



# Family Handbook

## 2023-2024



<i>Blacksburg Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 552-0490</i>
<i>Christiansburg Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 381-7559</i>
<i>Floyd Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 745-2120</i>
<i>Rich Creek Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 726-2700</i>
<i>Pearisburg Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 921-2355</i>
<i>Pulaski Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 994-5740</i>
<i>Radford Head Start Center</i>	<i>(540) 731-4107</i>
<i>Early Learning Center @ NRCC</i>	<i>(540) 674-3600 ext. 4246</i>

*New River Community Action, Inc. Head Start Program  
Administrative Office  
1093 East Main Street  
Radford, VA 24141  
(540) 633-5133*

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents:	2
Policy Council and Parent Committee:	4
Positive Solutions for Families Parenting Curriculum:	5
Parent Rights and Responsibilities:	5
Creative Curriculum:	7
Class Schedule:	9
Screening and Assessments of On-Going Child Educational Developmental Gains:	9
Growing Up is Hard to Do:	9
Successful Transition:	9
Outside Play:	9
At Home Learning Plan and Parent-Child Homework:	10
Holidays and Celebrations:	10
Fieldtrips:	10
Rest time & naps:	10
Bathroom & Toileting:	11
Classroom Adults:	11
TB test for volunteers:	11
Services to Children with Disabilities:	12
Assessment and Referral:	13
LICENSING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:	13
Building for the Future:	15
The Virginia WIC Program:	16
INSURANCE POSSIBILITIES:	16
Guidance for Inclement Weather:	18
Challenging Behavior Protocol:	19
Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct:	20
Release of Child:	21
Arrival & Departure:	21
Late Pick-Up Policy:	21
Weapons Policy:	22
Tobacco Free Policy:	22
Child Abuse and Neglect:	23
Registered sex offenders:	23
Ill or Injured Child Procedures:	24
Center and Classroom Safety During Infectious Diseases:	24
Medication at the Head Start Center:	26
Communicable Disease Chart:	27
COVID-19 Vaccination Information:	28
Pedestrian Safety:	30
Community Disaster Plan:	31
NRCA Head Start Community Grievance/Complaint Policy 1304.50(d) (2) (v):	32
Client Appeal Process:	33

# HEAD START'S MISSION STATEMENT

Head Start is a comprehensive early education program for children from at-risk backgrounds from birth to age 5. From early math and reading skills to confidence and resilience, we help children build the abilities they need to be successful in school and life. Each Head Start program engages parents as equal partners with their child's teacher and works closely with the local community to adapt to what each area needs. Every child has the ability to succeed, and together, we're supporting more children, families, and communities on their path to success.

## WELCOME to a wonderful year of Head Start!



This handbook is offered to your family as a resource to provide you with important information pertaining to your child's experience in Head Start. Head Start recognizes that you are your child's most important teacher. **YOUR CHILD NEEDS YOU!** Studies show that children whose parents or guardians become involved in their pre-school program have a more successful school experience all through school. In fact, 60% of a child's academic achievement can be directly linked to their parent's involvement in their child's education.

Our Head Start program offers many opportunities for families to have a significant experience while their child is enrolled in the program. A variety of supports are offered throughout the school year. In addition to classroom teachers, each Head Start family has the special opportunity to work with a Family Health Advocate to achieve family and child goals. We commit to create and sustain a partnership of collaboration with all Head Start parents and guardians.

We are pleased to share this school year with your child and family.

## THE EARLY YEARS MATTER

90% of a **Child's Brain** Develops By **Age 5**. At birth, the average baby's **brain** is about a quarter of the size of the average adult **brain**. Incredibly, it doubles in size in the first year. It keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by **age 3** and 90% – nearly full grown – by **age 5**.

[Brain Development - First Things First](https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/)

<https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/>



Head Start enrollment **requirements** include the following:

- Proof of Birth
- Current Physical Exam with up-to-date immunizations
- Dental Exam completed within the past six months

Talk to your Family/Health Advocate if needing assistance in meeting these requirements.

## Policy Council and Parent Committee

### Head Start Policy Council:

The Head Start Federal Performance Standards state that families are to be active participants in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program. Families in Head Start are given the opportunity to represent their Head Start center on the Head Start Policy Council.

### The Policy Council is:

- A decision-making body of parents and community representatives.
  - New Policy Council representatives will be trained yearly to help them become familiar with all the duties they will be expected to perform.
  - Policy Council representatives from each center come together once a month for a meeting.
  - Meetings maybe held virtually to meet the requirements of social distancing and guidelines for large group meetings
  - Childcare and transportation are provided for all meetings.
- It approves or disapproves
  - The goals of the program and ways to meet them.
  - Requests for funds and the use of funds
  - Hiring of staff
- Policy Council also conducts a yearly self-evaluation/assessment of the entire program.



### Parent Center Committees:

Each parent with an enrolled child is a member of the center's Parent Committee. The Parent Committee helps plan, conduct, and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities for parents and staff.

### Board of Directors:

The New River Community Action Board of Directors provides oversight of the Head Start Program. Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public.

***Although it is not required, we hope you will join and become an active member of Policy Council!!!!!!!!!!***



## Positive Solutions for Families Parenting Curriculum

### Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.51(b)

A program must, at a minimum, offer opportunities for parents to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge and offers parents the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development.

Our Head Start program has implemented the Positive Solutions for Families parenting curriculum to meet this Head Start Performance Standard. Positive Solutions for Families information can be found at <https://challengingbehavior.org>. Positive solutions for Families provides evidence-based, user-friendly lessons to help professionals working with parents and caregivers to promote positive and effective parenting behaviors, which will, in turn, promote children's social and emotional development and address the challenging behavior of children ages 2-5 years.

Talk with your Family/Health Advocate do discuss how to take part in this strengthening caregiving practices opportunity.



### Parent Rights and Responsibilities

My rights as a Head Start parent/guardian include:

- to be recognized as my child's primary educator
- to participate in Policy Council and Parent Committee meetings which affect the planning and operation of the program
- to be welcomed in the office, classroom, meetings and special events by all staff
- to be informed regularly about my child's progress
- to always be treated with respect and dignity
- to receive information and guidance from the program that will help my child's development
- to have opportunities to learn about the total operation of the program, including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions
- to be informed about community resources that will assist in improving my family's quality of life
- to offer constructive criticism of the program and to participate in annual program evaluations
- to access my child's file during regular business hours

## Head Start Program Performance Standards 1303.23 Parental rights

### A. Inspect record.

- A parent has the right to inspect child records.
- If the parent requests to inspect child records, the program must make the child records available within a reasonable time, but no more than 45 days after receipt of request.
- If a program maintains child records that contain information on more than one child, the program must ensure the parent only inspects information that pertains to parent's child.
- The program shall not destroy a child record with an outstanding request to inspect and review the record under this section.

### B. Amend record.

- A parent has the right to ask the program to amend information in the child record that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy.
- The program must consider the parent's request and, if the request is denied, render a written decision to the parent within a reasonable time that informs the parent of the right to a hearing.

### C. Hearing.

- If the parent requests a hearing to challenge information in the child record, the program must schedule a hearing within a reasonable time, notify the parent, in advance, about the hearing, and ensure the person who conducts the hearing does not have a direct interest in its outcome.
- The program must ensure the hearing affords the parent a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues.
- If the program determines from evidence presented at the hearing that the information in the child records is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy, the program must either amend or remove the information and notify the parent in writing.
- If the program determined from evidence presented at the hearing that information in the child records is accurate, does not mislead, or otherwise does not violate the child's privacy, the program must inform the parent of the right to place a statement in the child records that either comments on the contested information or that states why the parent disagrees with the program's decision, or both.

### D. Right to copy of record.

- The program must provide a parent, free of charge, an initial copy of the child records disclosed to third parties with parental consent and, upon parent request, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties, unless the disclosure was for a court that ordered neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information furnished in response be disclosed.

### E. Right to inspect written agreements.

- A parent has the right to review any written agreements with third parties.

