



## Fulmont Early Childhood Services

providing

Head Start and UPK

Programming

Parent Handbook

2021-2022



*Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.*  
*Early Childhood Services*



Dear Parents and Guardians,

We look forward to an exciting year and want to extend a warm welcome to you and your child as you begin your journey in our Early Childhood Services department.

You, as a parent or guardian, are your child's first and best teacher. You play the most vital role in your child's development and success. Our Early Childhood Services department provides families opportunities for growth and support. The more that you participate, the more rewarding the experience will be for you and your child. We encourage you to interact in all aspects of your child's experience in the program and offer this handbook, so you may become familiar with our procedures and expectations.

Our program adheres to the highest performance standards to ensure your child receives quality learning opportunities and life lessons to prepare them for a smooth transition to kindergarten. A primary program goal is school readiness and attendance is a critical part to its success. It is important that your child attend programming on time, every day. We want to lay the foundation for good attendance habits for life.

Play is critical to the growth and development of children. Toys and play materials are tools that help children learn about themselves and the world around them. As children play, they learn how to get along with others, become proficient in problem solving, and develop their fine and gross motor skills. The best part is they will have a whole bunch of fun doing it!

We recognize that this experience will be new and different in most cases. You should never hesitate to ask any questions you have about your child or the program. Your child's teacher is more than happy to field any suggestions, comments, or concerns that you may have.

As we embark on this journey together, we know that the Head Start program will have a positive and meaningful impact in your child's life, and yours as well. We look forward to working with you and your family this year!

Sincerely,

Marianne Suchocki

Fulmont Early Childhood Services Director

## Program Goals

Head Start provides educational and social activities to **promote your child's overall learning and development for school readiness**. Programs are offered in caring and creative environments so children can explore freely and safely. Through positive interactions and guidance from staff, your child will also form friendships that will last a lifetime. School readiness is a key goal of the Head Start program. All children develop at individual rates and learning in the early years is enhanced through exploratory play and social experiences.

Head Start knows the major responsibility of raising children rests with parents. To bridge lessons learned at school with home, **Head Start welcomes and strongly encourages you to participate in your child's education**. We hope you will volunteer in the classroom, participate in parent/teacher conferences, or serve on the Head Start Policy Council.

**Head Start not only provides services to your child but to you – the caregiver – as well**. Classroom staff and Family Advocates can help you find support to promote your family's overall health, lead you on a path to self-sufficiency, and help you reach your goals.

## Head Start Classrooms

### CLASSROOM TEAMS

Head Start serves 285 children and families throughout Fulton and Montgomery Counties. Amsterdam services 108 children on Truax rd., 115 in the McNab elementary school in Gloversville, 30 in the Canajoharie elementary school, 16 in the Johnstown school district and 16 in the OESJ elementary school. A team that includes a Classroom Teacher, a Assistant Teachers and a Center Aide (as needed) leads each class. Educational programming is supported through transportation, nutrition, health, and family and community engagement services and activities. The child to adult ratio is 8:1 in classrooms where the predominant age is 4, 7:1 in classrooms where the predominant age is 3. In support of school readiness, staff will be addressed in Mr./Mrs./Ms. "Last Name" format to prepare our children for mainstream Kindergarten. Parents are encouraged to do the same.

Head Start staff will utilize video to record activities occurring in the classroom. The purpose of the video is to allow staff to assess what the children are learning and to reflect on the interaction between the children and their teachers. The videos offer supervisors an opportunity to support their staff by providing training to increase their professional development.

Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD is the online assessment tool that is used by teachers to plan and implement content-rich, developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that support active learning and promote children's progress in all developmental areas. Staff are trained to plan for each child's individual learning and development through ongoing observations and documentation. Families meet with their child's teacher to discuss and learn about their child's progress and to help set goals for the child's continued growth and development. TS GOLD is aligned with the New York State Foundation for the Common Core and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Birth to Five. With parent consent, a child showing areas of concern may be referred for additional services or further developmental evaluations.

