

Welcome to the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program!

For over 40 years, the Chippewa-Luce-Mackinac Community Action Agency has been providing high quality, comprehensive early childhood programs in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Program staff forms partnerships with parents to help their children develop their full potential while strengthening the family and community. A partnership between parents and the program best supports children in their early childhood experience.

The Parent Handbook provides an overview of program policies and procedures. If you have any additional questions please contact your child's Teacher.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to support children and families in realizing their potential by providing quality programs in partnership with our communities.

Philosophy

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program believes that parents are the first and most important teachers in their child's life. The curriculum, High/Scope, is based on developmentally appropriate practices. Children learn by actively exploring their environment, through the use of classroom materials, and by interacting with other children and adults. Staff has been trained in Child Development and provides a nurturing atmosphere and a learning rich environment where children can best learn.

Children who are served in the Home Base program are provided educational learning opportunities by using materials in their own home and by interacting with their Home Visitor and their family, their most important teacher. These children are also provided regular socialization opportunities.

About the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program

Early Head Start and Head Start are federal grant programs funded by the Department of Health and Human Services. The Great Start Readiness Program is funded by the Michigan Department of Education. The C-L-M Community Action Agency operates the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Programs. This agency is dedicated to families and individuals seeking to improve their quality of life.

NOTE: Procedures and Policies have been written in accordance with the Head Start Performance Standards, Great Start School Readiness Standards of Quality, the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing, and the governing board of the C-L-M Community Action Agency. C-L-M Community Action Agency complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Michigan Handicappers Civil Rights Act and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. To inquire about reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, please contact the agency at (906) 632-3363 or (800) 562-4963.

Program Options

Head Start

- 3-4 years old
- 3 ½ hours per day
- 8 months per year

Early Head Start

Center Based

- 6 weeks – 3 years old
- 3 ½ hours per day Head Start-Extended day (hourly fee)
- Full Year Program

Home Base

- Pre-birth – 3 years old
- Weekly Home Visits
- Biweekly Socialization Experiences
- Full Year Program

Combination Option

- 6 weeks – 3 years old
- Attends center less than 3 days per week
- Educational Home Visits are made by the teacher (The number of visits is determined by the number of days the child attends the center.)

Great Start Readiness Program

- 4 years old
- 3 hours per day
- 8 months per year

Non Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice).

Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is and equal opportunity provider and employer.

Parent Agreement

Center Based Children

I HEREBY AGREE OR PERMIT AND/OR UNDERSTAND:

- I must meet all program requirements in a timely manner or as mandated by Federal/State regulations.
- A responsible adult must be visible with the child for pick up and drop off.
- Name(s) of adults who may accept a child **MUST** be listed on the Child Information Card or your child will be returned to school and you will be responsible to pick up your child.
- I will meet my responsibility to the program by **VOLUNTEERING** in the classroom or by using my talents and resources to enhance my child's educational experience, and to participate in parent gatherings, Family Days, and other program events.
- The teacher and/or other support staff will make home visits while my child is enrolled in the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program and I will participate in the minimum number of required home and/or center visits.
- My child will attend school on a regular basis as long as he/she is in good health. Eight (8) consecutive days absent without a doctor's excuse will be considered excessive absences or whereas frequent absences drop the mandated average daily attendance rate below 85% may result in dismissal.
- Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Staff will conduct screenings and assessments to plan my child's educational program and to determine areas of concern.
- I will allow my child to participate in activities outside the classroom (field trips) conducted by the program during school hours. I understand I will be notified separately of each activity. Short walks around the school area may occur without prior notice.
- **My child must have the required physical examination, dental examination, and immunizations required by the Head Start Performance Standards and the State of Michigan.**
- I will keep my child at home whenever he/she is ill. I further understand that the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program may exclude my child from school for health reasons, if health requirements are not met in a timely manner, or as mandated by Federal and/or State regulations.
- In the case of accidents or illness at school, I will be notified and agree that I am responsible for any necessary treatment or services.
- In extreme situations and when all other possibilities have been considered, my child may be excluded from the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program if it is determined to be an inappropriate setting.
- The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program may provide records to parents through out the year.
- No medication such as Epi-Pens, inhalers, antibiotics, or over the counter products such as sunscreen, diaper rash ointment, etc.; will be sent to school in backpacks or diaper bags.
- The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program Staff will release information to all people listed on the emergency card regarding the illness of my child, in the event that I am unable to pick him/her up (i.e. stomach flu, lice, diarrhea, fever, etc.).
- I will work on a mutually agreed upon toilet training plan with the Head Start/Preschool Staff for my child if he/she is not trained upon entering the program.
- I will ask my child's Teacher, Lead Caregiver or FSW if I have questions or concerns.
- I received an Orientation from my Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Family Services Worker, Teacher, Lead Caregiver or Home Visitor. At that time the content of the Parent Agreement was explained and I agree to comply with the policies and procedures presented there in.

Parent/Home Visitor Agreement

Home Base Children

I, THE PARENT, HEREBY AGREE OR PERMIT AND/OR UNDERSTAND:

- To establish family goals and work toward them.
- To be home for each visit. If I will not be home, I will let the Home Visitor know in advance (i.e. note or phone call).
- To have my family ready for the visit.
- That the visit is just for me and my child (discourage visitors, phone calls, television, and computer use).
- To participate with the Home Visitor and my child and not do other work (i.e. dishes or laundry).
- To work with my child on activities left by the Home Visitor.
- To assist in planning and make suggestions for home visits and playgroups.
- To keep track of Early Head Start materials and return them upon request.
- To keep all health requirements up to date (i.e. immunizations, well baby checks, dentals, etc.).
- To use positive, non-physical discipline during home visits and at playgroups.
- To provide a smoke, alcohol and drug free environment during the time of the home visits, playgroups and program functions.
- To be open and willing to accept suggestions concerning parenting and discipline.
- To attend playgroups regularly.
- To participate at playgroup and be responsible for my own children.