## Creative Curriculum

**Curriculum Philosophy:** Our program implements The Creative Curriculum. The curriculum's philosophy says that the best way to help children succeed is to teach them to be creative, confident thinkers. The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is a research-based, curriculum that reflects 5 essential ideas critical for school success.

1. Positive interactions and Relationships with adults.
2. A child's social and emotional development skills predict success in kindergarten and success later in life.
3. Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
4. The classroom environment supports quality of learning.
5. Children benefit from strong Teacher-Family Partnerships

**Use of Studies:** Throughout the year teachers will guide their classroom through several 4-6 week hands-on, project-based investigations. The topics of the studies are both exciting and engaging. They tap into children's natural curiosity, resulting in a learning environment that is both fun and intentional. The study approach helps children raise questions about the topic, and through exploration and discovery they find answers to their questions.

**Learning Content:** Creative Curriculum addresses all areas of development. It is divided into categories of learning that are aligned with state and professional standards and address development in 9 areas: Social and Emotional, Cognitive, Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Physical, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and the Arts.

**Special Support:** The Creative Curriculum allows teachers to individualize for and support every type of learner including dual-language and children with disabilities.

**Hands on Activities:** Hands-on exploration and discovery build lifelong critical thinking skills. Teachers directly teach using materials and not through sequenced activities, drills, workbooks or worksheets.

## What is AI's Pals?

The *AI's Pals* program is a social skills building program for children ages 3 to 8. *AI's Pals* includes puppets, songs, and group games that teach children to:

- Express feelings appropriately
- Use kind words
- Care about others
- Use self-control
- Think flexibly
- Accept differences
- Make friends
- Solve problems peacefully
- Cope in positive ways
- Make safe and healthy choices
- Understand that tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs are not for children

It has been shown that *AI's Pals* results in improvements in positive attitudes/behaviors and self-control; an increase in children's social and life skills; and a decrease in aggressive/antisocial behaviors.

*AI's Pals* also includes a parent component. Letters from AI are sent home regularly to inform parents about the life skills their children are learning and suggest activities parents can use to help their children practice and retain these skills. The curriculum also includes "AI-a-grams" – school-to-home messages, delivered home by the children, that recognize positive behavior noted at school. Be on the lookout!







**Research<sup>1</sup> has shown that the skills your child needs to be successful in the future are social and emotional skills!**

The more socially skilled children are, the more likely they are to succeed in school. Because this is so important for your child, we are using the Pyramid Model in our program.

**What is gained by using the Pyramid Model?**

**FAMILIES**

- Receive information on how to help promote children's social and emotional skills
- Team with teachers to help children grow and learn
- Receive support for preventing and addressing behavior problems

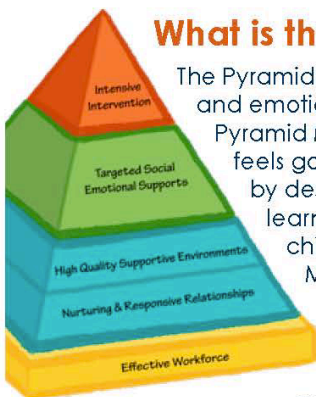
**TEACHERS**

- Are effective in helping children learn social and emotional skills
- Strengthen classroom management skills
- Have information and resources to support families

**CHILDREN**

- Increase their social and emotional skills
- Improve in their readiness for kindergarten

**What is the Pyramid Model?**



The Pyramid Model is a framework for supporting the social and emotional development of our children. The goal of the Pyramid Model is to create an environment where every child feels good about coming to school. This is accomplished by designing classrooms that promote engagement in learning and by building positive relationships among children, families, and staff. In our use of the Pyramid Model, our classroom staff will work together to ensure that all children understand behavior expectations, receive instruction in social skills, and those who are struggling receive individual support.

The Pyramid Model illustrates that the foundation for helping children develop social and emotional skills is nurturing and responsive relationships and high quality environments. The middle of the Pyramid, teaching of social and emotional skills, is provided to all children with some children receiving additional teaching and support. The top of the Pyramid shows that a few children will need the foundation, the middle AND individualized intervention to address challenging behavior.

To use the Pyramid Model, our program established a leadership team that will provide ongoing support to our staff and families. Our leadership team looks forward to sharing some of the important work we are doing, including teaching program-wide expectations, partnering with families, training staff in teaching strategies, providing classroom coaching to help teachers implement, and using data for decision-making. Stay tuned for ongoing updates about the Pyramid Model in our program!

<sup>1</sup> Jones, D. E., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105, 2283-2290.



## Class Schedule

Each classroom has their own schedule. Please refer to the schedule posted in your child's classroom.

## Screening and Assessments of On-Going Child Educational Developmental Gains

Child educational gains are measured using TSG (Teaching Strategies Gold.) Data from TSG is reviewed 3 times each year and is used to measure individual child, classroom, and program-wide educational progress. The reports help us set and plan for individual and program goals. The VKRP (Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program) is used to measure school readiness in Math, Self-Regulation, and Social Skills. The Pre-K Language and Literacy screener is used to evaluate emerging literacy concepts. It is administered 2 times per year, in the fall and in the spring, with an optional mid-year checkpoint in our blended Head Start classrooms in the public schools. We also complete a Brigance developmental screening, and a speech/language screening on each child upon enrollment. Parents will be provided with score reports from all assessments. Parents who wish to opt their child out of screenings and assessments should contact the center's site administrator for information.

## Growing Up is Hard to Do

When you see your child playing with materials, you are watching your child work hard to learn what he/she needs to know to have a bright future. A child's brain is set up to learn through play. That is why Head Start gives your children plenty of hands-on materials. It is important to know that all activities have been actually well planned to help your child learn important skills. This is done by providing materials, experiences, and interactions that are fun yet have a learning objective attached.

- Children have a specific place to store their own personal belongings such as coats and rest time materials.
- Each day the children have the opportunity to work alone, within small groups, and as part of a large group.
- Full day classrooms receive rest time and afternoon activities.

## Successful Transition

Head Start provides individual and group adjustments to ensure children transition into their preschool setting successfully. When a child begins school, we offer half days to transition students slowly into a school day. Our classroom staff teach children the schedule, routines, and expectations of their classrooms. We can individualize for a child that may be having temporary difficulty staying for a full school day. With parents' participation, we will discuss an alternative schedule and how to provide these accommodations to ensure school readiness.

## Outside Play



When weather permits the Head Start children will go outside for an hour each day. Children will not be permitted to go outside if the temperature or wind chill is below 20 degrees, or when the heat exceeds 95 degrees. Teachers will use best practices shortening the length of time depending on weather situations and how the children are dressed. *Flip flops or open toed shoes are discouraged and not best for playground play.*

## **At Home Learning Plan and Parent-Child Homework**

You are your child's first and most important teacher. Children have many opportunities throughout your daily home schedule to learn. If your child is helping you during everyday tasks like matching socks when you are folding laundry, helping clear dishes from the table, washing their hands, brushing teeth, making a snack, or going on a walk; these are all valuable learning experiences you already do. As you work and play with your child, you are teaching them. In addition to these daily learning experiences, teachers also send home weekly Homework for School Readiness activities. These activities do not have to be followed exactly, but we do hope you will use them as ideas to challenge your child so that they are kindergarten-ready when the time comes. On the back of each homework activity is a book log for you to fill out anytime you read to, or with, your child. We hope you enjoy spending time with your child doing these activities. Another benefit is that for each activity you complete with your child, Head Start receives something called, "in-kind". In-kind turns the time you spend on learning activities into dollars for our Head Start program. Please complete these activities and send homework back to school each week. In doing so, you are helping your child prepare for kindergarten and are helping to keep Head Start available for future families and children.

## **Holidays and Celebrations**

Holiday- related discussions in the classroom occur ONLY as a result of children's interests and initiative. Daily classroom routines can be interrupted by parties and celebrations and often create confusion for the children, especially those of different cultures who do not relate to the holiday or tradition. We do not have a "no Holiday" policy. What we do have is curriculum guidelines and performance standards that when followed appropriately keep holiday related activities and discussions to a minimum and appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children with which we work.

