policy for PRE- K Children:

- **Two consecutive days unexcused – A written notice will be issued.**
- **Three consecutive unexcused days – A written notice and parent conference will be scheduled.**
- **Four consecutive days- A parent conference will be scheduled, and notification will be issued to Bright from the Start**

This policy also covers late arrivals and early pick-up prior to dismissal. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Family Service Worker.

ASSIGNMENT TO CLASSROOM

If you have more than one child in our program, they will be placed in a separate classroom when possible, at the same center. If a transfer is needed for your child during the second year, please see your child's Teacher, Site Director or Family Service Worker.

CLOTHING & LINEN

Young children can have bathroom accidents or are involved in messy play through- out the day. Children should have a clean change of clothing at the center at all times. Clothing should be exchanged as the seasons change so that children are adequately dressed. When a change of clothing has been worn home, please return them immediately. The child's parent/guardian should provide the change of clothing. If, however, clothing is needed, notify your FSW immediately for assistance.

DAILY RECORD KEEPING

Daily notes are kept concerning the child's developmental process, social and group skills, and any other incidents that may be of interest and helpful when planning the curriculum or sharing progress reports with parents.

Daily record keeping regarding attendance, food service reports, and unusual incidents relating to child's health (such as a rash, a sore that may not be healing like it should, or a child who is unusually irritable without an apparent reason) is required by all staff.

MEALS

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

The following information must be shared with parents and updated regularly: current feeding schedules and amounts and types of food provided, including whether breast milk or formula and baby food is used; meal patterns; new foods introduced; food intolerances and preferences; voiding patterns; and observations related to developmental changes in feeding and nutrition. The children will be provided with two (2) meals, breakfast, lunch and a PM snack while in our program. Infants and young toddlers who need it must be fed "on demand" to the extent possible or at appropriate intervals. Preschool age children in the program are provided with toothbrushes and taught to brush their teeth after lunch at the center. In Early Head Start the infants and toddlers mouths and teeth are gently cleaned using age-appropriate methods.

Family style meal service is observed at all meal times. Food will be served in bowls, and plates at each dining table. If a child does not want to eat a particular food item, the child is encouraged to have a taste but is never forced or coerced. Adequate food will be prepared to make second servings available if a child desires. No more than three servings of any one food will be served to one child. Adaptations will be made for children with special needs. Teachers, Assistants, Volunteers and guests will serve themselves from the same bowls and plates as the children. The portions served to adults will be the same as those to children. Second portions (same size as child portion) are available if there is additional food. Teachers and Assistants will take a serving of all foods on the menu, at least a tasting portion. Sufficient time is provided for children to eat in a relaxed manner.

Teachers, volunteers or guests WILL NOT eat or drink any food item in the classroom or at the dining table that is not being offered to the children. Each class will designate an adult and child to set the tables for the rest of the class. The adult will supervise and coach the setting of the tables. The child and the adult will wash their hands before beginning to set the table. The children are selected to set the table by a class rotation.

The cooks will be notified in advance of food and equipment needed for special projects or extended food experience, at least TWO weeks in advance. Foods served at holidays or celebrations will be healthy and nutritious. No candy, chips, or soda pop will be served due to their low nutrient value. If children bring any food to the center, it will be returned home.

Children having difficulty eating, chewing, or eating a variety of foods may be at nutritional risk. The Teacher will notify the Family Service Worker and Health & Nutrition Specialist of these concerns and a conference may be called to discuss this with the parent.

During enrollment in Head Start/or Head Start the child's nutritional needs and family's nutritional concerns will be addressed and will be reviewed by the Health and Nutrition Specialist. Eating patterns, cultural and religious preferences, and special dietary concerns will be noted and reported to all parties involved in the child's nutritional program. If any problem presents itself, with the parent's permission, the child will be referred for nutritional services.

The Clayton County Community Services, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start Program also participates in the, I'm Moving, I'm Learning Initiative (IMIL). This initiative targets obesity in young children as well as adults. The initiative is implemented on a daily basis on the Lesson plans and executed within the classrooms as a part of the daily activities.

Parent/guardian(s) **ARE NOT TO BRING FOOD TO SCHOOL** due to product liability (insurance) issues. This includes foods purchased in separate packages from a grocery store. **NO BIRTHDAY CAKES, CUPCAKES, and ETC...**

Administrative staff will go into the classrooms during meal time at least once a month to monitor the food quality and quantity provided. Teachers and Assistants will sit with the children during mealtime and converse with them about the day, the food they are eating, upcoming events etc. Teachers model appropriate eating behavior.

All personal staff's food in the center will be labeled with the staff member's name. A designated refrigerator can be reserved for staff food not part of the USDA/CACFP program.

USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

PLAYGROUND RULES AND SUPERVISION

Staff supervises and actively engaged with children to keep children safe. Staff provides appropriate indoor and outdoor supervision of children throughout the day. Children are never left alone or unsupervised. Your child will participate in outdoor activities daily as the weather permits. We follow the state childcare regulations concerning outdoor play. When inclement weather occurs, teachers have alternate recreational activities on their weekly lesson plans.

NURTURING PROCEDURES

Physical touching is an important part of the care and nurturing of young children. Children feel loved, accepted and supported through the sensations of touch by nurturing adults and peers. Staff members should be sensitive to children's responses and requests for physical interaction and model appropriate nurturing touches. Except for safety or cleansing,

children will always have the right to refuse touch. Children are also taught to respect adults and other children's touch preferences.

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF TOUCH BY STAFF MEMBERS:

NURTURING TOUCHES (Spontaneous):

- Hugging, i.e. welcoming to the classroom
- Holding on laps, i.e. reading a book or during group time
- Rocking, i.e. reading story

COMFORTING TOUCHES:

- Rubbing and patting backs, i.e. saying, "thanks" or "I'm proud of you".
- All the touches listed above, plus:
- Holding or carrying in arms, i.e. when child is injured

TOILET TRAINING

Child development specialist say that teaching a child how to use the toilet is best started sometime between 30 months (2 ½ years old) and 36 months (3 years old). Consequently, because of this newly learned procedure, some three-year-olds need REMINDERS, even if they may say, "I don't have to go." Bathroom reminders should be issued and scheduled:

- Before going to the playground,
- Before going to lunch,
- Before and after nap time (If Applicable); and
- Before going on field trips.