I, THE HOME VISITOR, HEREBY AGREE OR PERMIT AND/OR UNDERSTAND:

- To provide support toward the family's goals.
- To be on time for the visit or let the parent know differently.
- To bring child related materials and activities.
- To show the parent how to use the materials.
- To provide information on health, nutrition, and community services.
- To show the parent how to use what is in the home as a learning opportunity for their child.
- To provide information on child development and discipline as needed.
- To provide any other information that is requested by the family.
- To provide socialization opportunities for the parent and child through scheduled playgroups.

Policies and Procedures

Admission / Withdrawal Policy

Admission - A child can be enrolled in the Early Head Start/Head Start Program if the following criteria are met and determined reasonable by the Enrollment Committee:

- Family meets Federal Poverty Guidelines for eligibility
- Early Head Start participants(including Home Base) must be between the ages of birth to three (3) years old or a pregnant woman
- Head Start participants must be three (3) years old on or before December 1st of the current program year to start school at the beginning of the Head Start year.
- A child may begin Head Start upon their third birthday if openings are available.
- Proof of immunization records on file with the Early Head Start/Head Start/ Preschool Program
- A child with a diagnosed special need(s)
- Families and children demonstrating the most need will receive priority

A child may be enrolled in the Great Start Readiness Program (4 year old program) if the following criteria are met:

- Child must be four (4) years old on or before December 1st of the current program year.
- Family meets State Income Guidelines and factors contributing to the educational risk of children as established by the Michigan Department of Education.
- Families and children with the lowest income and demonstrating the most need will receive priority.

Withdrawal – A child may be dismissed from the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program if:

- They are absent consistently; eight (8) consecutive absences without a doctor's excuse, repeated missed home visits for Home Base participants, or whereas frequent absences drop the mandated average daily attendance rate below 85%
- They do not meet the health/licensing requirements by the required deadlines
- The parent fails to follow program policies
- The program is determined to be an inappropriate setting
- A parent may withdraw their child at any time during the program year. Please notify the Central Office by calling (906) 632-3363 or 1-800-562-4963

Arrival Procedure

Parents are responsible for their child whenever they are present at the center. Upon arrival at the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet located at the center. Children are required to be escorted by their parent, or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility.

Pick up procedure: Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care on the sign-out sheet located at the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on the agency premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are reminded to be

extremely cautious of parking lots, alley ways and streets when exiting the buildings with their children.

Emergency Alternate Pick up: At enrollment, parents will be presented with Emergency White Cards. Parents are encouraged to include on this card all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick up their child from the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center. **NO ONE may pick up your child if you have not listed them on the white card or without written authorization.** In an emergency situation the child's parent(s) will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the person(s) listed on this white card as an emergency release. Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Persons on the Emergency White Card will be required to provide photo ID. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

The parent(s) names do not need to be listed on the Emergency White Card but all related employment information must be listed.

Attendance / Illness Policy

Consistent attendance and being on time are very important. Young children need a regular routine which they know will remain the same each day.

If a child must be absent, the parent should notify the teacher with the reason for absence.

When a child misses three (3) consecutive days for unknown reasons, a Family Services Worker (FSW) will contact the parent.

Eight (8) consecutive days absent without a doctor's excuse will be considered excessive absences or whereas frequent absences drop the mandated average daily attendance rate below 85% may result in dismissal.

Please contact your child's teacher or FSW if you are having difficulty getting your child to school. FSWs will work closely with parents to assist them in making the necessary arrangements to assure regular attendance.

It is important for families whose children are enrolled in the Home Base program to keep their scheduled home visits and attend the socializations.

There are times when it is appropriate for your child to miss school. If your child is sick, **DO NOT** send him/her to school. If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called to pick him/her up. If you cannot be reached, we will use the Child Information Card (Emergency) to contact an alternate person. Please make sure the teacher knows where you are during the day. A child will only be released to an individual listed on the Child Information Card-the adult must have identification, such as: driver's license, Michigan I.D. card, etc.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Policy

Parenting is a great responsibility. Most people are not trained in parenting skills. Sometimes you may feel overwhelmed by the experience. There are resources available to assist you should you find yourself in need of help. The Family Services Worker may be able to put you in touch with services or agencies that can help you. Feel free to call and ask them for resources.

Sometimes the only way we know how to parent is how we were parented. In some cases, this may mean that we grew up being physically, emotionally, sexually or verbally abused. As a result we may repeat those same patterns with our own children. Most people would agree that this is not the best way to go through childhood, but they do not know how to break the cycle. Again, if you find yourself in this situation, call your Family Service Worker for help. It is courageous to admit that you need help and are willing to break the cycle of abuse.

Reporting: Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of the Early Head Start/Head Start/ Preschool Program are considered mandated reporters under this law. The employees of this program are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program can not be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in “good faith.”

Child Custody Policy

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR CHILD OR THE PROGRAM STAFF IN THE MIDDLE OF CHILD CUSTODY DISPUTES. STAFF CANNOT TAKE SIDES.

Parents Right to Immediate Access to Their Children: Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (i.e., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program must be provided with a **certified copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program can not, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent’s right to immediate access.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center Director and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program will accompany visitors at all times throughout the center.

Child Information Policy

EHS families must complete one (1) Child Information Card, while all Head Start and Preschool families must complete two (2) Child Information Cards. All lines on the Child Information Card must be filled out including complete addresses and phone numbers. These cards are used for emergency situations. It is important to update the cards as changes occur. For example: telephone numbers, cell phone and pager numbers, disconnects, addresses, allergy information, or to whom the child may be released. If you have changes it is important to call your child's teacher or FSW immediately with the new information.

Child Management / Discipline Policy

The C-L-M Community Action Agency Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program maintains that effective discipline begins long before disruptive behaviors erupt. The adults' personal interaction style, the environment, the schedule and expectations all have an effect on children.

Discipline problems can be expected when children are bored or rushed, when they have to wait, when they are over-stimulated without time to unwind, or when unreasonable expectations are put on them.

Staff shall use positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. If the staff maintains a positive attitude, creates an environment responsive to the child's needs and abilities, and provides interesting and appropriate learning activities; disruptive behavior should be kept to a minimum.