### DAILY ACTIVITIES

Head Start Program Performance Standards provide a guide for teachers to follow that ensure all classroom activities are appropriate for children of all ages. When you visit your child's classroom, you will see:

- Many hands-on activities such as blocks, dramatic play, painting, writing, sand and water play, puzzles, cutting, etc. Young children learn best when allowed to explore and create within carefully planned intentional environments and learning experiences.
- An opportunity for children to make choices. During free exploration/center time, children choose the timing and location of their activities. Children learn more when they have some choice in the activity.

- Skill development and supported learning. Play activities are designed with a definite goal for the child's skill development. A variety of materials and activities are offered to support each child's individual development.
- Children participating in circle activities as a group. These activities give children an opportunity to learn how to function in a group, share ideas, and learn listening and cooperative learning skills.
- Healthy habits and safety-based instruction and modeling, such as hand washing, fire safety, safe toys, tooth brushing, and hygiene.
- Children resting/napping on an individual mat when enrolled in a full day classroom. We are required by NYSOCFS to offer children a rest period or offer a quiet activity. A pillow and/or blanket may be sent in from home for this time period.
- Family participation and engagement. Every family, including families for who English is a second language, is encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program. Classroom teams use a variety of resources to support the home language and build the child's acquisition of English through stimulating and individualized language experiences.

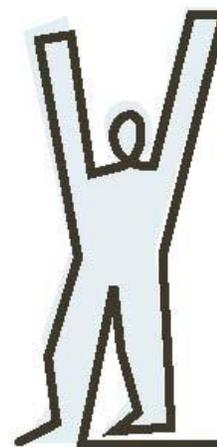
### **CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS**

Any special events need to comply with established program guidelines and be organized to allow enough time for required approvals to be obtained. Head Start may include seasonal/holiday classroom activities that reflect the culture, ethnicity, and backgrounds of children and families enrolled in programming. In planning activities, each center/classroom determines if activities might exclude any children. In such a case, staff will plan and offer other options.

Occasionally, Head Start is invited to join in community holiday/cultural activities or special events. Staff may accept the invitation and participate as appropriate.

Other celebrations:

- Family Traditions/Culture: Head Start welcomes families to share their culture, traditions, and celebrations. Please talk with your child's teacher if you would like to schedule a special event.
- Birthdays: Parents may celebrate their child's birthday with a non-food item. For example, your child's favorite book can be sent in to read, a pencil or sticker for each student can be sent to send home with the children in their classroom. We cannot have any food items sent in due to potential student allergies.



### **GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

We all learn best in a positive climate where we feel safe and supported. Head Start uses positive forms of guidance and discipline to help young children learn safe and cooperative behaviors. Positive guidance, such as reinforcing behaviors we want to see, builds social skills, mutual respect, and self-esteem.

The use of corporal punishment or verbal or emotional mistreatment is **strictly** prohibited in the Head Start program.

### **SUPPLIES PROVIDED BY PARENTS**

Head Start will provide all supplies needed for the day, except:

**Clothing:** Although efforts are made to keep your child's clothes clean, we cannot guarantee clothing will not become soiled or stained. Please dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes each day they attend. Children should also wear safe, non-slip shoes – sneakers are best. Additional clothing items needed are:

- A complete change of clothing (including underwear). Extra clothes are kept at the center. Please label clothing with your child's name so they do not get accidentally misplaced.

- Seasonally appropriate outdoor wear (e.g., raincoat, winter jacket, hat, mittens, and boots). Please talk to your Family Advocate if you need help accessing these items.
- A child-sized bed covering/blanket for naptime only (at full-day classes).

**Medication:** For children who require regularly prescribed medication and/or emergency medication (e.g., EpiPen, rescue inhalers), please refer to the *Medication Administration* section.

**Please do not send any food or toys to the center.**

## When Head Start is Open

Head Start runs a 10-month program. Our program attempts to follow the school calendar of the district in which they operate as closely as possible. Head Start classrooms close for recognized holidays, breaks, superintendent/parent-teacher conference days, and staff development days. A calendar of events, including planned activities and closings, is sent home monthly so you can plan accordingly.