Children who forget and have accidents must never be degraded by harsh words or appearances of disgust. A conference between the teacher(s) and the parent/guardian(s) will serve to establish common goals and methods. Parent/guardian(s) are encouraged to dress their child in suitable clothing (easy to get on and off). They should provide a change of clothing just in case the need arises. Accidents are to be expected. Children are admitted to Head Start without regard to whether they are toilet trained or not. Some children may start the program in diapers or pull-ups, and it is expected that staff will change diapers and assist children in positive ways to learn to use the toilet. Coordination with the family around toilet training is imperative.

Head Start / Early Head Start must follow sanitation and hygiene procedures for diapering that adequately protects the health and safety of the children. Diapers and wipes are purchased by the program.

HAND WASHING

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Parents are encouraged to reinforce proper hand washing at home. Children, staff, and volunteers wash hands with soap and running water when arriving each day and coming in from playgrounds and before and after preparing food or beverages, eating, handling food, or feeding a child, brushing or helping a child brush their

teeth, giving medication or administering first aid, playing in water or sand, diapering. And after using the toilet/diapering or helping a child use a toilet, handing bodily fluids, cleaning or handling the garbage.

REST/NAPS

All staff, parent/guardians, volunteers and others approved to enter room where infants are cared for are made aware of and follows safe sleep practices for infants recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Teachers must always be able to observe sleeping infants by sight and sound at all times.

Children under the age of five (5) who are in a child care facility for more than five (5) hours will have a rest and/or quiet period in accordance with the State Regulations. A facility will provide physical care that is appropriate to each child's developmental need that will include a supervised rest period.

We will provide rest/naptime in our program; the children need a rest time to help them relax and unwind from their busy morning schedule. A quiet time in the daily schedule enables them to have a more positive afternoon and be a happier child at home at the end of the day.

FIRE DRILLS

We will hold monthly fire or tornado drills and post evacuation plans. During these drills, staff will lead the children to a safe area outside of the building. Please do not be alarmed if a fire drill occurs while you are in the school building.

DAILY COMMUNICATION

Every effort will be made daily to communicate with families when they drop off and pick up their child, through direct contact, notes sent home, or through telephone calls. If there has been an unusual or special circumstance during the day, information will be passed on to the parent/guardian(s) verbally or in a written note. Serious incidents or events which the staff feels may be upsetting to the parent/guardian(s), will be communicated verbally and written, as documentation.

HOME VISITS/PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Education staff will schedule a minimum of two home visits (2) for a full year program. The purpose of the first home visit is to provide an opportunity for the staff to get to know each child and family in their comfort of their home environment. The intent of this the first visit is to also allow parents the opportunity to provides the Teaching Staff with information to better assist them in effectively welcoming new families into the program. During this time staff will educate parent on what the program has to offer to them and their children. Parents will be encouraged to share any concerns of ask any questions that they feel are pertinent to their child's learning experience while in the program. Also, Teaching Staff will inform parent/guardian(s) of what is going on in the program and to form a partnership with them. Family participation and observation is highly encouraged during this first visit. During the 2nd Home visit information of the child's progress since the Winter Assessment

Checkpoint is shared with the parent. Parents are encouraged to ask detailed questions of what they may not understand as well as offer helpful suggestions to the teacher. Teachers also share with the parent the 2nd Family Conference form which provides the parent with detailed academic and social skills that the child has mastered as well as areas in which they still require assistance from both parents and teachers. It is during this visit that teaching staff and parents can really plan strategies together to make sure their child is on task as they enter the Spring Assessment Checkpoint and prepare for kindergarten.

The Family Service Workers will conduct home visits on an as needed basis throughout the program year when circumstances arise (i.e. excessive absenteeism, family crisis, health issues etc.).

Together, the Teaching staff and Family Service Workers will make every effort to meet with the family in their home, unless otherwise indicated by the parent. If for some reason the parent is uncomfortable with a meeting being held in the home, the staff will document this information in the child's folder and try to find another location to meet (i.e. local library, local fast-food place, etc.).

While Home visits are encouraged to be conducted in the home environment, it is not compelled.

Your child's teachers will also conduct two (2) parent/teacher conferences per year. These visits are conducted at the child's center. The first center visit (usually beginning in October/November) is to discuss your child's initial progress. Teachers also share with the parent the 1st Family Conference form which provides the parent with detailed account of the child's beginning academic and social skills levels. The purpose of the second parent/teacher conference is to exchange information and perspectives between home and school. The second visit is made late in the program (latter April/May) and the 3rd and final Family Conference Form is shared with parents at this time to show final mastery levels and to give end-of-the-year progress reports to the parents which may be necessary for kindergarten entrance.

The first half of each meeting will consist of families informing the staff about their understanding of the child's growth and development since the last meeting. The second half of each meeting will consist of staff sharing their assessment and observation of the child's growth.

Staff will always attempt to communicate with families in a positive and supportive manner that encourages the parent-child relationship. Information concerning family issues and personal lives will be handled confidentially. In the event of divorce, separation, joint custody ruling etc., every effort will be made to treat both parents equally. Without legal documentation, the staff cannot act as though one parent is more fit than another to the legal rights of the child.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The purpose of the Family Partnership Agreement is to support parent/guardian(s) in identifying their own strengths, interests and goals. We feel that fathers are very important and play an integral role in a child's development. Therefore, we want to include them in this process, even if they are not residing in the home with the child. The FSW's will

encourage both parents, (if possible) to be a part of the family partnership process. This includes writing down goals and interests, as well as, setting timetables for achieving them. Your FSW's will schedule meeting times to complete the Family Partnership Agreement. After the initial meeting, your FSW will continue to follow up and work with you to achieve your family goals and document accomplishments.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

We MUST keep up-to-date emergency contact information about your child in our files at all times. Any change of information from parents must be given to the Family Service Worker, child's teacher or Site Director to ensure that the master files are updated.

Staff MUST have current First Aid and CPR certification. In the event of an emergency, either the parent or the emergency contact person(s) must be contacted as soon as possible. The program emergency preparedness plan/manual is to be followed in the event of an emergency or major disaster. In the event of an emergency, either the parent or the emergency contact person(s) must be contacted as soon as possible.

PROPER ATTIRE/HAZARDOUS ITEMS

Please adhere to the following dress code guidelines while attending the program to ensure the safety of all children.