Whenever a discipline situation occurs, the following principles will be asserted:

- The goal of discipline is to help children build their own self-control, not to have them behave through adult-imposed control.
- Any discipline technique will be most effective if it is applied in a way that maintains or enhances the child's self-esteem.
- Discipline must immediately follow the behavior. Children cannot be expected to relate future consequences to their current actions.
- Match the technique you use to the behavior and the child. No technique will be effective in every situation.
- Help the child understand why he/she is being disciplined - after the child has gained self-control.
- Effective discipline requires follow through and consistency. Idle or impossible threats encourage children to test rules and push limits. When you use a disciplinary action, make sure the problem-solving solution works, that a re-directed child becomes involved elsewhere, or that a child in the classroom's calm area has an adult with whom to talk.
- Progress may be slow. If either you or the children are accustomed to other techniques, time and patience are required for these ideas to be effective. It takes time for children to understand self-control instead of adult imposed control. Also, it may take you a while to be consistent and in control of yourself.

- Help others understand the positive approach to discipline. Emphasize why helping children learn to control him/her self is an essential part of becoming an independent and caring person. When adults see that spanking stimulates children to fight and hit because children copy adult behavior, they may be more inclined to adopt other more effective methods.

- Any one of the following discipline techniques may be appropriate as long as the previously stated principles are maintained:

Redirection - When reasons are stated, children can soon learn to redirect themselves.

Restraining/Holding - In some situations a child will be so upset and so intense, that he/she is unable to talk. An adult can hold the child with just sufficient strength to protect the child and other children, and help restore calm. A child screaming and thrashing may need to be soothed in this manner before discussing the incident.*

* Prior to implementing any restraining techniques, the teaching staff must work with the education staff and parent to assess the situation and develop an appropriate behavior plan for that child. The Mental Health Consultant is usually involved in this process as well.

Ignoring inappropriate behavior - Children who behave inappropriately often receive the most attention from adults. Annoying, rather than harmful behaviors are best ignored. This technique usually takes longer to be effective than other methods and at first the inappropriate behavior may increase as children diligently try to attract your attention. These behaviors will also escalate if you sometimes ignore and sometimes criticize the children. Be consistent.

Time-out - The following principles must be observed for time-out to be a positive learning experience leading toward self-discipline:

- Time-out is not a punishment. Children should not be threatened with or fearful of a time-out
- Time-out should not be humiliating. Consequently, there should not be a pre-determined time-out chair or place
- Time-out should last as long as the child feels is needed to calm down. If children underestimate the length of time they need, they can be asked to try to calm down again in time-out
- Time-out can be a time for the adult and child to talk about feelings after the child has calmed down. An adult's presence can help calm an angry child, but only after calm has been restored will it be productive to talk

Staff and volunteers shall be prohibited from using the following as a means of discipline:

- Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, slapping, spanking, or inflicting a form of corporal punishment
- Restricting a child's movements by binding or tying him/her
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, hallway, or similar cubical

The above Discipline Policy is taken from the High/Scope TOTT manual on Child Management.

Clothing

Dress your child for play. Children will be involved in messy activities – paint, glue, playdough and sand/water play. You will want to send them in clothes that they can get dirty. Your child will be comfortable and willing to play if they do not have to worry about staying clean.

Each Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool child should have a change of clothes at the center in case it is needed (shirt, pants, underwear, socks). Please label all clothing. Sometimes accidents cannot be avoided. Early Head Start children have a labeled box for each child enrolled in the center; extra clothing can be kept there.

The best shoes for school are tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes. Other shoes may be dangerous both in the classroom and outside. If your child wears boots to school, be sure to send shoes to wear in the classroom. Paper booties are available for those visiting the Early Head Start Center. Bare feet are **strictly prohibited** for both children and adults.

Anyone entering an Early Head Start Infant/Toddler Center MUST REMOVE HIS/HER SHOES. Infants and toddlers spend a great deal of time on the floor, learning and exploring. Removing outdoor shoes helps keep their learning environment clean. Shoes should be left in the entrance to the center. Shoe covers are available. Please remove your child's shoes and leave them in their cubby. You should provide another pair of shoes or slippers to be worn in the center by your child.

Early Head Start also requires labeling of all feeding equipment along with shoes and clothing brought to the center. You will find a place at the bottom of your child's daily report that lets you know if he/she needs additional diapers for extended day care.

Code of Conduct

- Swearing/Cursing – No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not.
- Threatening of employees, children, other parents or adults associated with the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center – Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.
- Physical/Verbal Punishment of your child or other children –Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool does not support nor condone corporal punishment of children. Such acts are not permitted in the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the Teacher or FSW and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.
- Confrontational interactions with employees, other parents or associates of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program – While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

- Violations of the Confidentiality Policy – Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family but all children, families and employees associated with the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program.
- Smoking and alcohol use are prohibited on agency property and at agency events.

Confidentiality Policy

Within the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents or staff, as Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and other health related information of anyone associated with Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool.

Outside of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, or overall general misbehavior). You may be curious or concerned about the other child, but our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center are strictly prohibited from discussing anything confidential about another child with you.

All staff, parents and volunteers participating in the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program are expected to follow the Confidentiality Policy to protect the privacy of all children and families. Parents/staff will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement as required by licensing regulations.

This Confidentiality Policy also includes social networking websites, such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter, etc., where staff, parents and volunteers are not allowed to post any agency confidential information.

Daily Operation/School Closing Policy

Early Head Start Programs operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Early Head Start does not operate on Federal holidays. Early Head Start Centers are closed on the last Friday of every month for staff training or cleaning and also closed for two weeks during the program year for center repairs and maintenance. These generally occur at the end of August. When this happens, you will be notified in advance. Read your monthly newsletter and calendar and watch for postings in the center! **It is recommended that all parents receiving extended-day childcare services have a backup childcare provider in the event the center is not operating. Parents are encouraged to contact their FSW if they need assistance in finding alternative licensed childcare.**

Head Start/Preschool Programs operate from October to May. They operate Monday through Thursday (Fridays are set aside for make-up days, training, special field trips or Family Days) with holiday breaks. Breaks usually coincide with the local school district break schedule, although Head Start/Preschool breaks may be somewhat shorter. A monthly calendar noting

specific dates will be provided. Most sites operate 3 ½ hours per day. State funded programs may have a shorter day.

Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Centers may also close due to **SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS**. Listen to the radio. If you hear that your local area school district is closed due to weather, then the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool classroom/center is also closed. If you are a Home Base Family, when the road conditions warrant school closings in **your district**, your Home Visitor will phone you to reschedule your visit. Any playgroups scheduled for that day will be rescheduled.

When local school districts are on a **delay** due to weather, the morning sessions for Head Start/Preschool centers will be cancelled or may be moved to a later time. Individual centers will notify parents of the status of their classrooms. Early Head Start will follow local school delay. Every effort will be made to make up missed classes, usually on the first available Friday (your child's teacher will notify you regarding the make up day).

Individual classrooms may close for a variety of reasons other than weather. If this happens, you will be notified in advance, if possible. Parents should refer to the Center Information at the beginning of this handbook if they have questions and need to contact classroom staff.

Extended Care for Early Head Start Children

Some Early Head Start children may be eligible for extended services where parents pay per hour while they work or are attending school. Scheduling and payment is done through the Early Head Start Site Director. Some families may be eligible for State of Michigan child care payments. If the family does not qualify for this assistance they will be responsible for making the payments themselves.

Grievance Policy

When a parent has a concern regarding the program, it should first be discussed with your child's Teacher, Lead Caregiver or FSW. If the issue is not resolved at the center level, the Program Manager assigned to your center and/or Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Director may be contacted. If the situation cannot be resolved at this level, contact the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Director for a copy of the written Grievance Policy. This document is also located in the Policy Council Representative Manual.

Home Visit/Center Visit Policy

Center Based Option: **Teachers/Lead Caregivers are required to make a minimum of two (2) home visits and two (2) center visits during the school year.** One of the benefits of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program is the home visit. Upon entering the program, the Teacher/Lead Caregiver and/or assistant makes a home visit to meet you and your child. Throughout the program year another home visit is made. You will have the opportunity to speak one on one with the Teacher/Lead Caregiver regarding your child's progress. These visits are scheduled at your convenience and give you the opportunity to speak with your child's Teacher/Lead Caregiver in a setting that is comfortable and familiar to both you and your child. This is also a time to voice your concerns about your child's development and to set goals that will enhance your child's education. Your child will take great pride in these visits and will see that family and Teachers/Caregivers work together, thus making school a positive learning experience. Please make every effort to assist us in meeting this requirement.

Home Based Option: The EHS Home Visitor provides one home visit per week, per family. These home visits last approximately one and one half hours (1 ½) each. The Home Visitor supports the fact that the home is the child's primary learning environment. Home Visitors work with parents to increase parenting skills, and to help them enhance their child's growth and development. The Home Visitor accomplishes this by modeling good educational strategies and providing educational activities for the parent and child in the home.

Immunization Policy

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program is required to comply with the rules and regulations of the Public Health Code (PA116) State of Michigan and Head Start Performance Standards. It is a requirement that your child's immunizations be up-to-date for their age according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention regulations upon entry into the program. Immunization requirements for Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program

DTP	-Series of four (4) doses and a booster at 4th birthday
Polio	-Series of three (3) doses and a booster at 4th birthday
MMR	-One (1) dose, and a booster at 4th birthday
HIB	-Complete series or one (1) dose at or after fifteen (15) months
Hepatitis B	-Series of three (3) doses
Chickenpox	-One (1) dose or parent's statement that child has had Chicken Pox
Pneumococcal	- As required by CDC

Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool staff will continue to advise parents regarding immunization requirements for Kindergarten entry.

Every effort will be made to assist parents as needed to meet the above program requirements. In all cases, if the requirements are not met, your child may be excluded from the program and placed on a wait list for reinstatement.

Medication Policy

In general, staff is **NOT** allowed to give any medication at school. Medication will only be given when prescribed by your child's doctor and when specific forms and procedures have been completed. No medication such as Epi-Pens, inhalers, antibiotics, and over the counter products such as sunscreen, diaper rash ointment, etc. may be sent to school in backpacks or diaper bags.

Moving to a Different Area

If you are moving within Chippewa, Luce or Mackinac counties, call the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool office with your new address. If there are openings in the area you are moving, every effort will be made to enroll your child in the program. If there are no openings, your child will be placed on a waiting list.

Nutrition Policy

Meals served are based on the dietary allowances for the appropriate age group and according to the requirements of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All centers serve food of sufficient quantity and quality for young children.

- Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool never forces a child to eat.
- Early Head Start serves ready-to-feed iron fortified infant formula to infants less than 1 year of age. According to the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing rules, we must serve this formula in bottles with disposable liners. If you wish to feed your child a different formula or your child will not use the bottles with the disposable liners, you will be required to sign a waiver stating that you do not wish your child to receive the formula provided by the EHS center.
- Prepared infant foods are served in compliance with State of Michigan Child Care licensing rules and CACFP regulations. When solid foods and table foods are introduced, we work closely with parents in order to make the feeding experience a positive one for your infant.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods, serve themselves and eat until comfortably satisfied. They are also encouraged to clean their eating area. All meals are served family style.
- Food **CANNOT** be used as a reward or punishment.
- Every effort is made to provide for children who have specific dietary needs.
- Staff and volunteers are required to participate in meals with the children.
- **Food brought in from home for any occasion is not allowed due to program policy.**
- Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit will be kept out of children's reach.
- **Unhealthy snacks will not be served.**

Child and Adult Care Food Program:

- The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In accordance with CACFP and the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program, nutritious meals are served. Food served will provide at least 1/3 of the minimum daily requirements. The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program **DOES NOT** meet all the daily nutritional requirements of your child.
- According to CACFP regulations, unless a doctor's statement is on file regarding food allergies, no item may be withheld or listed as an allergen.

There are no fees for meals.

Outdoor Play Policy

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program provides outdoor play to optimize all areas of development for children in our care. Children (0-5 years) shall play outdoors daily when weather does not pose a health risk to children. The National Weather Service web site shall be the reference source for weather checks for the tri-county area.