**In keeping with our Nutrition Policy and Food Safety, we do not allow families to bring any food or treats into the center to celebrate birthdays or other special occasions.**

End of the Year Celebration

Preschool graduation events with caps and gowns and related activities have strong significance in many communities. However, these kinds of events can be stressful for children, and can result in expensive costs for families and hours of practice and preparation for children and teachers. Children and families will experience these types of events when children are older and better able to understand and appreciate them. Developmentally appropriate End of Year Celebrations will be organized each year to celebrate children's growth and development.

Cultural holiday attendance exemption

Your child can be excused for celebration of non-traditional American holidays. The school calendar has days built in for breaks. In the event your family celebrates holidays that do not fall in these already scheduled school closings, your child will be excused to celebrate your family's holiday and traditions. Please inform your Family Health Advocate if your child will be absent for these holidays.

## **Fieldtrips**

Children may go on 1-2 field trips per year. You will be notified 2 weeks prior to any fieldtrip. Field trips allow children to experience their community through hands-on activities.

## **Rest time & naps**

Licensing requires that centers operating 5 or more hours a day shall have a designated rest period for at least 1 hour. A rest mat, a blanket, and a sheet will be provided for your child. After the first 30 minutes children not sleeping can engage in quiet activities.

## Bathroom & Toileting:

As a component of our comprehensive early childhood program for children, we work with children who are still in the process of becoming toilet trained. Classroom Teachers will be available to assist your child in the Head Start program and will support your child in learning to use the toilet.

- Classroom staff will respond promptly when a child requests assistance using the toilet.
- *Classroom staff will not show disapproval or punish children for any accidents. Children who have toileting accidents are NEVER degraded by harsh words or appearances of disgust. A conference between the Teacher(s) and the parent(s) will serve to establish common goals and methods for toilet-training.*
- A child's clothing will be changed immediately following a toileting accident. Soiled clothing will be sent home with the child, so that a fresh change of clothes can be sent back to the center.
- **Full sets of changes of clothing will need to be provided to the school.**

Staff members are required to wash their hands with soap and water after each toileting, and to assist children with handwashing, using soap and water.

## Classroom Adults

You will see interns, volunteers, and public-school personnel working in the classrooms. Please feel free to ask them who they are and to talk with them. We welcome everyone being involved so come on in and join us!!!

## TB test for volunteers:

**Anyone** who volunteers in our program on a regular basis (at least once a week) and/or assists with meal service are required to have a current TB (tuberculosis) test or TB risk assessment within 21 days of beginning your volunteer duties – unless you have had this test within the past year. Head Start requires a TB test/risk assessment every two years. Anyone assisting with meal service must have a current TB test/assessment before beginning those duties.



## **Mental Health Services**

Head Start Staff, Mental Health Consultants and Case Managers work together to provide Mental Health Services to families and children. A focus of on-going prevention services that promote positive Mental Health and well-being of children and adults is utilized. Crisis intervention and linkage to services will always be provided as needed. All staff work together to best meet the needs, and build upon the strengths, of families and children. Monitoring the Emotional Health of children, adults, and ourselves is as important as scheduling an annual physical. Mental Health Services are contracted through New River Valley Community Services (NRVCS) and additional services are offered to families and children.

**Mental Health Consultants** provide contractual services in our classrooms and the home, and link families with Case Management Services. They observe at least monthly in classrooms and meet with teachers and SA to provide them with resources and strategies to implement within the classroom. MHC's do not work with individual children unless they have been enrolled by their parents in Case Management Services. They can meet with parents at any time.

**NRVCS Preschool Case Managers** assist children and their families in finding medical, psychiatric, social, educational, and other services which are needed for the child to thrive in the community. This includes help with referrals to other services, assistance to appointments, and assistance in working with school staff, physicians, and other agencies. They offer tremendous parenting support to families and work with teachers to provide supports for children on their caseload.

### **Safe and Successful (S&S) Meetings**

S&S meetings are held as a supporting effort for implementation of PBIS- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Informed Practices.

S&S meetings are held for those children needing a little more support to be "Safe and Successful" and bring together Teachers, Mental Health Consultants, Family Health Advocates, Parents and Specialists to begin developing interventions or practices individualized for a specific child as a Team. S&S meetings are held to develop specific teaching strategies within the classroom and identify Home Strategies that support the learning the child is experiencing at school. Family Health Advocates will work with the family to provide parenting resources through AI's Pals and Positive Parenting Solution lessons as well as providing referrals and other resources. At these meetings we are developing effective ways to teach appropriate behavior and intervene quickly before behaviors escalate.



## **Services to Children with Disabilities**

Head Start has always had a national policy of open enrollment to all eligible children, including children with disabilities. Since 1974, each program has been required to reserve at least 10% of its enrollment opportunities for children with disabilities. Our program can be an effective inclusive environment for children with special needs, who can often learn more readily when in a group of children their own age than when placed in a separate group for only children with disabilities.

## Assessment and Referral

Within 45 days of a child's enrollment in Head Start, developmental and most health screenings are completed for that child. When children have a low score on the speech and language assessment or the developmental assessment, and/or when parents or teachers have a concern in any area, Head Start staff will meet with parents to discuss the possibility of making a referral to the local school system for further assessment. If parents are in agreement, a referral is written and signed by the parent. It is then passed on to the local school system. Through the additional school system assessments, it will be determined if a child qualifies for services through the public schools. If they do, an IEP will be written that spells out the type of services and frequency for which the child will receive them. A referral **WILL NOT** be made without the prior consent of the parents.

Throughout the referral process, parents are supported in their understanding and follow-through of the process, and in being an advocate for their child. Head Start staff, to include the Disabilities Services Specialist, will attend eligibility and IEP meetings along with parents for support of the parents, input regarding child skills and abilities, goal setting ideas, and advocacy for the parent and child.

Children should be referred if there is a delay or concern in:

- Physical (Motor) Skills – movement, balance or coordination
- Cognitive Skills – learning or problem-solving, play or pre-academic skills
- Communication Skills – language use or understanding; ability to be understood by others (articulation)
- Social/Emotional Skills – behavior, relationships with others, responsibility
- Adaptive (self-help) Skills – eating, dressing, toileting, attending to tasks

In most cases a child enrolled in Head Start will receive IEP services at the Head Start center if they are found eligible.

Sometimes children need some extra supports in their efforts to be successful such as fidget toys, special things to sit on as a disc seat or chair with arms, or visual supports such as sand timers, social stories or individual picture schedules to help them focus on a group activity or help them know what is coming next. These supports may be used by all children or individually.

Some children may benefit from more sensory related supports such as a weighted blanket, lap pad, or a chewy. Because these are much more individualized supports staff will gain parent permission to utilize sensory interventions and supports before using them as an ongoing intervention. To ensure that parents know and understand how we feel this will benefit their child and agree that it is ok to use them, staff will discuss with parents and have a release for permission to use them.

## LICENSING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Virginia Department of Education licenses child day centers and enforces the standards through announced and unannounced visits. Every effort is made to protect the rights of children in care and licensees by enforcing the standards using discretion and judgment. When appropriate, technical experts may be consulted to assure accurate compliance determination with the standards. Child day center operators regulated by these standards may request an exception (allowable variance) for any standard that creates a special hardship unless the standard is required by law or another agency's regulation. Licensees are encouraged to discuss any concerns about licensing procedures, interpretation and application of standards, or the actions of licensing personnel with the licensing inspector and, if necessary, supervisory personnel at the field or home office level. If you would have questions regarding these standards, please contact:

Office of Child Care Health and Safety (Western) Virginia Department of Education  
190 Patton Street, Suite 100 Abingdon, VA 24210  
Phone: 276-608-3758  
Email: [western.cclicensing@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:western.cclicensing@doe.virginia.gov)



**Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education licensing standards:  
Child Supervision**

As a reminder and for clarification, ***no child is left unattended at any time during the Head Start day.*** This includes when the child arrives or leaves and during bathroom breaks.