- Proper clothing suitable for play, other program activities, and weather conditions must be worn.
- Children are required to wear closed footwear. Sandals, flip flops, and any ornaments on clothing or footwear that could pose a hazard for other children are not allowed.
- Children should not wear beads in their hair or jewelry around their neck or wrist. Any dangling jewelry could be pulled or caught on another child during play or other activities, posing a hazard.
- If a child is wearing inappropriate clothing, footwear, or accessories, we will contact the parent if the child does not have alternate clothing available.

Please be advised of the following **DECAL Rules for Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.12 Equipment and Toys (7)** Toys that launch projectiles, such as dart guns, pop guns, slingshots, etc., shall not be allowed in the Center, and balloons shall not be accessible to preschool children.

BALLOONS

We understand that balloons are often associated with joyous occasions and celebrations, but the safety of our students must always come first.

Please be advised of the following **DECAL Rules for Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.12 Equipment and Toys (7)** Toys that launch projectiles, such as dart guns, pop guns, slingshots, etc., shall not be allowed in the Center, and balloons shall not be accessible to preschool children.

SICK CHILD PROCEDURES

Please do not send your child to school if he/she displays any of the following symptoms: fever, cold (runny nose, coughing, and sneezing), vomiting, diarrhea, skin rashes, pink eye and ringworm. When a child is sent to school sick, it is dangerous to his/her health and the health of the other children. Please notify the center if your child is being kept home because of sickness. If a child becomes ill while at the center, he/she must be isolated from the other children. The parent must be contacted and informed to make arrangements to have their child taken home.

The Family Service Worker, Site Director or child's teacher will contact the parent if the child has a fever of 100 degrees F, has diarrhea, is vomiting or has other medical conditions that cause concern. Parents are asked to be considerate of other children enrolled in the center and to keep a sick child at home if signs of illness are evident.

Staff is required to document unusual incidents relating to the health of the child, such as bowel movements with blood, a sore that may not be healing or a child who is unusually irritable without an apparent reason. All incident reports must be kept confidential and will be brought to the parent's attention by the child's Teacher, Family Service Worker or Site Director.

Some common childhood diseases and guidelines are listed below:

Fever: A temperature of 100 degrees or higher. The child must stay home until his/her temperature is normal without medication for 24 hours.

Diarrhea: Watery or foamy bowel movements, more frequently than usual. Diarrhea is defined as three or four watery stools during a period of two hours. If the child is sent home for diarrhea, he/she should not return to the center until at least one normal bowel movement has occurred.

Vomiting: Once within a 24-hour period.

Impetigo: A skin infection consisting of blisters surrounded by a reddened area. When the blisters break, the surface becomes raw, weeps and oozes. The lesions eventually become crusted and yellowish.

Conjunctivitis: An eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye" in which the eye is generally red with some burning and sometimes a thick yellow drainage). The child must be on medication for 24 hours and all signs of the irritation must be gone before returning to the center.

Bronchitis: Begins with hoarseness, cough and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful and then becomes loose.

Strep Throat: If the doctor diagnoses strep infection, the child should be on medication for 24 hours before returning to the center.

The following are contagious childhood diseases:

- Chicken pox
- Impetigo
- Lice or scabies
- Ringworm or other fungus infections
- Pinworms
- Giardia or other parasites
- Strep throat
- Skin rashes
- Pink eye
- Sinus infection (green or yellow drainage from sinus)
- Cold with fever

Some common childhood diseases and guidelines for when the child may return to the center is listed below:

<u>Disease/Illness:</u>	<u>May not return to the center until:</u>
Chicken Pox	When all lesions have dried or scabbed over (5-7 days)
Impetigo	After lesions have healed
Measles	Return is advised by a physician
Conjunctivitis	Return is advised by a physician
Ringworm (in scalp)	Doctor's statement indicating condition has been treated with medication
Scarlet Fever	Adequately treated and temperature is completely gone
Mumps	All swelling has disappeared or upon the advice of a physician
Strep Throat	Adequately treated and temperature is completely gone
Whooping Cough	On the advice of a physician and the cough is completely gone

Head Start reserves the right to send the child home and/or require a note from the child's physician before re-admitting him/her into the center under these conditions.

IMMUNIZATIONS

To attend Head Start your child MUST have a current immunization certificate (form #3231) and he/she MUST maintain all shots required by the Georgia Health Laws. During the year, please forward update immunization information to your Family Service Worker. This information will be kept in your child's folder. The Health & Nutrition Specialists will also keep a copy for an annual inspection that is conducted by the County Board of Health. If your child's certificate is not current, he/she will not be able to attend classes until it is updated.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Prescribed medication may be administered. However, staff must check to ensure that it is in the original container, is not expired, the name of the child/dosage to be administered, the name of the prescribing doctor listed on the original container and has written parental consent. Staff will observe and report any side effects from medication. The Site Director or assigned staff will administer medicine. Also, staff will log all medications given on a Medication Form. All medications kept at the center must be always kept in a locked box away from access to children. All empty or unused medication containers are returned to the parent. Medications to control fever will not be administered (children with a fever are considered sick and are to stay home).

SAFETY AND INCIDENT REPORTS

Health and Safety is everyone's business in our Head Start Program. We encourage all parents to report any health and safety hazards to Site Director, Family Service Worker or child's teacher. It is very important to note unusual or strange circumstances that may cause an accident or become a safety issue. Staff members are expected to ensure materials and equipment are safe, clean, and sanitized and to teach children to care for the materials, equipment, and facilities. Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, strollers, and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children must meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or the American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM)

If necessary, a Daily Health Check will be completed by the child's teacher. This report documents any unusual signs, marks or bruises that a child may have when he/she arrives. It also documents things such as a sore that is not healing properly, or if your child is unusually irritable without any apparent reason. We also keep Incident Reports on your child, if necessary. If your child gets a minor scratch, bump or bruise while in school, we will note it on the incident report and give a copy to you. All incident reports are kept confidential and signed by the Site Director.

AUTHORIZATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL TREATMENT

Parents must sign consent forms allowing their child to receive Emergency Medical/Dental treatment, if necessary. In the event the parent or emergency contact cannot be located, the consent form can be used to seek treatment until the parent or guardian arrives.