Children will not utilize outdoor time when:

1. The National Weather Service identifies the wind-chill at or below 15 degrees F. The staff will carefully consider all factors when determining if outdoor play time will occur. The current supervisor on staff will make the final determination for outdoor play time.
2. The National Weather Service identifies the temperature to be above 90 degrees F.
3. Air quality announcements from local health authorities or through ozone alerts shall require children to remain inside where air conditioners exchange indoor with outdoor air.

4. Children with respiratory health problems (i.e. Asthma) shall not play outdoors when unhealthy air quality levels are reached and announced by local health authorities.

Recommendations for Parents:

5. In warm weather, children shall be protected from the sun/insects by using shade, protective clothing, sunscreen with at least SPF-15 and insect repellant no higher than 30% concentration of Deet in products. Insect repellant will not be used on children under 2 months of age. Parents may elect to administer sunscreen/insect repellant at home, before school or have it administered at the center. The Medication Administration forms will need to be filled out before sunscreen/insect repellant can be administered at Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool.
6. Protective clothing for warm and cold weather should be worn as appropriate for the current, warm or cold weather conditions. We will encourage children to drink water during physical activity in warm weather. In cold weather children's clothing shall be layered and dry. Outerwear should include mittens, jacket, boots, a hat and snow pants. Staff will check children's extremities for normal warmth and color every 15 minutes outdoors.
7. All current and new staff will be trained to recognize symptoms of frostbite, hypothermia, and heatstroke. Written instructions for identification of frostbite, hypothermia, and heatstroke will be provided to staff.

Parent Fund Policy

Fundraising activities must be discussed at Parent Meetings and the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program Administrator must approve all fundraising activities in advance. All monies raised from parent fund activities are to be submitted to the CLM Community Action Agency Finance Office. Under no circumstances are funds to be kept at the center or at a parent's home. The Agency Finance Office will deposit the funds into the respective parent fund account. Checks mailed to the Central Office should be made payable to **CLM Community Action Agency**. Cash deposits **WILL NOT** be accepted.

All expenditures need prior Parent Committee approval. If a center is raising funds for a specific project or piece of equipment, parents may decide to carry the funds over to the next program year. If not, funds should be spent during the year they are earned.

Parent Involvement Policy

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program is mandated to provide a variety of opportunities for parents to volunteer in the program. Parents participate on a variety of levels. These include but are not limited to:

- Participation in center Parent Meetings
- Providing input to Policy Council and to center staff
- Participation in program planning
- Participation as a representative to the Policy Council
- Assisting with annual program self-assessment
- Assisting in the classroom

By volunteering in the classroom and during playgroups parents:

- Gain a better understanding of what the program is doing for your child and how young children learn and develop
- Show your child that you are interested in his/her school experience

- Give the staff an opportunity to know you better
- Assist with classroom operations/activities and playgroups

Work with your child at home, reinforcing activities that the child has experienced in the classroom, at playgroups and on home visits.

EVERY PARENT IS IMPORTANT AND THE TIME AND EFFORT YOU PUT INTO THE PROGRAM IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED BY YOUR CHILD AND THE EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START/PRESCHOOL STAFF!

Parent Meetings/Family Days

Parent Meetings and Family Days occur on a regular basis at your child's Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool center. The purpose of these events is two fold. First, it provides an opportunity for parents to connect, learn about and receive information important to their families, career, and current needs. Second, it is to gain parent input in all aspects of program planning. Several topics of interest may be presented at the monthly Parent Meeting or off-site at Parent Workshops. This is also a time to socialize and meet other parents, see your child's learning environment, and talk with the staff. Please plan on attending for a pleasant experience!

The first opportunity for the parents to get together will be scheduled in the fall. During the short Parent Meeting, the parents in attendance will elect two parents to represent their classroom at the monthly Policy Council Meetings; one representative and one alternate. Parents are encouraged to provide input and participate in all areas of the program.

Phone Calls

The center staff is available for telephone calls. Staff will let you know at the beginning of the year what is the best time of day to telephone. In the event of an emergency, please call the center or Central Office at any time.

Cell Phone Use

In order to ensure the safety of Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool children, cell phone use is prohibited in the classroom or any function when children are present.

Photographs/Videos/Audio

In order that we may protect the privacy of Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool children and their families, parents/visitors are asked to obtain permission from a Head Start/Early Head Start/Preschool Program Teacher/Lead Caregiver prior to taking photos, either in the center, on the bus or during field trips and other outings. Photos of children other than your own may not be shared on social networking sites.

Physical and Dental Exam/Health Screenings Policy

All children **MUST** have a completed Physical Exam (EPSDT Physical) on file in the Head Start/Preschool Central office. Children who have NOT met this requirement within 30 days of enrollment **WILL BE EXCLUDED** and may be dropped from the program. The health screenings required for all programs include: vision, hearing, blood pressure, height, weight, hematocrit/hemoglobin, physical inspection, and blood lead screening (depending on child's age). The Early Head Start Program follows the EPSDT guideline for Well Baby Checks.

Parents may want to contact their insurance providers regarding coverage for required components.

The Head Start Program requires a dental examination within 45 days of enrollment. The Early Head Start program requires a dental inspection at each well baby check up to 36 months. A dental exam performed by a licensed dentist, is required at 12 months of age and once a year after.

Policy Council

The purpose of the Policy Council is to provide the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool staff with parent input regarding program activities and business, and to ensure that the needs of children and families are addressed.

Policy Council is comprised of one representative and one alternate per classroom and meets monthly. Home Base Families also have representation on Policy Council. Representatives are selected and voted for by other parents from the classroom at either the Parent Orientation or the first Parent Meeting.

The Role of Policy Council Representatives:

- Attend the Policy Council meetings once a month. (Mileage and child care are paid each time you attend the Policy Council Meeting)
- Provide a link between program staff and classroom parents
- Attend Parent Meetings to share Policy Council information with parents, and in turn, bring their input back to Policy Council
- Provide input regarding program planning and activities
- Participate in the annual self assessment of the program

This is one way you can participate and play an active role in the program and your child's education. If you are interested in participating in an opportunity for personal growth and program enrichment, call your Family Services Worker, Teacher, Lead Caregiver or your child's Home Visitor. WE NEED YOU!