### **UNPLANNED CLOSINGS**

- **Snow Days:** Head Start centers will not open if the school district in which they operate remains closed for bad weather. **Please listen to local tv stations for announcements or check your phone and emails for a ChildPlus alert.**
- **Two-Hour Delays:**
  - Half-day programs (McNab school) – When there is a two-hour delay in the school district where your child’s center operates, Head Start morning classes will be cancelled.
  - Full-day programs – When there is a two-hour delay in the school district where your child’s center operates, Head Start will open two hours from their regular start time.
- **Facility Problems:** Centers may close for mechanical problems (e.g., broken water pipe, electrical issues). An announcement will be made on local tv stations as well as an email/text alert from ChildPlus if the center must close for the day. If problems arise while your child is at the center, the early dismissal procedure will be followed.
- **Early Dismissal:** Head Start will close early for emergencies. If classrooms dismiss early, center staff will contact you – please be sure your contact information and emergency contact information is up to date. Children will be transported back home by their usual means of transportation (bus or self-transport).

### **PESTICIDES**

Head Start uses preventive pest control at our centers and takes precautions to prevent the possible harmful effects of pesticides to children. Scheduled pesticide treatments occur after children have left the building for the day.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Head Start expects your child to attend programming daily, as scheduled and on time. In the case of illness, medical appointments, or other situations that prevent your child from attending, it is mandatory you call the center and let them know of the absence within 1 hour of program start time. If you do not report your child’s absence, center staff will call you that morning. Our expectation is that your child attends a minimum of 85% of the scheduled school days. Families are encouraged to plan vacations/travel while school is not in session. School success goes hand in hand with good attendance. Our efforts to promote school readiness for all children depends on each child’s regular attendance and interaction with the teaching staff, peers, and the learning environment created within each classroom. Young children succeed in building academic and social skills over time when they feel confident and secure. A consistent, predictable routine that includes regular attendance at Head Start is one of the best ways for parents to support their children’s growth and development.

Of special note:

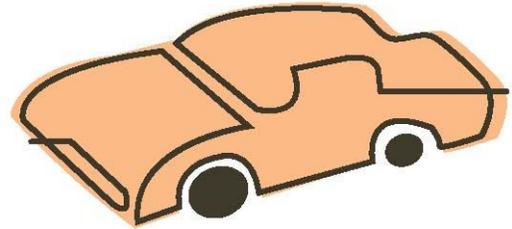
- If we do not hear from you regarding your children’s absence, our Family Advocates or Recruiters may do a home visit to check on you and your family.

- Parents must let Head Start know of extended absences such as family vacations.
- Excessive absences may result in a letter outlining your child's attendance record and/or your child being withdrawn from the program.

### **DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

For the safety of all children, only authorized individuals can accompany your child to and from school each day. In addition to yourself, you need to provide the name, date of birth and contact information of emergency contacts. Only these people will be able to pick-up your child.

Head Start will not release your child to anyone not listed on the emergency contact list. If your child must be picked-up by someone other than an authorized individual, you must come in person to add them to the "release form". Staff will request photo identification to confirm the identification of the person picking up your child. The person designated to pick-up your child must be at least 18 years of age.



Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures:

- Children must be dropped off/picked up at the established times.
- Non-bused children must be signed in and out by yourself or an authorized individual upon arrival and dismissal.

If you are delayed picking-up your child, it is expected that you will contact the classroom staff immediately. If the appointed pick-up time passes with no contact, staff will:

1. Attempt to contact you through the phone numbers provided.
2. Attempt to contact individuals listed on the emergency contact list.
3. Contact Child Protective Services and/or the police if there has been no contact/communication with you or anyone on the emergency contact list within 60 minutes of the program ending.

## **Support Services**

### **MEALS & NUTRITION**

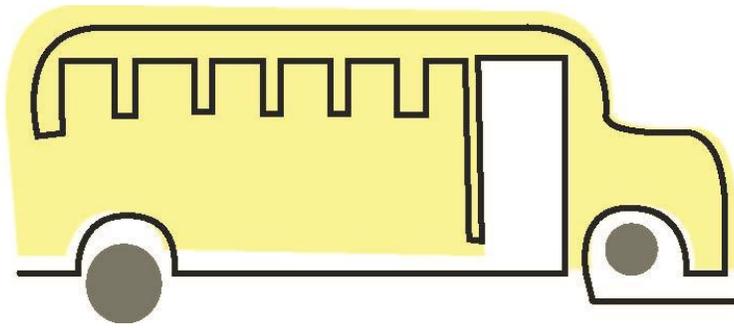
Children receive  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their minimum daily nutritional requirements through meals and snacks each day they attend Head Start. Menus are reviewed by a Registered Dietician to ensure all meals are nutritionally balanced and offer a variety of tastes and textures for your child to enjoy. Menus are sent home each month for your reference.