ACCIDENTS

Minor accidents requiring first aid will be treated in the Site Director's office. If the child sustains any type of head injury, bump or broken skin, the child's parent must be notified by the Family Service Worker, Site Director or child's teacher immediately. The teacher must prepare an Incident Report immediately after the child is treated and it must be signed by the Site Director. The original will go to the child's parent, a copy will be placed in the child's file; a copy will be given to the Site Director and a copy will go to the Health & Nutrition Specialist. First aid will consist of a cold compress when appropriate. Open wounds may be cleaned using soap and water only. A non-medicated band aide or sterile cloth may be used to cover the exposed area. Under no circumstances are topical medications or sprays to be applied.

Serious accidents might occur inside the center or on the playground. The first step is for the staff member to assess the extent of the injury. If the child is not able to be moved, the following procedures will be followed:

- * If the child has sustained a head, neck or spinal cord injury, has an obvious leg or arm fracture or is unconscious, a staff member will call 911 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the parent/guardian immediately.
 - * If the child has none of the above and can be moved, the child's parent/guardian can choose to transport the child to the doctor or emergency room.
 - * The Site Director will call ahead to alert the emergency room or doctor with pertinent information.
 - * Emergency records will be sent to the hospital with the adult accompanying the child if it is not the parent or legal guardian.
 - * If the child is not accompanied by a parent/guardian or emergency contact person, an Early Head Start/ Head Start staff person will accompany the child in the EMS vehicle.
- Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES are staff to transport an injured child.**

HOLIDAYS, SCHOOL CLOSINGS & CELEBRATIONS INCLEMENTS WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Severe winter storms are usually forecast far enough in advance to allow for preparation. Clayton County Early Head Start/Head Start will follow the decision of the Clayton County Public Schools in determining school delays or closure for inclement weather. For example, if Clayton County Public Schools is operating on a 2-hour delay, the children in our program will operate on a 2-hour delay. Parents are encouraged to listen to the local news or radio for school closings.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Young children can be over stimulated by the consumerism associated with major holidays (Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc.) The program is interested in facilitating an environment which offers meaningful experiences for children so there is not an emphasis on specific holiday celebrations or activities. Children will be exposed to meaningful experiences within their own family traditions, which they will be asked to share with the class. Conversations about the diversity of ways that people celebrate is encouraged and will be included as part of our multicultural and anti-bias curriculum.

END OF YEAR/EXIT CELEBRATION/INTERNATIONAL DAY

At the end of each program year, Clayton County CSA Inc. Early Head Start/Head Start program celebrate our uniqueness and our differences by showing appreciation to the children, families and the community that we serve through Diversity Day activities. This event includes a parade of countries, games and field day activities for the children and families. Also, community vendors are onsite to offer an array of information and resources for families. It is always our intent to provide developmentally age-appropriate activities to the children that we serve. Children that leave the Early Head Start program to attend Head Start and/or children who leave the Head Start Program to attend Kindergarten in the fall are simply TRANSITIONING to the next level; therefore; the Clayton County CSA Head Start/Early Head Start program does not conduct ANY type of GRADUATION ceremonies.

This also includes CAP & GOWN PICTURES. Please be informed that activities such as Graduation and Graduation picture taking are “PROHIBITED”.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE/ SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The long-term goal for children enrolled in the program is to provide a setting where children can slowly develop a sense of inner self-control; that they can begin to understand the reasons for limits that are set and develop a sense of both being respected and respecting other’s rights and feelings.

When behavior problems arise, staff is encouraged to look at classroom routines, the environment and individual needs of the child in order to help the child overcome the behavior. Classrooms are also equipped with behavior modification kits used by teaching staff to assist children in controlling their behavior. Parents are also expected and may be required to assist with their child’s uncontrollable behavior by volunteering in the classroom to provide extra assistance to the teaching staff if deemed necessary by the Mental Health Consultant.

It is important for all adults to be aware of the language, the tone of voice and the manner of speech used when working with young children. Providing each child with choices, foreseeing problems and responding to their needs immediately enables us to help the child positively without having to use direct discipline. When opportunities arise to praise and encourage appropriate behavior with positive, specific statement such as, “Look how high you are building the blocks”, or “Thank you for helping set the table.” The teacher will set few, clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children to help children to know what is expected.

The program will limit the use of suspension due to child’s behavior. Temporary suspension will be the last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

Before the program determines whether a temporary suspension is necessary, the program will engage with mental health consultant, collaborate with parents, and utilized appropriate community resources. If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, the program will help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible, while ensuring child safety.

One of the goals of guidance and discipline is to help children develop the necessary skills for problem solving. Discipline is the external tool to help children develop internal control. Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing the consequences of their behavior.

TIME OUT

Clayton County Head Start Program DOES NOT support the use of “traditional” time out. Positive statements such as, “Do you need to be alone for a while, should be used to help the child recognize the need to quiet himself/herself. Other statements such as, “This seems to be hard for you right now, can I help you find something else to do?” allows children a choice in choosing a more appropriate activity for that time. Children may be invited to

work independently for a short time in order to gain self-control, and in those cases, the child has an open invitation from the teacher to return to the group when he/she feels ready. At any time, a child is allowed to have some quiet time alone, he/she **MUST BE** supervised and monitored by one of the teaching staff and the child **MUST** be engaged in some type of quiet activity, (books, soft toys, audio listening). If the child refuses to participate in quiet activities provided, the teacher must stay near and close until he settles down enough to rejoin the group.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (PROHIBITED ACTIONS)

- a. Children shall not be subject to any form of corporal punishment, including rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or spanking.
- b. Children shall not be subject to any form of emotional abuse, including name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or his family, or using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens the child.
- c. Withholding of food, rest or bathroom activities.
- d. Unsupervised isolation.
- e. Traditional “Time Out” procedures.
- f. Any type of punishment hazardous to the physical, emotional, or mental health of the child.
- g. Toileting habits, or the lack of, will not be the cause of punishment in any form.
- h. Yelling or raising voice (unless the child is in some type of danger, such as running into the street and traffic is coming).