**8VAC20-780-340. Supervision of children:**

1. Children under 10 years of age shall always be within **actual sight and sound** supervision of staff, except that staff need only be able to hear a child who is using the restroom provided that:
  - a. There is a “system” to assure that individuals who are not staff members or persons allowed to pick up a child in care do not enter the restroom area while in use by the children; and
  - b. Staff will check on a child who has not returned from the restroom after five minutes.

**Acceptable and Unacceptable Discipline Methods:**

**We are required by the Virginia Department of Education Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers to inform parents of acceptable/unacceptable discipline methods. The following guidelines are taken from those standards.**

**8VAC20-780-400. Behavioral Guidance:**

1. In order to promote the child’s physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being and growth, staff and volunteers shall interact with the child and one another to provide needed help, comfort, support and:
2. Respect personal privacy;
3. Respect differences in cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds;
4. Encourage decision-making abilities;
5. Promote ways of getting along;
6. Encourage independence and self-direction; and
7. Use consistency in applying expectations.

Behavioral guidance shall be constructive in nature, age and stage appropriate, and shall be intended to redirect children to appropriate behavior and resolve conflicts.

**8VAC20-780-410. Forbidden Actions:**

**The following actions or threats thereof are forbidden:**

1. Physical punishment, striking a child, roughly handling or shaking a child, restricting movement through binding or tying, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment;
2. Enclosure in a small, confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself; however, this does not apply to the use of equipment such as cribs, play yards, highchairs, and safety gates when used with children preschool age or younger, for the intended purpose;
3. Punishment by another child;
4. Separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member;
5. Withholding or forcing of food or rest;
6. Verbal remarks which are demeaning to the child;
7. Punishment for toileting accidents; and
8. Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

## Building for the Future

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

Each day more than 2.6 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

Milk  
Fruit or Vegetable  
Grains or Bread  
(*meat/meat alternate may replace grains up to 3 times a week*)

### Lunch or Supper

Milk  
Meat or meat alternate  
Grains or bread  
Fruit  
Vegetable

### Snacks (Two of the five groups)

Milk  
Meat or meat alternate  
Grains or bread  
Fruit  
Vegetable



**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 childcare 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 question about the CACFP, please contact your

#### Center/Sponsoring Organization:

New River Community Action, Inc.  
Head Start Program  
1093 East Main St.  
Radford, VA 24141  
1-540-633-5133

#### State Administering Agency:

Special Nutrition Programs: CACFP  
Virginia Department of Health  
Division of Community Nutrition  
109 Governor Street 9th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219 1-877-618-7282

## USDA Nondiscrimination 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, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.
- 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 Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may 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 complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). **This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**

## The Virginia WIC Program

WIC stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. The Program provides nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, supplemental nutritious foods, counseling at WIC clinics, and screening and referrals to other health, welfare, and social services. The goal of the Program is to improve the health of pregnant women, infants and children (under 5 years) through better nutrition and access to health care. To be eligible for the WIC Program, applicants must meet categorical, residential, income, and nutrition risk requirements.



**We're Open!**

**Call for More Information**  
**888-942-3663**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## INSURANCE POSSIBILITIES



1-833-5CALLVA (1-833-522-5582) or visit <https://coverva.dmas.virginia.gov/>

## Welcome to Cover Virginia

Virginia Medicaid has low-cost and no-cost health coverage programs. There are programs for children, pregnant women and adults, including those with disabilities. To learn more about each program, call the phone number or visit the website listed above.

If you have questions about insurance, please discuss with your Family/Health Advocate to obtain assistance with locating resources.

# ***Head Start Policies*** ***& Procedures***



## CHILD ATTENDANCE

Children need to attend their program each day. When children miss a day they do not take part in activities designed to meet their needs. It is expected that all students will attend class daily except in the case of illness or family emergency. Tardiness and early releases are interruptions to the instructional program and are discouraged.

We request parents notify the school if they are going to be absent. We also request parents notify staff by 9:00 am when children will be arriving late, so the appropriate lunch count can be called into the school. When a student shows history of poor attendance and excessive tardiness, families are required to meet with the Family/Health Advocate and/or Site Administrator.

Absence Procedure: Families will be contacted within one hour of start time if a child is absent. If a staff member is unable to make contact with family, a home visit will be completed. If a child is absent for 3 consecutive days or has been absent 10% of the time during any month, the Family/Health Advocate will do a home visit with the family to identify the reasons for the absence and review attendance report with family. An Attendance Improvement Action Plan will be implemented with the family. In situations where absenteeism is chronic; consistently undocumented; unrelated to illness, or similar reasons; or persists even after multiple attempts at family support, the program can choose to drop the child from the program. This step is a last resort, used only after the HS staff have made every effort to keep the family engaged in and benefiting from the program.

**Your cooperation toward good attendance for your child is necessary and appreciated. The more children attend school, the greater growth in their development.**



## Guidance for Inclement Weather



We often follow the public-school systems schedule but **NOT** always. For closings due to inclement weather and/or we cannot meet licensing requirements for heat and water; NRCA Head Start will attempt to broadcast closings on: **Facebook as well as our GoEngage system of closings and delays.** For your child's safety, it is very important to keep your information as well as your emergency contact information updated at all times.

When school is one hour delayed classes will begin 1 hour later than the usual start time. When there is a two-hour delay, classes will begin two hours later than usual. Drop off and pick up will reflect the delay. Staff who have scheduled home-visits will call if the weather too bad to travel. If the road to your house is clear enough to travel safely, staff may decide to make your home visit at the scheduled time. If the roads seem unsafe, the home visit will be cancelled and rescheduled.

When a two-hour delay falls on an Early Release Day, the Early Release will be cancelled.



## Challenging Behavior Protocol

Our program is committed to ensuring the health and safety of each child and family we serve. For this reason, and in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards and State Licensing regulations, we have an Inclusion Policy that defines and outlines our procedures and timelines for supporting children with behavioral challenges.

If a child presents a health and safety concern, our program will work with the child, family, and community Mental Health/Disability Professionals to provide alternate services/program options. With parent participation, a comprehensive Safe and Successful Plan will be written to address issues and support the child and classroom. It will include positive strategies to ensure safety and address the mental health needs of the child. Team members will include many, if not all, of the following: Child's Parent, Teachers, Family Health Advocate, Site Administrator, Specialists, and Mental Health Consultant.

When working with a child that exhibits health and safety behavioral challenges the Mental Health Consultant, Mental Health/Disabilities Specialist, child's Teacher, Specialists and F/HA will work towards creating a plan that:

- a. Promotes and teaches desirable social-emotional behaviors
- b. Strive to prevent the development and occurrence of disruptive, violent and other inappropriate responses
- c. Provide ongoing parent and teacher supports/education
- d. Assist and recommend referral to community agencies and school system for support and services.
- e. Provides for parent partnerships by ensuring consistency between home and school.

In the event that significant health and safety concerns continue to arise, a child may be placed on temporary exclusion (full or half-day) so that meetings to develop and implement appropriate supports and modifications can occur. This measure must be taken to ensure the safety of all children and staff in the program.

**Child actions** that may require exclusion, after reasonable amount of time and multiple attempts using different strategies, include the following:

- a. Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts that cause harm to self or others
- b. Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- c. Excessive biting
- d. Disruption in classroom that continues to require one-on-one adult attention for a major part of the day
- e. If prescribed medication is not available to meet the medical condition
- f. Repeated attempts to leave the classroom or other supervised areas, thus endangering self or other children

**Parental Actions** that may require exclusion of the child include the following:

- a. Failure to support the Child's Safe and Successful Plan where parent support is indicated (parents sign off on the plan prior to implementation)
- b. Failure to meet with Mental Health Consultant for family supports
- c. Physical or verbal abuse to staff

The Head Start policy is to respect the individuality of each child and family, to include maintaining their confidentiality in all areas. Therefore, **we will not discuss and/or name a child** who is in need of extra support services as mentioned above with another parent.

**We Will** let a concerned parent know that we are addressing issues as a team and refer them back to this Family Handbook to review our program steps.

The Head Start Director will be the primary decision-maker on all issues related to long-term exclusion of children with behavior concerns.

## Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

It is the role of every person at Head Start to treat staff, families and children with respect and dignity. It is an expectation that all adults in Head Start settings conduct themselves in the following manner:

- with courtesy
- with respect
- with patience
- by dressing appropriately
- by modeling appropriate behavior to our children
- by acknowledging and accepting the cultures and practices of other people and families

Under no circumstances will the following behaviors be allowed:

- physical or verbal punishment of children (including siblings or any other non-Head Start children)
- threats to staff or parents/guardians
- swearing and cursing in the presence of children, other Head Start parents or staff
- smoking in the presence of Head Start children or during Home visits from staff
- quarreling, verbal fighting, raised voices towards staff or parents/guardians
- violation of center safety practices and policies
- bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons to Head Start centers, offices, or to events
- Violation of the Confidentiality Policy
- Violation of any program policy

If any of the above behaviors occur, parents/guardians or friends will be asked by a staff person to stop the inappropriate behavior. If parent/guardians continue inappropriate behavior, staff will call the police. If threats or abuse toward staff or the Head Start program continues in any way, the family may be dropped from the Head Start program.

## Confidentiality Policy

**Confidentiality is of utmost importance at all times!**

When I volunteer my time with New River Community Action, Inc. Head Start Program, I understand I am responsible for maintaining the privacy of any information to which I have heard, have observed, or is shared with me. This information: whether it involves staff, other volunteers, and/or families, will not be the topic of conversation either inside or outside of the program or shared on social media.



## Release of Child

Our program is deeply committed to the safety of the children we serve. The following will be strictly enforced.

- Children will only be released to parents/guardians and persons designated as “Authorized Contacts” on the Emergency Contact Information” form.
- The program recommends that these “Authorized Contacts” be adults of 18 years of age or older, however, if due to the family’s needs a person of a younger age is needed to pick the child up from the center this request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Virginia Child Care Licensing guidelines will be followed.
- All persons picking up the child from the center must have proper identification at all times, this includes parents/guardians. Staff will refer to the child’s “Emergency Contact Information” form and requests persons to show photo identification as needed.
- If a non-custodial parent has been denied access or granted limited access to the child by a court order, copy of court order must be submitted and will be maintained on file. Center will comply with the terms of the documentation.
- If a parent or another designee fails to pick up a child at the end of the designated full-day or part-day Head Start school time, center staff will follow the Child Release Contingency Procedures outlined below.
- If the parent picking up the child, or the person authorized by the parents to do so, is physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the staff on site, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, we will not release the child. In this event, staff will attempt to contact the child’s other parent/guardian, or an alternative person, authorized by the parents/guardian. Law enforcement may also be called to assist.

## Arrival & Departure

To ensure your child’s safety,

- Parent/guardian or adult must accompany their child to and from his or her classroom when dropping off and picking up
- Parent may not drop off or pick up their child during bus loading and unloading times
- Child must be signed in when dropping off and signed out when being picked up
- Children must be picked up promptly at the program’s closing time, according to full-day or part-day schedule

If a child is being picked up from the program on a consistently late basis the parents/guardian will be required to meet with their Family/Health Advocate and/or Site Administrator to determine a successful plan of action and follow-up.

## Late Pick-Up Policy

It is essential that parents/guardians pick their children up on time from our program. If an emergency occurs, parents/guardians should call the center and inform the staff of the emergency and provide a time when a parent/guardian or person from on the “Emergency Contact Information” form will be able to pick up the child.

If outside situations or challenges are affecting you picking up your child on time, please speak with your Family/Health Advocate.

## Child Release Contingency Procedures

In the event that a child is not picked up by an authorized person or at the appropriate time, the Head Start program will adhere to the following procedures:

1. The parent/guardian and persons listed on the "Emergency Contact Information" form will be called in 15-minute intervals.
2. The center staff will ensure the safety and well-being of the child at the center until the issues are resolved.
3. One hour after designated school session ends, the Head Start program will contact the state 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child.

We thank you for your cooperation in this matter, and we know you understand that for their safety and well-being, it is essential that children are picked up on time by the appropriate people and that a responsible adult is available to receive the children from the center. **At no time will Head Start staff hold the child responsible for the situation or discuss the issue with the child.**

## Weapons Policy

NRCA and the Head Start Centers are "Weapon Free" zones. Children, Staff, Parents, and Volunteers are not permitted to bring a weapon of any kind onto school vehicle, property or to any school sponsored activity without the permission of the agency or school personnel. If a child is found in possession of a weapon, it will be confiscated, and the parent/emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. The child will not be able to come back to school until they have received permission from the Site Administrator or Main office staff. Staff may insist that a home visit occur before a child return to school.

If a parent is found in possession of a weapon while on school property, they will be asked to leave immediately and may return without the weapon on their person.

A weapon includes:

- Any pistol, revolver, or gun of any kind
- Any knife or razor with a metal blade
- Any flailing instrument such as nun chucks or fighting chain
- Any disk with pointed blades designed to be thrown or propelled
- Any other toy that may resemble the above items at the judgment of center staff



shutterstock - 241154023

## Tobacco Free Policy

NRCA and the Head Start Program have a "Tobacco free environment" policy. Smoking or vaping is not permitted during Head Start activities, during home visits with staff or at or on any Head Start center grounds.

**Smoking is also not allowed at bus stops.**

If you choose to use tobacco, you must be off Head Start center grounds and always out of site of the children. During outside functions, such as picnics, field trips, etc., you must be out of sight of the children and at least 100 feet away from the activity area. You must pick up and dispose properly of all cigarette butts and trash when you leave the area. We ask that you please not smoke while assisting your child to get on the bus in the morning and when you are getting your child off the bus in the afternoon. Failure to abide by these rules may result in you being asked to leave the premises completely.



## Child Abuse and Neglect

All Head Start staff members are mandated by Virginia State Law to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

Head Start maintains a role not only in reporting cases, but also in working to prevent and identify child abuse and neglect situations.

The laws of Virginia states that any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school, kindergarten, or nursery school who has reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected shall report the matter immediately (within 24 hours).

The child abuse and neglect plan calls for a strategy to inform parents of what state and local laws require regarding child abuse and neglect. It is for this reason that the above information is included in this handbook designed for parents. You, as a parent can help protect children by contacting your local Social Services or calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-552-7096, if you suspect child abuse or neglect.

**Commonwealth of Virginia law considers leaving a child unattended in a vehicle for any time at all to be grounds for child abuse/neglect. Please do not leave your children alone in your car. Head Start staff are mandated to report any person leaving a child in the car.**

## Registered sex offenders

Each center will follow Virginia code 18.2-370.5

Sex offenses prohibiting entry onto school or other property; penalty

Every adult who is convicted of a sexually violent offense, as defined in 9.1-902, shall be prohibited from entering or being present (i) during school hours, and during school-related or school sponsored activities upon any property he knows or has reason to know is a public or private elementary or secondary school or child day center property; (II) on any school bus as defined in 46.2-100; or (iii) upon any property, public or private, during hours when such property is solely being used by a public or private elementary or secondary school for a school related or school-sponsored activity, <https://vacode.org/2016/18.2/8/4/18.2-370.5/>

If you are a registered sex offender, every effort will be made to accommodate you and your child's needs when dropping off and picking up of your child. If you have no one else to drop or bring your child to school, staff may arrange pick-up and drop off at a location other than Head Start or school property when there is staff availability to do so.