Short Term Exclusion Policy

EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START /PRESCHOOL CENTER BASED:

Children who have been ill (i.e. persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing or unexplained lethargy) during the night or early in the morning should stay at home. A child should also stay at home if he/she does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities. The staff cannot adequately care for a sick child without compromising the care of the other children.

EARLY HEAD START HOME BASED:

Parents are asked to contact the Early Head Start Home Visitor or the Home Visitor's office if a child or another member of the household has any of the following symptoms or diagnosis, so a home visit can be rescheduled. Early Head Start parents are asked to inform the center when their child is ill.

The following conditions also apply to the staff and volunteers that work with the children. A child is too sick to attend the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center if they have any of

the following symptoms, unless a health provider determines that the child is well enough to attend and that the illness is not contagious.

- **FEVER:** (Above 100 degrees F. axillary or 101 degrees F. orally) accompanied by behavioral changes and other signs or symptoms of illness (i.e. child looks and acts sick)
- **SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE SEVERE ILLNESS:** (i.e., Persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing or unexplained lethargy)
- **DIARRHEA:** Changes from the child's usual stool pattern, increased frequency of stools, multiple loose/watery stools, stools that run out of the diaper or child cannot get to the bathroom in time or diarrhea accompanied by other symptoms of illness. *Exception would be if child is taking medication that could induce loose stools i.e. antibiotics (should have been on antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school) Circumstances should be evaluated.
- **VOMITING:** More than once in the previous 24 hours
- **MOUTH SORES:** Accompanied with drooling
- **RASH:** Spreading or open/weeping sores

A child is too sick to attend the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center if they have any of the following diagnosis from a health provider (until treated and/or are no longer contagious):

- **HEAD LICE:** Until after treatment and Nit free.
- **CHICKENPOX:** Until six days after the start of the rash or all sores have crusted over
- **IMPETIGO:** Until 24 hours after treatment started
- **INFECTIOUS CONJUNCTIVITIS/PINK EYE:** With eye discharge that is yellow, white or green – until 24 hours after treatment has started
- **SCABIES OR OTHER INFESTATIONS:** Until 24 hours after treatment.
- **FIFTH'S DISEASE:** When child feels well enough to be in school.
- **STREP THROAT, SCARLET FEVER, OR OTHER STREP INFECTION:** Until 24 hours after treatment started and the child is fever-free
- **SHINGLES:** If lesions cannot be covered, until they are dry
- **PERTUSSIS:** Until five days after treatment started
- **TUBERCULOSIS (TB):** Until a health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious
- **MUMPS:** Until nine (9) days after the start of symptoms (i.e. swelling of cheeks)
- **HEPATITIS A:** Until seven (7) days after start of symptoms (i.e. jaundice)
- **MEASLES:** Until six (6) days after start of rash
- **RUBELLA (German Measles):** Until six (6) days after the start of the rash
- **ORAL HERPES:** If the child is drooling or lesions cannot be covered – until lesions heal
- **RSV:** Until a health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious and child is symptom free

Children that become ill during the time that they are at the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Center will be sent home. The staff will call the parents to come and pick up the child. If transportation is not available, the Head Start/Preschool bus may be available to

bring children home. While the children are waiting to be picked up they will be separated from other children in a designated comfortable area.

Should an Early Head Start child or parent become ill during a group socialization activity, the parent and the child will be brought home or the parent may use his or her own means of transportation. If a child or parent becomes ill during the home visit, the home visit will be rescheduled for another time.

IF A PHYSICIAN OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDS EXCLUSION FOR ANY ILLNESS NOT LISTED ABOVE, THE CHILD OR STAFF PERSON SHOULD REMAIN OUT OF SCHOOL/WORK AS DIRECTED. They may return with a release from the doctor.

Smoke-Free Policy

Due to the acknowledged hazards, both to adult non-smokers and especially to young children, arising from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, it shall be the policy of the CLM Community Action Agency Preschool Program to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children and volunteers. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and applies to both employees and non-employee participants of the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program. Parents of **Home Base** children are asked to refrain from smoking during the weekly home visit also.

Toileting

Young children sometimes have toileting accidents. If your child has an accident at school, staff will change your child and send home the soiled clothing. Please wash the clothing and send a second set of extra clothing the next day. We will work closely with you and your child during toilet training. Consistency pays off!

Transportation Policy

Transportation services are provided in most areas. Depending on location some children may not be transported by the bus. Routes are determined so that the majority of the children may be transported in an efficient manner.

- Children who are transported must be ready to leave their homes and board the bus in a timely manner.
- Routes will be done the same way every day. It is not possible to determine an exact time the bus will arrive. After the first week or so, you will know the approximate time. Many things such as road conditions, weather, attendance, etc., can affect the schedule.
- If your child has a daycare provider, please inform them of our Transportation Policy.
- The bus will not be able to go back and pick up your child if he/she is not ready when the bus arrives. You will be responsible for transporting your child to the center.
- You or a person you have designated on the Child Information Card must be at the drop off destination for your child at the end of the school day. If you are not at the drop off destination, your child will be returned to the center, and you will be responsible for picking him/her up.
- If you or those listed on the Child Information Card cannot be contacted and your child is not picked up within one (1) hour after they are returned to school, Protective Services or the local police may be called.

- Parents may ride the bus on their volunteer day or for Parent Meetings, if space is available.
- **APPROPRIATE RESTRAINTS (SAFETY BELTS) MUST BE WORN BY ALL PERSONS RIDING THE HEAD START/PRESCHOOL BUS.**

If you transport your child to the center:

Any time a child is dropped off or picked up by the parent, you must be on time. You must sign your child in or out of the center and notify the Teacher or Lead Caregiver of your arrival. Never leave/take your child without speaking with a center employee first. Anyone else picking up your child must be listed on the Child Information Card and will be asked to show picture identification. **This is for your child's protection.**

Volunteering

WE LOVE VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteering is a very important part of our program. Every hour helps us reach our volunteer goal but more importantly, it strengthens the child, parent, and school relationship. And once again, we need you. Much of our funding depends on our ability to recruit parent and community volunteers to maintain high levels of monthly volunteer hours. Research shows that children with involved parents have greater academic success! **You are always welcome at the center!**

Volunteer Opportunities in the Classroom

1. Help the Teacher or Lead Caregiver
2. Work with the children
3. Read a book or tell a story
4. Help with tooth brushing
5. Help with meals
6. Help with snacks
7. Help with clean up
8. Go on field trips
9. Share a talent or teach a skill (talk about your job, play an instrument, etc.)