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT (PROHIBITED ACTIONS)

The Clayton County CSA, Inc. Early Head Start/Head Start Program will not allow the following:

- a) No Threatening of Staff, Parents, or Children.
- b) No Physical/Verbal Abuse or Punishment of your children or other children in the program.
- c) No Screaming in Anger; No Frightening or Humiliating Punishment.
- d) No Smoking on or inside the premises.
- e) Not Abiding by Safety Policy
- f) No Quarreling with other Parents or Staff (Please refer all complaints or issues to the Site Director or Family Service Workers).
- g) No Violating the Confidentiality Policy
- h) Adhere to the “**DRESS CODE**” (No Pajamas, House Robe, and Sagging or Loosely Hanging Pants exposing your undergarment. **ALL MEN ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A BELT WITH THEIR PANTS.** No Clothing with suggestive, derogatory, non-therapeutic, objectionable slogans or insignia printed on it. No clothing that promotes or advertises tobacco or alcohol products. No ripped or torn clothing.
- i) No Cell Phone Usage Inside the Building Unless an EMERGENCY.
- j) Do Not Allow Children to Bring Toys, Jewelry, Food, or Snack from Home (**PLEASE CHECK YOUR CHILD BOOK BAG DAILY**).

- k) No Swearing/Cursing Inside or Outside the Premises.
- l) No Early Pick-Up or Late Pick-Up WITHOUT Proper Notification or Approval. (Please see Site Director or Family Service Worker).

It is our school policy and Georgia State Law that children must not be physically or emotionally abused or punished. Parents must abide by this policy when at any Early Head Start/Head Start center.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY: IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING

All staff members are MANDATED by law to report any suspected abuse and neglect. This is in accordance with the Child Abuse Reporting Act. We will not be able to let a parent know if a report has been made so that Child Protective Services is able to investigate. Our reporting does not place blame; we only report signs and symptoms of suspected abuse or neglect.

In accordance with both Federal/State Regulations, all staff working in facilities in which children are cared for, including the Clayton County Early Head Start/Head Start Program, is required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to an agency designated to receive and investigate reports.

REPORTABLE SITUATIONS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

1. Continuous bruises, sores or other injuries observed on the child's body, even though the source or event of injury is unknown.
2. Abandonment of a child by a parent or guardian.
3. Suspected sexual abuse.
4. Absence of proper parental control or subsistence, education, medical or other care of control necessary for the child's well-being.

Early Head Start/Head Start program parents and families are informed of laws regarding child abuse and neglect reporting procedures. The Family Service Workers or Site Director provides this information at enrollment and continuously throughout the program. Training on the detection of abuse and neglect, as well as the program's reporting procedure is reviewed annually for employees and parents. All new employees are trained on child abuse and neglect identification and reporting during the pre-employment orientation.

NOTE: If you are aware that your child has been accidentally injured while in your care (after school hours, weekends etc.), PLEASE make sure you inform your child's teacher upon entrance into the classroom the following school day. This act of concern protects ALL of us from the accusation of child abuse.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF FILES

All files of Head Start children are confidential. Site Director, Family Service Workers, Specialists, Therapists, Teachers, Federal Reviewers and other approved staff are the only people who have access to these files. Parents have the right to view their child's file at any time during normal business hours. All persons viewing files MUST sign a Record of Access form. This form is attached to your child's individual file.

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Clayton County Head Start/Early Head Start will not release information from a child's record or file without the parent signing the Release of Information Form. Parents have the right not to sign the release. The consent is good for one year from the date signed and shall be revocable at any time.

The parent may choose to sign a release allowing Early Head Start and/or Head Start staff to disclose specifically identified information to other providers/agencies if:

1. The release lists the specific agencies, providers or individuals to whom information may be given.
2. The release specifies the type of information that will be given and the form (video or audio tape, written report, oral report etc.).
3. The parent is given an opportunity to limit the information provided under the release, and to limit the agencies, providers or persons with whom information may be shared.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

We provide educational services to children with disabilities. If your child has been evaluated as having a disability, contact the Site Director upon enrollment. You will be asked to provide copies of all assessments or evaluations done on your child. This information will be given to the Disabilities & Mental Health Specialist who will also share this information with the Education Specialist. The information you provide will be kept confidential. All newly enrolled children will receive a Developmental screening (Ages & Stages Questionnaire-ASQ) days after entrance into the program which will be used to assist staff in planning your child's developmental needs and educational growth. If the result of the screening yields disability concerns in academic learning or behavior, with your consent, Early Head Start/Head Start will assist you in getting to the appropriate referral agency for further evaluation. The teacher will first discuss the disability with the Family Service Worker, Site Director and parent. From there, the teacher will do an In-house referral to the Disabilities & Mental Health Specialist for screening and follow-up. The Disabilities & Mental Health Specialist will stay in close contact with the Education Specialist for support throughout the process especially if the disability concern is of the academic spectrum. The program will work closely with the parents, the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, and other services partners, as appropriate, to implement transition services that include at minimum: For children with IFSP transitioning out of EHS, ensure appropriate steps are undertaken in a timely and appropriate manner to determine the child's eligibility of services under Part B of IDEA; and For children with an IEP who are

transition out of Head Start to kindergarten, ensure steps are undertaken in a timely and appropriate manner to support the child and family as they transition to a new setting.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Public law 94-142: the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed by Congress in 1975 to establish a “right to education” for all handicapped children.”

Public Law 99-457: Enacted by congress in 1986, this law extends the provisions of Public Law (P.L.) 94-142 to children from birth through age five.

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part B, Local Education Agencies and Part C Early Intervention Infant/Toddler Programs)

Children are eligible for services if they are professionally diagnosed as meeting one of the following categories of disabilities:

- * Hearing Impairments/Deaf
- * Orthopedic Impairments
- * Developmental Impairments
- * Speech/Language Impairments
- * Visual Impairments/Blind
- * Traumatic Brain Injury
- * Autism
- * Specific Learning Disabilities
- * Intellectual Disabilities
- * Physical Disabilities
- * Emotional/Behavior Disorder
- * Other Health Impairments

Inclusion in an Early Head Start/Head Start setting provides children with disabilities, an opportunity to learn, play and live with non-disabled children. Inclusion helps children develop healthy attitudes about each other and themselves and starts them down the path toward becoming responsible, aware participants in adult society.

PARENT/COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Head Start was founded in 1965 with the belief that the child’s development depends on caring adults spending quality time with their children. Early Head Start and Head Start believes that the parents are the child’s first and most important teacher because they are the most significant adults in his/her life. It is our goal to promote the parent/child relationship and help parents in the difficult task of child rearing. We do this partly by using volunteers. Some are parents; others are people from the community. We use our volunteers in every area of the school. Many classroom and program activities provide opportunities for parent and community involvement.

Families will be encouraged to visit and participate as a volunteer at any time. In this manner, families can gain a deeper understanding of their child and the Head Start program.