## Ill or Injured Child Procedures

If a child becomes ill or injured at the center:

- Every attempt will be made to keep the child away from other children to avoid spread of disease, if necessary. This will be in a quiet area designated for this purpose. A mat and blanket should be kept for this purpose.
  - Staff will use Universal Precautions and First Aid/CPR knowledge, if necessary, while helping a child who has become ill or injured.
  - If a child is injured or in emergency situations, see Head Start Medical Emergency Plans and refer to First Aid Guide for School Emergencies, Steps for Choking Emergencies and/or Life Saving CPR Steps posted in each classroom.
  - Center staff or other appropriate official shall notify the parent immediately if a child requires emergency medical attention or sustains a serious injury.
  - If staff is unable to contact the child's parents, the emergency contacts provided by the parent on the child's Emergency Information Form will be contacted. If an emergency contact arrives to take the child, identity will be verified, and a message will be left at the parent's preferred telephone number indicating the situation to the parent. If no one can be reached, the child will remain at the center unless transport to an emergency medical facility is warranted. If child is transported to an approved caretaker by Head Start staff, a note will be sent home with the child informing parents of the illness or injury.
  - If child needs to be transported to the emergency room, a familiar staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, taking that child's Head Start medical and emergency contacts information.
  - For child accidents which result in an emergency room visit, staff contact NRCA finance department for insurance guidance: primary contact: finance director, secondary: accountant. The primary witness to the accident will complete the Enrolled Head Start Child's Accident Report Form as soon as possible after the accident by the end of the educational day for children. Provide parent with a copy of the completed accident form.
  - In the event of a communicable illness, staff will consult the VA State Dept. of Health Communicable Disease chart to determine when the child may return to school. And report the communicable disease to the local health department if disease is listed on the Virginia Reportable Disease List.
- **For your child's safety, it is very important to keep your information, as well as your emergency contact information updated at all times.**

## Center and Classroom Safety During Infectious Diseases


NRCA Head Start will create a safe and healthy environment for children, staff, and approved visitors. We will follow our Mitigation Policy for Infectious Diseases including COVID-19. This infectious disease/COVID-19 mitigation policy is subject to change as the situation surrounding COVID-19 shifts based on local, state, and federal guidelines and requirements, with particular attention to what's happening in our local communities. The full policy is available at your Head Start center.

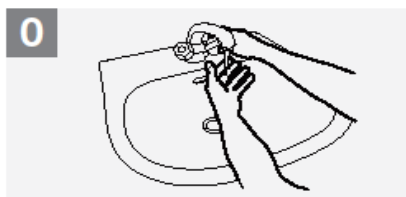
We will use a layered system to reduce the spread of any illness. A layered system includes:

1. Follow the VA Department of Health's childcare guidance for COVID-19 for as long as it is in effect.
2. Monitoring for signs of illness with all individuals who enter the Head Start facility.
3. Improved ventilation in the facility.
4. Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
5. Cleaning the facility according to a specific schedule and more often during an infectious disease occurrence/outbreak.
6. More outdoor learning opportunities will take place for the children: being outside reduces the chance of spreading infectious diseases.
7. Staff participate in required trainings to better equip them for handling and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

# How to Handwash?

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

 Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds



Wet hands with water;



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



Rub hands palm to palm;



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



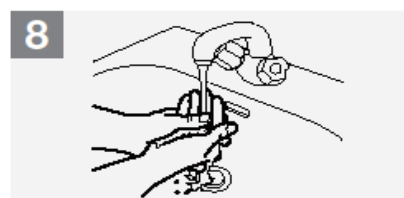
Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



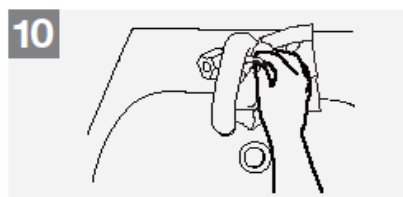
Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



Rinse hands with water;



Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



Use towel to turn off faucet;



Your hands are now safe.



**World Health Organization**

**Patient Safety**

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

**SAVE LIVES**  
Clean Your Hands

All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this document. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use. WHO acknowledges the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), in particular the members of the Infection Control Programme, for their active participation in developing this material.

May 2009

## Medication at the Head Start Center

In order to ensure your child's safety during school hours, you must notify Head Start staff of any allergies and medications that pertain to your child prior to school entry.

The Medication Authorization Form must be completed and signed by you, the parent or guardian for medications given less than 10 days. For medications given 10 days or longer the child's physician needs to sign also.

- ◆ You are encouraged to discuss with your child's doctor a plan that will allow your child to take medicine only during hours at home.
- ◆ Prescription medication must be in its original container with your child's name, the name of the medication, date of the prescription, and instructions for time and dosage.
- ◆ Non-prescription medication (Tylenol, Triaminic cough syrup, etc.) must be recommended by your child's doctor. It must be labeled and accompanied by written instructions from his/her doctor.
- ◆ General over-the-counter skin care products (sunscreen, diaper ointment, bug repellent) do not require a doctor's prescription, unless prescribed by doctor. You as the parent will still have to give permission to have the skin care product applied.
- ◆ Staff will keep a record of the date and time each dose is given. When the medication is no longer needed, the Medication Authorization Form will be kept in your child's file and unused medication will be returned to you or disposed of properly if you can't be reached after five business days.
- ◆ You will be notified immediately by staff should your child experience an adverse reaction to medication.



## Sick Child Policy

As a parent, you can help to keep your child healthy as well as any other people your child may come in contact with while participating in the Head Start Program. We ask your help in the following ways:

Call the center to tell an employee that your child is sick and will not be attending. We ask that you let us know of any contagious/communicable disease (including head lice and scabies) your child may have or to which your child has been exposed.

1. Contact your doctor if your child has a high fever or a fever that has lasted several days, a severe sore throat, vomiting which has persisted for more than 24 hours, or if you're in doubt.
2. If your child shows any of the symptoms on the Communicable Disease Chart (found on the next page) while at the Head Start center, you will be called and asked to come as quickly as possible and get your child. Please help us protect your child and the other children by responding promptly.
3. If your child is sick and you cannot be reached, one of the emergency contacts you have listed for your child will be called. It is important that you let Head Start staff know of any changes to your emergency contact list throughout the year.
4. In some situations, children may be required to be excluded from Head Start group activities for longer than listed in the Communicable Disease Chart. The Site Administrator will make that determination on a case-by-case basis. The local health department or child's physician may be contacted to assist in making that decision.
5. **If you believe your child is too sick to go outside with the other children, you must keep your child home until he/she is completely able to take part in all activities.** Head Start children go outside daily, weather permitting, and due to licensing requirements and staff demands, we are unable to keep one staff person inside with children not participating in outside activities.
6. For some illnesses we may require a doctor's excuse for your child to return to the classroom or group activities. The Site Administrator will make that determination on a case-by-case basis.
7. If your child has any of the symptoms listed on the Communicable Disease Chart, before they are to come to the center, you must keep him or her at home until the symptoms are gone or until your doctor says it is all right for your child to return to the Head Start Center.
8. Your child (as well as any adult) may be excluded from the Head Start Center if not age appropriately immunized against a communicable disease (such as Chicken pox, Rubella) or if immunocompromised. This exclusion is in effect to protect all individuals. The diseases which can be particularly threatening to the immunocompromised and those inadequately immunized are Fifth disease, Coxsackievirus [hand, foot, and mouth disease], Chicken Pox, and Rubella.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES CHART** (*Summary of the most common contagious diseases from the current versions of VDH Communicable Disease Chart and the VA DOE Child Care Licensing Standards\*\**)