Volunteer Opportunities at the Center

1. Attend Parent Committee meetings at the center
2. Serve as an officer of the Parent Committee or Policy Council
3. Attend conferences, workshops and seminars where you represent Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool and report back to your group
4. Work on posters, parent bulletin board, make name tags, etc.
5. Volunteer as a Bus Aide with training and CPR/First Aid
6. Preparing refreshments for Parent Meetings/Family Days

Volunteer Opportunities at Home

1. Classroom prep work (cutting out materials, tracing, etc.)
2. Make play dough, etc. for the classroom materials
3. Repair center toys or equipment

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program is mandated to provide a variety of opportunities for parents to volunteer in the program. Parents participate on a variety of levels. These include but are not limited to the following:

- ❑ Policy making by participating as a representative on Policy Council
- ❑ Participating in center Parent Meetings, providing input to Policy Council and to Center Staff
- ❑ Assisting with annual program assessment
- ❑ Participating in the classroom as assistant to the Teacher/Lead Caregiver or assist Home Visitor with play groups

Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Services

Disability Services

The Disability Services that the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program provides include comprehensive services for children with special needs through early identification, intervention, and programming in collaboration with other agencies and programs, acting in an advocacy role on behalf of children and families.

What Disabilities Services Can Do For You: The preschool years are critical in the physical, mental and emotional growth of your child. Learning problems or physical problems that are found early, can often be corrected. The Disabilities Coordinator will assist in the following ways:

- Assist in referring your child if necessary
- Review forms completed by parents to determine needs
- Review screenings to determine needs
- Discuss special needs with the family as they arise
- Advocate and support families who qualify for school district services
- Assist in writing an Individual Lesson Plan (ILP) for the child and family

What You Can Do: Take an active role in sharing information about your child with the Teacher and the Disabilities Coordinator. By doing so, you will help us to provide experiences that fit your child's specific needs. Here are some of the things you can do to provide a quality experience in the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program:

- Inform staff of conditions that you suspect or are aware of
- Notify staff of changes as they occur
- Sign releases of information if you are receiving services
- Take an active role in the writing of your child's Individual Lesson Plan (ILP)
- Call the Disabilities Coordinator with concerns, ideas or questions

Education Services

The Education Services that are provided strive to offer a comprehensive, individualized approach to learning through developmentally appropriate activities in the development of social, emotional, cognitive, language and motor skills with emphasis on positive self-esteem.

Celebrations and Holidays: Holidays in Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool are celebrated in a variety of ways. Many of the children talk about family traditions and various ways they celebrate holidays in their homes. In keeping with our curriculum, it is our goal to support the interests of the children and keep away from planned programs. We support children's interests in the holidays by participating in their conversations and role-play about the festivities. We celebrate with children and families in ways that encourage all participants to be actively involved.

Program policies require any food served for celebrations and holidays must be prepared at the center.

Field Trips: The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program frequently supplements the curriculum with field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend field trips as part of the Enrollment Packet. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including destination, date, time, and reason for trip. Field trip information may also be included on monthly calendars.

Early Head Start children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Parents will not be permitted to transport any child, other than their own, on an Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool sponsored trip.

What the Education Services Can Do for You: This service area provides each child with experiences to meet their educational needs. The individual education plan for your child invites you to participate in your child's education as a teaching partner. The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program provides you with the opportunity to observe child development and child management techniques that build on your knowledge and skills.

The Education Services:

- Provides your child with many learning experiences
- Encourages your child to “work” at playing
- Builds your child's self esteem
- Involves you as a teaching partner
- Builds your knowledge and skills about child development and child management

What You Can Do:

- Make sure your child attends school daily
- Participate and volunteer whenever possible
- Talk with your child about school
- Keep your child's Teacher or Lead Caregiver informed
- Call the Teacher, Family Services Worker, Lead Caregiver or Program Manager with any questions, ideas or concerns
- Attend Education Advisory Committee Meetings
- Attend Policy Council
- Attend child development training

Family Services

Family Services is committed to bringing comprehensive services to families. This includes training and resources that may be beneficial and would assist in building family strengths.

What Family Services Can Do for You: A Family Services Worker (FSW) is assigned to your child's classroom. Your FSW can provide you with information on services, resources and trainings that are available if you are interested. This is done in a variety of ways:

- **Goal Setting** – During the first home visit and throughout the year, FSWs will review family goals, needs and strengths.
- **Parent Meetings/Family Days** - The FSW will assist the teaching staff with Parent Meetings at your center. A variety of issues and topics will be discussed.
- **Parent Meetings** - Parents have an opportunity to attend parent meetings held at their centers throughout the year. This gives parents an opportunity to have in-put into

program planning including special activities such as field trips, fundraisers, and other classroom events.

- **Family Days** - Family days are another opportunity for parents to get together while including the entire family. The families and staff at the center plan family day activities.
- **Parent Volunteering Opportunities** - The FSW works in conjunction with the teaching staff to provide a variety of ways you can participate in the classroom, at home, or as a Policy Council Representative.
- **Family Survey Questionnaire** - is a form the parent completes during the year. Your FSW will call you during the year to discuss and clarify your concerns and needs.
- **Referrals** - When you discuss a need or situation with your child's Teacher, she can submit a referral to your FSW. Your FSW will contact you and assist in developing a plan of action.
- **Self-Referral** - If you are in need of assistance or just want to talk with someone about an issue, please call your FSW.
- **Assist with Health Services** (see Health Services)

What You Can Do: As a parent, become involved in your child's education. Show your child that home and school work together. Ways to become involved:

- Send your child to school daily
- Volunteer in the classroom and at playgroups
- Attend Monthly Parent Meetings and Family Days
- Serve as a Policy Council Representative
- Go to Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool workshops
- Attend Policy Council Meetings
- Complete the parent evaluation which is then used to plan program improvements
- Call your FSW with any concerns, ideas or questions

Health Services

Health Services commit to the overall goal of healthy children and families through prevention, identification and early intervention of health problems. The Health component links families with the medical/dental community and other resources, emphasizes good health, nutrition and encourages positive, mentally healthy attitudes and practices. All medical and dental information is submitted to the child's FSW or Teacher. It is reviewed throughout the year by the Health Services Coordinator, and you will be notified if information is not up-to-date.