PARENTS CAN VOLUNTEER FOUR WAYS:

1. Parents working with their children at home.
2. Parent-sponsored activities in the program.
3. Parent participation in the decision-making process (i.e. Policy Council, Advisory Committee or some other committee).
4. Volunteering in the classroom or in some other part of the program.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

Detailed records are kept on the number of hours you volunteer or any in-kind contributions (i.e. toys, books, etc.), and from these records we recognize our volunteers yearly for their outstanding contributions to the school. Staff will ensure that any parent or person that volunteers on a regular basis (more than twice a week on continuous basis) must show documentation of TB screen and criminal background check. These actions will not be a requirement for occasional volunteers.

Parents who meet the minimum job qualifications are given preferential consideration for employment. They are urged to donate their time and unique services to the Early Head Start/ Head Start Program. They can serve as substitute teachers, classroom volunteers, office workers, or other areas in the school. Parents are always welcome in the classroom. However, in a few instances, the child may be best served if the parent works in a classroom other than the one his/her child is in, or another part of the program.

The benefits of volunteering or working in the Early Head Start/Head Start Program are many. A parent or community volunteer will gain experience that may be useful in a future or current job. Early Head Start/Head Start honors volunteers in special Awards ceremonies each year. For more information about volunteering, contact you're Site Director or our Family and Community Partnership Specialist at 404-363-6710.

Note: Does Parent Volunteers need a background check? Per the State regulations of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, ANY volunteer, including a parent volunteer, who performs consistent * services for the Center shall be considered an Employee and must have a satisfactory criminal background check determination. The term Consistent is defined as, any repeated arrangement that occurs more than once in a fiscal quarter. A fiscal quarter is defined as "Every Three (3) months."

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Volunteer time is given to Early Head Start/Head Start by parents or community members cooperating in the following ways:

- Parents accompany children for medical and dental appointments.
- Parents accompany children on field trips.
- Parents volunteer as assistants in classrooms, attend meetings and workshops.
- Parents or other family members take an active part in participating with assisting the child/children complete their Home Center Activities.
- Parents provide transportation for other parents.

POLICY COUNCIL-SHARED GOVERNANCE

Parents can express an interest and possibly be elected to be members of the Policy Council and attend meetings. Parents may attend training sessions that are planned for them, including out-of-town conferences.

POLICY COUNCIL

The Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council participates in shared governance of Head Start. The Policy Council functions as a link to parent committees in communicating with parents enrolled in the Early Head Start/ Head Start program. Policy Council members operate as the voice for the parents who have children currently enrolled in the program. The Policy Council is made up of 51% parents and 49% community members. A parent and an alternate member are elected from the center and one from every 20 children for each child care site and meet once a month. Policy Council members receive formal training on their roles and responsibilities. The Policy Council representative's role is to express the ideas and viewpoints of the parents at the center they represent.

Policy Council members cannot be a Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start employee, nor can they be related to any Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start employee by blood or marriage. There is a lifetime limit of three (3) one year terms to serve on the Policy Council.

PARENT COMMITTEES

Parents are automatically on the parent committee. Parent committees are formed at the center level for parent participation. Every parent who has a currently enrolled child is a member of the parent committee. Other committees such as the Newsletter, Health Advisory Committee, Education Advisory Committee, etc. also ensure input in the decision-making processes that involve their children's education.

PARENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities and services.
- Plan, conduct and participate in informal, as well as formal programs and activities for parents and staff (e.g., center parent committee meetings, family picnics, family field trips, etc.).
- Play a vital role in recruiting and interviewing employees by helping determine how and where to recruit potential employees when needed and to participate in the interview process.
- Assist in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education.
- Identify how volunteers and community resources can extend program services.
- Suggest where to look for community volunteers and resources.
- Collaborate with local foundations and other organizations to advocate on behalf of low-income family needs.

- Locate resources to carry out program activities as part of the matching non-federal share.
- Bring parents together to share common interest.
- Work with the Policy Council to support program development and implementation.
- Plan programs and activities for parents and staff. Parent Committees are encouraged to discover and discuss what parents would like to do, what they would like to learn and to discuss how ideas can be realized with or without staff assistance.
- Assist in securing funding, recruit parents, and other resources to support desired parent driven activities.

PARENT ACTIVITY FUND

The purpose of this fund will be explained during Center/Parent Committees Meetings. Parents will be encouraged to use the money for educational purposes at their child's center upon approval by the Policy Council.

CLAYTON COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES AUTHORITY, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS (GOVERNING BOARD)

The Clayton County Community Services Authority, Inc. Board of Directors has the administrative and fiscal responsibility for the Clayton County Head Start/Early Head Start Program. As the Governing Board for the Head Start/Early Head Start Program, the Clayton / Rockdale County Head Start/Early Head Start, Board of Directors is a partner in the shared governance of the Program.

COMPLAINT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

If you have a concern about your child's development, we encourage you to discuss it first, with your child's teacher. It is important that you discuss with your child's teacher and Family Service Worker, any concerns that you may have involving behavior, activities, health or emotional well-being. The more information you share about your child, the better we can care for your child and help him/her develop his/her learning skills.

It is our policy to work closely with you and your child to create a positive learning experience. We encourage you to share comments and concerns with Early Head Start/Head Start staff. Your concerns will always be addressed. We respect your rights as parents, and we ask that you respect us as childcare providers.

Program administrators WILL NOT TOLERATE blatant disrespect of any staff member. Should this occur, your child may be suspended from receiving future childcare services from Early Head Start /Head Start.

If you are dissatisfied with any part of our program, please discuss it first with your child's teacher or Family Service Worker. If you are still dissatisfied, then please see the Site Director. If you are still unsatisfied, you can request to see the Head Start/Early Head Start

Director. You may file a formal written complaint by completing the Parent Complaint Form on page 30. The Head Start/Early Head Start Director will respond directly to your complaint.

PARTICIPANTS FAIR HEARING PROCEDURES

The Clayton County CSA, Inc. will ensure that the Board of Directors and the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council members are fully involved in any complaint that individuals has against the agency. Upon the assurance that fair hearings shall be held for all dissatisfied individuals, upon their request, who are applying for assistance under this program where one or more of the following situations occur. If the problem is not resolved with the program or grantee, all community complaints will be brought before the Policy Council and the Board of Directors. The following are grounds for a hearing:

1. The applicant is denied services.
2. The application is neither denied nor approved within forty-five (45) days after application, unless the delay was caused by the applicant's lack of cooperation in providing necessary and reasonable evidence.
3. The payment (if applicable) is less than the applicant believes it should be.
4. The payment (if applicable) is to be made in a lesser amount than the applicant was notified of earlier.