If the Disease or Illness is . . . . and the Symptoms are . . . .	Then Child Remains Home.....
<b>Chicken pox</b> – Fever, runny nose, cough, rash of pink bumps, blisters, and scabs.	Until at least 5 days after rash begins or until <u>all</u> sores have dried and crusted and child is fever-free.
<b>Coughing</b> – child makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after the cough.	Until the symptoms are gone. Follow up with doctor as needed especially if lingering cough as may be a serious illness.
<b>COVID-19</b> – May be without symptoms. Or have a variety of symptoms: fever, cough, fatigue, sore throat, diarrhea, etc.	Please refer to the VDH K12 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance. Depending on severity of illness, refer to a healthcare provider, urgent care center, or emergency department for further evaluation and treatment.
<b>Diarrhea</b> - increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained.	Until diarrhea stops for a full 24 hours. Also see below specifically for Norovirus.
<b>Fever</b> – A child shall not be admitted to the center if he or she has a fever. A fever is an oral (by mouth) temperature of 101°F or higher. An armpit temperature of 100°F or higher. The temperature used to determine a fever is subject to change according to childcare licensing standards.	Child may return after 24 hours being fever-free without use of medicine. If fever is COVID-19 related, refer to VDH K12 Isolation and Quarantine Guidance.
<b>Fifth disease</b> – Headache, body aches, sore throat, fever, chills, rash on face, rash on body that makes a “lacy” pattern	Until fever-free, as defined above, for a full 24 hours and the child feels well enough to participate.
<b>Flu</b> (influenza) – fever, chills, headache, sleepiness, muscle aches, cough, sore throat, nausea, vomiting.	Until fever-free, as defined above, for a full 24 hours and the child feels well enough to participate.
<b>Hand, Foot and Mouth disease</b> (Coxsackievirus) – fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough, tiny blisters in mouth, on palms of hands and soles of feet, sore muscles, diarrhea, and stomachache, pink eyes.	Until fever-free, as defined above, for a full 24 hours and the child feels well enough to participate.
<b>Head Lice</b> – Sesame seed size insects on scalp or hair, eggs (nits) deposited on hair strands near scalp on top of head, behind the ears, nape of neck, excessive itching of the head.	NRCA Head Start follows a no-live head lice policy. Parent or guardian is required to treat child with appropriate head lice killing treatment and work toward removing nits. Child may return to the center after a full 24 hours has passed since the treatment was completed.
<b>Impetigo</b> – Red, cracking, oozing, blister-like bumps which often occur on the face but may be anywhere on the body.	Until at least 12 hours of antibiotic treatment has been started and all sores on exposed skin are covered. Close contact with other children should be avoided during this time.
<b>Norovirus</b> - Sudden onset of vomiting and/or diarrhea, abdominal cramps and nausea.	Until 48 hours after symptoms resolve.
<b>Pink Eye</b> – White or yellow discharge from eyes, often with matted eyelids after sleep; itchy, painful, watery eyes.	Until symptoms have resolved or until cleared to return by a healthcare provider.
<b>Rash</b> – With fever, behavior changes, child is unable to participate, oozing open wound, rash is not healing	Until a doctor determines that the rash is not a contagious disease and is fever-free as defined above.
<b>Scabies</b> - Extremely itchy, red bumps or blisters in a thread like line. Commonly found between the fingers and toes but can appear anywhere on the body.	Until a full 24 hours of appropriate medication treatment has been completed.
<b>Strep throat</b> (streptococcus) – Sore throat that is red and painful, fever, swollen glands in the neck.	Until a full 24 hours of antibiotic treatment has been completed and fever is gone.
<b>Shingles</b> – Painful, red blisters which occur mostly on the abdomen (belly) and sides.	Sores must be covered; child does not need to remain at home unless recommended by a doctor or when the child is not feeling well enough to participate in activities.
<b>Ring worm (Tinea Corporis)</b> - Skin has reddish scaling, circular patches, with raised edges. The center of the circle is smooth. Cracking, peeling of skin between toes. Scalp has redness, scaling with broken hairs or patches of hair loss.	Sores must be covered and/or child is receiving medical treatment. .
<b>Vomiting</b> – two or more episodes of vomiting within 24 hours.	Until vomiting stops completely for a full 24 hours.

Revised: 8 January 2013 as approved by HS Health Advisory Committee in November 2012; 7/27/2023

\*\*For communicable diseases, our HS Program will follow the current version of the Virginia Department of Health's **Communicable Disease Reference Chart for School Personnel and DSS Child Care Licensing Standards** except in decisions made by the HS Health Advisory Committee for individual diseases

Parents are to be notified when children at the Head Start Center have been exposed to a communicable disease listed in the above chart. Parents shall be notified within 24 hours or the next business day of the Head Start Center having been informed of a communicable disease, unless forbidden by law, except for life threatening diseases, which must be reported to parents immediately. [22 VAC 40-185-490, C. Preventing the spread of disease. From Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers]

# COVID-19 VACCINATION

IS THE BEST WAY TO HELP PROTECT CHILDREN AGAINST SEVERE COVID-19



**COVID-19 VACCINES** are now available and recommended for **children 6 months and older**. With children in school, COVID-19 vaccination is the best way to help protect them from severe illness.

Just like adults, COVID-19 can cause long-term health problems, hospitalization, and even death in children with or without underlying health conditions. Children who have previously had COVID-19 should still get vaccinated, as vaccination offers added protection.

Encourage parents to contact their health care provider, local health department, pharmacy, or visit **VACCINES.GOV** to find a vaccine for their children.



## Medical Emergency Procedures

1. Keep cool. Do not panic.
2. Follow OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens Universal Precautions
3. Follow the First Aid Guide for Child Care and School Emergencies for specific situations.
4. Give child immediate attention – check the scene for potential dangers.
5. **Call 911** if immediate help is needed.
6. If child is bleeding seriously, is unconscious, has broken bones, head injury, or breath stoppage, do the following:  
Do not move child  
**Call 911** immediately  
In case of poisoning, dial 1-800-222-1222  
Do not give liquids or medication  
Cover child with blanket, cloth, or any available covering  
Trained staff should administer first aid/CPR, if necessary. Refer to emergency information posted in classroom.  
Notify Site Administrator  
Notify Parents  
Notify Doctor (doctor's name is on Emergency Information Form in child's file)
7. If child needs to be transported to the emergency room, a familiar staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, taking that particular child's Head Start medical and emergency contacts' information. A Hartford Insurance Co. form is to be taken if child incurred an accident/injury.
8. If child suffers from an ailment not mentioned above, proceed with emergency first aid, **call 911** if necessary, and notify Site Administrator and child's parent or emergency contact when parent not available.
9. In the case of an accident/injury, the primary witness to the accident will complete the Enrolled Head Start Child's Accident Report Form as soon as possible after the accident occurred yet by end of educational day for children. Provide parent with a copy of the Enrolled Head Start Child's Accident Report Form and VA DSS Licensing will be notified.
10. Refer to the Instruction page for NRCA Head Start Enrolled Child's Accident Report Form for additional protocol.

**Medical Emergency Procedures, approved by HS Health Advisory Committee, updated April 14, 2023, previous editions obsolete Updated April 22, 2016, reviewed April 17, 2017 no changes needed; updated April 13, 2018; reviewed April 5, 2019; reviewed April 14, 2021; reviewed April 8, 2022 no changes.**

---

Need Help Now?  
Stop and Call:

**911**

---



# Pedestrian Safety

## SAFETY FACTS

*\*It is a Class 1 misdemeanor to leave a child under 12 years old alone in a vehicle.*

*\*According to noheatstroke.org, there were 29 pediatric vehicular heatstroke deaths in 2022*

*\*According to the National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA 2020) 6,500 pedestrians are killed each year in parking lot accidents. 16% of children who died in traffic accidents were pedestrians.*

## BUCKLING UP SAVES LIVES!

*-Harness straps at top slots above the shoulders.*

*-Chest clip should be at arm pit level.*

*-Straps must be snug. Try to use the "pinch test". Try to pinch the strap material at the child's collarbone. If you can grab any material, it is too loose.*

*-Take off winter jackets **BEFORE** Buckling up.*

## Head Start Pedestrian Safety Training

### ✓ Important Safety Reminders at Drop-off/Pick-up:

- ✓ PLEASE SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD AT ALL TIMES
- ✓ Children must be signed in/out each day
- ✓ Make **eye contact** with a staff member when dropping off/picking up. This will ensure that staff are aware that your child is now in their care.
- ✓ Your child must be signed out by persons 16 years of age or older.
- ✓ Children will **only** be released to parents/ guardian or "**Authorized Contacts**" listed on the Emergency Information form.
- ✓ Keep your contact information updated regularly!!
- ✓ The school must have a **signed, written notice** of change in child pick up.  
\*This could also include an email or text from parent's account

### ✓ Parking Lot Safety:

- ✓ ALWAYS HOLD YOUR CHILD'S HAND WHEN WALKING INTO SCHOOL
- ✓ The parking lot is a very busy place during drop off/pick up. In fact, all children are at risk in any parking lot.
- ✓ Please help your child to become a parking lot safety STAR.
  - **STOP:** As soon as you get out of the car, stop and stand still.
  - **TOUCH:** Touch the car (a fun magnet helps). Keep your hand there!
  - **ATTENTION:** Pay attention and look at the cars around you. Listen to your grown-up.
  - **READY:** Wait for your grown-up to tell you it's time to go. Then take his or her hand and go.
  - Always celebrate their success when following your safety rules!!