What Health Services can do for you?

- Assess your child's overall health status
- Act as a resource for health information
- Be available to discuss your concerns related to health
- Attend meetings that plan for children's health needs
- Assure that you are notified when health records are not up-to-date

What You Can Do: Take an active role in keeping your child healthy:

- Take your child for a yearly physical exam or EPSDT age appropriate well baby checks
- Keep your child's immunizations (shots) up-to-date
- Take your child for dental checkups every 6 months

- Submit health forms by the due date
- Keep your child home when ill
- Attend health meetings when requested
- Call the FSW, your child's Teacher or Lead Caregiver with any ideas, questions or concerns
- Attend Health Advisory Meetings

Mental Health Services

A licensed psychologist is available to provide Mental Health Consultation regarding specific child and classroom management techniques. The Mental Health Consultant is also available to work directly with families upon request. Appropriate referrals can be made if necessary.

What the Mental Health Consultant Can Do For You: provide the parent, teacher or lead caregiver with an understanding of a child's behavior through early screening, intervention and training. The Mental Health Consultant can assist in the following ways:

- Observe the child in the classroom
- Develop a behavior management action plan for the classroom
- Assist the teaching and caregiving staff in implementing the plan
- Discuss behavior management classroom concerns with parents
- Provide information and referrals individually to parents as requested
- Promote positive mental health practices for children, families, and staff
- Assist in identification and referral services
- Coordinate mental health activities with other Head Start components

What You Can Do:

- Keep the staff informed of concerns that you may have about your child
- Collaborate with the Teacher or Lead Caregiver and Mental Health Consultant to best meet the needs of your child
- Ask about the Parent Education Program offered

Nutrition Services

A Registered Dietitian reviews all program menus prior to and during the school year. The Registered Dietitian is also available to meet with families regarding nutritional needs and concerns throughout the year and works directly with families upon request.

What the Nutrition Consultant can do for you:

- Provide information regarding food service rules and regulations
- Be available to discuss specific concerns and individual needs
- Meet with you if your child has specific dietary needs

What You Can Do:

- Please contact your child's Teacher, Lead Caregiver or FSW if you would like to meet with the dietitian
- Keep the staff informed if your child's nutrition needs change

Transition Services

Children and families are supported during transitions. Parents are assisted in understanding what to expect in new environments; and staff assist children and parents throughout the year with transitions in and out of the programs by:

- Encouraging children and parents to visit the next placement, before the children begin. The parents and children visit, take part in sample activities, and meet staff and other children and parents;
- Making orientation information available, including information about parental rights and opportunities for parent participation so that they are prepared for active involvement in the activities and committees of their child's Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program or next placement.

Transitioning children suspected or diagnosed with disabilities into Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool or next placement

Head Start collaborates with the Intermediate School District to assure referrals are received and services are provided to both programs. Parents are informed of programs by both agency's staff.

A meeting will be arranged with the service providers, the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool teachers/caregivers and the parent(s) to discuss the child and to determine needs and what the staff needs to know in order to make the transition smooth. This meeting will take place prior to the child's enrollment in the program or as soon thereafter as possible.

If a child is suspected or diagnosed with a disability during the enrollment process, Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool staff will contact the parents to explain eligibility requirements and services. If after the initial meeting the parent is interested in enrollment, releases of information will be secured to gather information relevant to the disabling condition. If required, a referral to Early On, the School District or Local Education Agency (LEA) will be made to request evaluations, determination of eligibility, and IEP/IFSP development.

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool parents sign a release form upon enrollment into the program, allowing all developmental and health records to be released to the public schools or appropriate agency. The Education Advisory Committee meets annually for the coordination of services between Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool and the Public or local schools. A transition form is written on all 3-5 year old children and is forwarded to the school the child is attending. Parents and Teachers review the Transition Form at the last Parent/Teacher conference. The parent then signs the form allowing the Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool program to forward the information to the next placement.

The Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program will facilitate the evaluation process by LEA for children with suspected or diagnosed disabilities that are brought to the attention of staff during the end of the program year. Program staff will assist parents in completing and signing the necessary observation/assessment forms and releases before the end of the school year.

Transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start

For children transitioning into Head Start, a transition form is completed and information is shared with the Head Start staff as confidentiality allows. Because Early Head Start operates during the summer months, transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start begins 6 months prior to the child's 3rd birthday.

When possible, the children transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start are given time in the Head Start classroom to explore and become familiar with their soon-to-be new environment. Families are encouraged to be a part of this process as well. Family Service Workers, Teachers and Lead Caregivers work closely together to ease transition.

Transitioning Children to Kindergarten

Head Start will support families as their children leave the Head Start program to continue education with the School District of their choice. Support will be offered in a variety of forms:

- Kindergarten classroom visits will be arranged to familiarize the children with the new classroom environment. Together the Kindergarten Teacher and Head Start/Preschool Teacher will previously develop an activity that will orient the children to the Kindergarten setting. Head Start parents will be invited to accompany their child to the new and exciting environment.
- A Head Start/Preschool Kindergarten Parent Meeting will be arranged to discuss:
 - School District expectations and curriculums
 - Ideas for summer parent support of child development
 - Information of how parents can take an active role in their child's education
 - Special Education Services
- In the spring, a Parent/Teacher conference will take place to assist parents in understanding their child's progress over the year and identify areas of support for Kindergarten entry.
- Also in the spring, transition information and activities will be distributed for parent support of child development.

We are here to help

***If you have any questions/concerns regarding any of the services provided
please contact the***

Early Head Start/Head Start/Preschool Program

Central Office

(906) 632-3363 or (800) 562-4963

headstart@clmcaa.com