You may request a hearing by applying to the administrative office of the Clayton County CSA, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start program where you completed your application. The agency will appoint a hearing officer to assure that these hearings meet the following standards.

1. Hearing shall be held in a place reasonably convenient to the claimant.
2. The claimant shall be afforded an opportunity to review the case file.
3. The hearing officer(s) shall be an agency representative who is not involved in the decision being appealed.
4. The claimant shall be properly advised of and guaranteed of their rights, which include:
 - The right to permit a representative to accompany him/her to the hearing.
 - The right to present oral and written statements and other evidence.
 - The right to have witnesses subpoenaed.
 - The right to cross-examine witnesses.
 - The right to bring an interpreter if needed.
5. All testimony will be given under oath.
6. All hearings shall be recorded, and the decision based on the record.

It is the intent of the agency to make certain that all appeals and/or requests for hearings are responded to in an orderly, equitable and timely manner. Therefore, when an applicant is dissatisfied because of one or more of the reasons cited, it shall be the responsibility of the Clayton County CSA, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start program to provide for an informal conference between the applicant and/or his/her representative and the Executive Director or his designee, provided that such designee has not been involved in the decision being appealed. The informal conference must take place within three (3) working days from the date of the request for a Fair Hearing. The agency should render a decision during this conference unless additional information is required.

If the applicant is satisfied with the decision rendered in the informal conference, then the agency shall notify the applicant in writing of its decision and the action taken to carry out the decision.

If the applicant is not satisfied with the decision rendered in the informal conference the local agency official shall advise the applicant, prior to adjournment of the informal conference of the procedures for utilizing the next step of the preliminary appeal.

Any applicant seeking assistance or service who is dissatisfied with a decision rendered by the Clayton County CSA, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start Program at this point the Board of Directors and Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council will be involved and make appropriate recommendations for resolution. A dissatisfied applicant shall have sixty (60) days from the date of application to file an appeal with the Executive Director of the agency, or his designee, based on the negative decision rendered by the agency.

**CLAYTON/ROCKDALE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES AUTHORITY, INC
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START/PRE-K PROGRAM**

PARENT COMPLAINT FORM

Name of Complainant: _____ **Center:** _____

Address:

Telephone Number: (Home) _____ **(Work)** _____ **(Cell)** _____
Best time to call: _____ **am/pm**

Please describe the complaint: (date, place, who, etc.)

Please state the action that you think would resolve this:

Signature

Date

**CLAYTON/ROCKDALE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES
AUTHORITY INC. HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START / PRE-K
PROGRAM**

PARENT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

I parent/guardian of _____ participating in the Clayton / Rockdale County Head Start / Early Head Start/ Pre-K Program, understand that I have rights and responsibilities defined by the program and will adhere to them during the school year.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PARENTAL RIGHTS VERY CAREFULLY:

1. **I AM** responsible for the delivery and pick-up of my child at the Head Start / Early Head Start /Pre-K Program each day. **I will observe the delivery time of 7:30am (EHS); 8:00am (HS) and the pickup time of 2:30pm** on the following days, Monday through Friday; holidays excluded. However, children enrolled in the Pre-K Program are required to be in class promptly at 8:00am and picked up promptly at 2:30pm. **(NO EXCEPTIONS)**.
2. **I AGREE** that my child will attend the program daily, unless he/she is ill, and I also understand that regular attendance is defined by the Federal Government as a way for the program to continue to receive money to operate.
3. **I AGREE** that my child will remain at the center for the full day of operation (EHS -7:30am-2:30pm or HS- 8:00am-2:30pm) on the following days, Monday through Friday. My child will receive the following meals while in Head Start's care, breakfast, lunch and snack. I understand it is important for my child to remain the entire day in order to receive the full benefit of the program.
4. **I AGREE** to notify the center in the morning if my child is unable to attend due to illness. I also agree to notify the center if my child has an appointment of any kind that will cause him/her to be late or absent.
5. **I AGREE** to the Head Start / Early Head Start staff making Home Visits at my convenience, during the school year or agree to meet at another mutual location.
6. **I AGREE** to my child going on all field trips planned by the center as long as I receive information prior to the trip, such as the date, time, place, departure and return. I also understand I may accompany my child on these trips by making arrangements with the Head Start Site Director as it relates to children in Head Start and Pre-K. **(NOTE: TRANSPORTATION MAY NOT ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE FOR PARENTS ON ALL FIELD TRIPS. EARLY HEAD START**

CHILDREN ARE EXCLUDED FROM FIELD TRIPS).

7. **I AGREE** to notify the center of any change in my address, telephone numbers and work location etc. to be reached during school hours in case of an emergency. I also agree to contact the center in advance, if I have any persons (other than those listed on my pick-up list) pick-up my child and will inform them to submit their identification upon arrival.
8. **I AGREE** to participate in the Head Start/ Early Head Start/ Pre-K program:
- As a volunteer at the center if my schedule permits.
 - Attend Parent Committee Meetings monthly whenever possible.
 - Attend training sessions and workshops whenever possible.

I FULLY UNDERSTAND THESE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND WILL ADHERE TO THEM DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

PROTECTION OF THE PRIVACY FOR CHILD'S RECORDS

CONSENT TO RELEASE MY CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL RECORDS (Minor Under 18)

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides certain rights to parents of students under 18 years old concerning the privacy of, and access to, the child's personally identifiable information, including Educational Records. Except as otherwise permitted by law, no educational agency may disclose any personally identifiable information contained in your child's files without your signed and written consent unless a specific exception is provided in FERPA. If you want/will allow an educational agency to disclose your student's information to another person or non-custodial parent, you must complete, date, and sign this form and return it to Clayton County Head Start/ Early Head Start & Pre-K Program.

YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

(please print or type):

Student's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
School Name: _____ School Site: _____
Your name: _____ Relationship to Student: _____
Address: _____
Home Phone#: _____ Cell Phone#: _____
Work Phone#: _____ Email Address: _____

AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

I, _____, HEREBY AUTHORIZE MY CHILD'S SCHOOL, Clayton / Rockdale County Head Start/ Early Head Start & Pre-K Program, TO RELEASE ANY AND ALL OF MY CHILD'S DEMOGRAPHIC AND ACADEMIC DATA, INCLUDING NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, GRADE LEVEL, GENDER, ETHNICITY, DISCIPLINE AND ATTENDANCE INFORMATION, FOR ANY PURPOSE RELATED TO SCHOOL DISTRICT. I UNDERSTAND THAT MY CHILD'S NAME WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED IN ANY REPORT; HIS/HER DATA WILL BE AGGREGATED FOR REPORTING PURPOSES.

I acknowledge by my signature below that although I am not required to release any of my child's Educational Records, I am giving consent to release my child's personal information as indicated above to _____. I understand that this consent will remain in effect until and unless I revoke such consent in writing and the revocation is received by the Clayton County Head Start/ Early Head Start & Pre-K Program.

Parent's Signature Date

RETURN the completed form to:

(Appropriate on-site Family Community Partnership Specialist at the Clayton / Rockdale County Head Start/EHS & Pre-K Program)

**CLAYTON/ROCKDALE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES AUTHORITY, INC
HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START/ PRE-K PROGRAM**

PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT VERIFICATION

This is to verify that I have received a copy of the Clayton County Early Head Start Parent Handbook:

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name _____

Center _____

Teacher(s) _____

Classroom _____

By Signing this Parent Handbook, I acknowledge that I will adhere to all policies and procedures of the Clayton / Rockdale County CSA, Inc. Early Head Start/Head Start Program.

Parent Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Site Director Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Witness Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Head Start & Pre-K Program - Clayton

CHILDREN'S CALENDAR / Teaching/ Cook Assistant/Floaters/ Receptionist

2024 -2025

August 1, 2024	Head Start & Pre - K Children Return
September 2, 2024	Children & Staff Out Out - Labor Day
October 7-11, 2024	Children Out - Fall Break / Staff In- Service
November 5, 2024	Election Day –School Closed –Children Out Teacher Work Day
November 25 -29, 2024	Children & Staff Out – Thanksgiving Holiday
December 23 -31, 2024	Children & Staff Out - Winter Holiday
January 1, 2025	Children & Staff Out New Year Holiday
January 2-3, 2025	Staff In -Service
January 6, 2025	Children Return from Winter Holidays
January 20, 2025	Children & Staff Out – MLK Holiday
February 17, 2025	Children & Staff Out –President’s Day
April 7-11, 2025	Children & Staff Out – Spring Break
May 23, 2025	Head Start & Pre –K Children Last Day of School
May 26, 2025	Children & Staff Out - Memorial Day
June 2, 2025	10 Month Staff Last Day

Clayton County Community Services Authority Inc.
Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership -Clayton

CHILDREN'S CALENDAR / Teaching/ Cook Assistant/Floaters/ Receptionist

2024 -2025

August 1, 2024	Early Head Start & Pre - K Children Return
September 2, 2024	Children & Staff Out Out - Labor Day
October 7-11, 2024	Children Out - Fall Break / Staff In- Service
November 5, 2024	Election Day –School Closed –Children Out Teacher Work Day
November 25 -29, 2024 Holiday	Children /& Staff Out – Thanksgiving
December 23 -31, 2024	Children / & Staff Out - Winter Holiday
January 1, 2025	Children / & Staff Out New Year Holiday
January 2-3, 2025	Staff In -Service
January 6, 2025	Children Return from Winter Holidays
January 20, 2025	Children & Staff Out – MLK Holiday
February 17, 2025	Children & Staff Out –President’s Day
April 7-11, 2025	Children & Staff Out – Spring Break
May 23, 2025	Head Start & Pre –K Children Last Day of School
May 26, 2025	Children & Staff Out - Memorial Day
June 19, 2025	Juneteenth –School Closed –Children & Staff Out
June 24,2025	Children Last Day
June 27, 2025	Staff Last Day

Clayton County Community Services Authority Inc.
Head Start & Pre-K Program - Rockdale

CHILDREN'S CALENDAR / Teaching/ Cook Assistant/Floaters/ Receptionist

2024 -2025

August 1, 2024	Head Start & Pre - K Children Return
September 2, 2024	Children & Staff Out - Labor Day
September 30-October 4, 2024	Children Out- Fall Break / Staff In- Service
November 5, 2024	Election Day –School Closed –Children Out Teacher Work Day
November 25 -29, 2024	Children & Staff Out – Thanksgiving Holiday
December 23 -31, 2024	Children & Staff Out - Winter Holiday
January 1, 2025	Children & Staff Out New Year Holiday
January 2-3, 2025	Staff In -Service
January 6, 2025	Children Return from Winter Holidays
January 20, 2025	Children & Staff Out – MLK Holiday
February 17, 2025	Children & Staff Out –President's Day
April 7-11, 2025	Children & Staff Out – Spring Break
May 23, 2025	Head Start & Pre –K Children Last Day of School
May 26, 2025	Children & Staff Out - Memorial Day
June 2, 2025	10 Month Staff Last Day

Clayton County Community Services Authority Inc.
Early Head Start -Rockdale

CHILDREN'S CALENDAR / Teaching/ Cook Assistant/Floaters/ Receptionist

2024 -2025

August 1, 2024	Early Head Start & Pre - K Children Return
September 2, 2024	Children & Staff Out - Labor Day
September 30-October 4, 2024	Children Out - Fall Break / Staff In- Service
November 5, 2024	Election Day –School Closed –Children Out Teacher Work Day
November 25 -29, 2024	Children & Staff Out – Thanksgiving Holiday
December 23 -31, 2024	Children & Staff Out - Winter Holiday
January 1, 2025	Children & Staff Out New Year Holiday
January 2-3, 2025	Staff In -Service
January 6, 2025	Children Return from Winter Holidays
January 20, 2025	Children & Staff Out – MLK Holiday
February 17, 2025	Children & Staff Out –President’s Day
April 7-11, 2025	Children & Staff Out – Spring Break
May 23, 2025	Head Start & Pre –K Children Last Day of School
May 26, 2025	Children & Staff Out - Memorial Day
June 19, 2025	Juneteenth-School Closed-Children & Staff Out
June 24, 2025	Early Head Start Children Last Day
June 27, 2025	11 Month Staff Last Day