### ✓ Bus Safety:

- ✓ AN ADULT MUST WALK YOUR CHILD TO THE BUS EACH MORNING & FROM THE BUS EACH AFTERNOON. Hold hands, especially if crossing the street.
- ✓ Children will **only** be released to parents/ guardian or "**Authorized Contacts**" listed on the Emergency Information form.
- ✓ **SAFE RIDING PRACTICES:**
  - Remain seated, facing forward, feet forward
  - Safety belt fastened & shoulder harness in place
  - No hitting or kicking
- ✓ **BOARDING & UNBOARDING:** Hold adult's hand, one step at a time, walking feet.
- ✓ **RECOGNIZE THE DANGER ZONES:** The front, sides, and back of the bus
  - **Safe Practice:** take 5 GIANT steps away from the bus steps before moving in front or behind bus
- ✓ **CROSSING THE STREET:**
  - Wait until bus comes to a complete STOP and the driver signals for you to cross
  - HOLD HANDS

## Community Disaster Plan

Every Head Start Center has its own individual “**Emergency Preparedness Plan**”. This plan is posted at each Head Start center. Please ask a staff person about the plan and its location.

In the event public schools go on lock down, NRCA Head Starts will follow the same protocol.

Head Start will adhere to the same procedures public schools are enforcing.

In the event of an emergency (fire, earthquake, flood, bomb threat, hostage situation, power outage, tornado and/or hurricane), please follow these procedures:

1. Remember that the center staff’s main priority is to get everyone to a safe place as quickly as possible. Be assured they are giving your child any emergency care that may be needed.
2. **Do not** call the center. When possible, the center staff will contact you by telephone to arrange pickup of your child.
3. **Do not** come to the center unless you have been contacted by the center or you are close and radio reports indicate there is no danger in traveling local streets.
4. Community disasters will be reported on the radio. Listen to it for directions. The safest place in case of a disaster is off the local streets, out of the way of emergency and rescue equipment. All centers have posted emergency procedures to follow that apply to each jurisdiction.
5. In the event the center must close due to a community disaster, NRCA, Inc. Head Start will attempt to broadcast closings on: WPSK (107.1) and Q-99 radio stations and WSLS (Channel 10) television station. Please listen to your local stations for announcements of closings.



## **NRCA Head Start Community Grievance/Complaint Policy 1304.50(d) (2) (v)**

**This policy applies to Head Start only and outlines the steps to follow if a parent of a Head Start child or a concerned citizen has a complaint/grievance concerning a Head Start matter.**

Step #1 Notify the Site Administrator at the local center involved.

**If you still have concerns or the issue has not been addressed:**

Step #2 Notify the appropriate Main Office Specialist (listed below):

### **Radford Main Office Head Start Administrative Staff:**

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services  
Teaching Practices and Coaching Specialist  
Disabilities and Mental Health Specialist  
Family Services and ERSEA Specialist  
Early Education & Program Planning Specialist  
Nutrition & Health Advocacy Specialist

Veronica Fitch ext. 445  
Alison Harris ext. 434  
Jodi Roop 540-357-0523  
Leah Hill ext. 446  
Kristy Castanon ext. 451  
Trina Porterfield ext. 448

### **If you still have concerns**

Step #3 Notify the Director of Early Childhood and Family Services **or**

Step #4 Address your concerns with the Head Start Policy Council **or**

Step #5 Notify the NRCA Board of Directors Chairperson.

At any time during this process, the complainant has the option to speak individually with any staff, Policy Council member, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services, NRCA Chief Executive Officer, or the Board of Directors Chairperson.

Once enrolled, no child or family will be denied an opportunity to fully participate in the NRCA Head Start Program. If you have a concern regarding breach of fairness or equal opportunity, please contact the NRCA EEO/AA Officer. This officer should be contacted if you have a complaint regarding discrimination. No one will be denied an opportunity to enroll in the program because of race, color, creed, belief, religion, gender, national origin, age, mental/physical disability, political affiliation, or past participation in the complaint process.

NRCA Administrative Offices are located in Radford and may be contacted by the following phone number: (540) 633-5133.



# Client Appeal Process

**IF YOU ARE DENIED SERVICE OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN TERMINATED FROM ANY NEW RIVER COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL THE DECISION. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS APPEAL PROCESS, PLEASE ASK A NEW RIVER COMMUNITY ACTION STAFF MEMBER TO ASSIST YOU.**

***New River Community Action is an equal opportunity agency, providing services to eligible persons regardless of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, color, creed or national origin. The agency follows Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1992, the Virginia Human Rights Act as amended in 2020, and federal/state program requirements when determining eligibility for service.***

Upon denial or termination of service, a New River Community Action (NRCA) staff member will provide you a written explanation of the specific reason(s) for the denial or termination, along with a copy of the Client Appeals Process. You have the right to appeal the decision by following these steps.

1. Within five (5) business days\* of receiving the denial or termination decision, you may submit additional information or documents to the NRCA staff member who made the decision to deny or terminate services and request a second review. The staff member will review the additional information or documents and reach a decision within three (3) business days and share with you by phone, letter, and email, if available. If you do not agree with the decision, you may proceed to step 2.
2. Within five (5) business days\* of receiving the denial or termination decision, you may contact the Supervisor to appeal the decision. Please contact the Executive Assistant / Communications Specialist (contact information below) for the Supervisor's name and contact information. The Supervisor will then schedule the meeting with you to occur within five (5) business days of receiving your request. You may bring a representative to help you with the appeal and the staff member who denied service will be present to respond. The Supervisor will reach a decision within three (3) business days and share with you by phone, letter, and email, if available. If you do not agree with the decision, you may proceed to step 3.
3. Within five (5) business days\* of receiving the denial or termination decision, you may contact the Director of Community Services Programs or the Director of Early Childhood and Family Services to appeal the decision. Please contact the Executive Assistant / Communications Specialist (contact information below) for the Director's name and contact information. The Director will then schedule the meeting with you to occur within five (5) business days of receiving your request. You may bring a representative to help you with the appeal and the staff members who denied service and the appeal will be present to respond. The Director will reach a decision within three (3) business days and share with you by phone, letter, and email, if available. If you do not agree with the decision, you may proceed to step 4.
4. Within five (5) business days\* of receiving the denial or termination decision, you may contact the CEO to appeal the decision. Please contact the Executive Assistant / Communications Specialist (contact information below) for the CEO's name and contact information. The CEO will then schedule a meeting with the Staff Appeal Committee and you to occur within five (5) business days of receiving your request. The CEO will serve as Chairperson on the Staff Appeal Committee, which will consist of the CEO, Affirmative Action Officer, and a staff member from another program selected by the CEO. You may bring a representative to help you with the appeal and the staff members who denied service and the appeal will be present to respond. The Committee will reach a decision within three (3) business days and share with you by phone, letter, and email, if available. If you do not agree with the decision, you may proceed to step 5.
5. Within five (5) business days\* of receiving the denial or termination decision, you may contact the Chairperson of NRCA's Board of Directors to appeal the decision. Please contact the Executive Assistant / Communications Specialist (contact information below) for the Chairperson's name and contact information. The Chairperson will then schedule a meeting with the Board's Client Appeal Committee and you to occur within five (5) business days of receiving your request. The Chairperson will appoint a Client Appeal Committee to consist of three (3) Board members, preferably with two (2) members being target representatives. You may bring a representative to help you with the appeal and staff members who denied service and the appeal will be present to respond. The Committee will reach a decision within three (3) business days and share with you by phone, letter and email, if available. This is the final appeal step within New River Community Action. If you do not agree with the decision, you may wish to seek legal advice.

*This appeal process will be posted in each New River Community Action office and a copy given to each person denied or terminated from program services.*

*Approved by the Board of Directors April 15, 2021*

*Executive Assistant / Communications Specialist (540) 633-5133 ext. 415; nrca@nrca.org*