Special Diets/Needs:

- **It is your responsibility to inform the Head Start Nurse of any special dietary needs due to food allergies, medical conditions, or cultural requirements your child might have.**
- Children with special dietary needs will be served nutritionally equivalent foods appropriate for their individual needs.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Families who have transportation are expected to drop-off/pick-up their child each day. For families who do not have transportation, Head Start may be able to bus your child to the center (Amsterdam center only). However, due to limited space and/or long travel times, your child may be placed on a wait list. You may be asked to transport your child to a common pick-up point. Please remember to bring photo identification with you when getting your child off the bus to ensure children are released to the correct pick-up person.



**\*\* Any request for route changes must be done at least 5 days in advance. The Transportation Manager (518-842-8225 ext 111) will evaluate the new route for safety and time considerations. Staff will notify you if the change can be made. \*\***

#### Safety:

Per Federal law, every Head Start child must sit in an approved child safety restraint system. Head Start has harness assemblies and booster seats in all buses and ensures each seat meets the standards for your child's height and weight.

#### **HEALTH SERVICES**

Head Start stresses identifying and treating health problems early and strives to improve and maintain the health of your entire family. As part of program participation, your child is required to be up-to-date on recommended health care visits, screenings, and immunizations. Your child will also receive regular screenings by trained Head Start staff to monitor their health and development. These small but important steps will ensure your child is in tip-top shape for learning.

#### Required Medical/Oral Health Documents:

Before your child can participate in Head Start, you must submit the following documents to the Nurse for review:

- A current physical\*\* (hematocrit/hemoglobin – completed at age 9 months or older; and lead results – completed at age 12 and 24 months or older).
- A copy of an up-to-date immunization record provided by your child's health care provider or a statement and schedule of immunizations "in-process" verified by your child's health care provider.
- A Written Medication Consent form for a child who may require medication while at Head Start

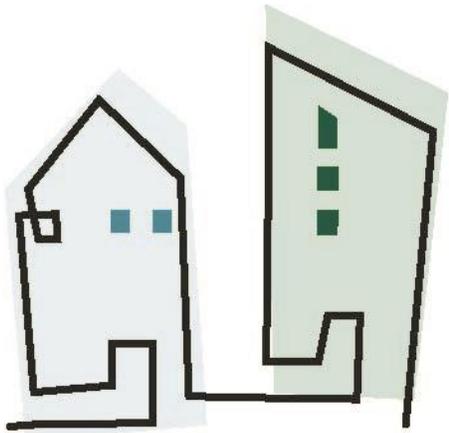
Additionally, the Nurse will need to require your child's oral health examination within 90 days of enrollment. Oral health exams are due each year, or as recommended by your child's dentist. It is expected follow-up on any preventive and treatment recommendations will be completed.

\*\* Physical exams and immunizations must be kept up-to-date as per the American Academy of Pediatrics Well Care Schedule (18 months, 24 months, 30 months, 3 years, 4 years, and 5 years). \*\*

***Please talk to your Nurse if you need the name of a doctor or dentist, or need help getting health insurance coverage for you or your child.***

#### Preparing Your Child to Visit the Doctor and Dentist:

Before going to the doctor or dentist, please be sure you have a Head Start/Early Head Start child physical exam and/or oral health examination form, with the top portion filled out with your child's information. Your Family Advocate or other classroom staff can provide you with the forms if needed.



#### Doctor Visit:

1. Prepare your child by explaining the purpose of the visit. Explain that the doctor examines them to make sure their body is healthy and that all children go to the doctor for these visits.
2. Explain how the doctor/nurse will measure and weigh them, and how the doctor will look inside their mouth, eyes, ears, and listen to their chest and back with a stethoscope. Explain that the doctor may press on their tummy and listen and feel what is inside, tap on their knee, and may look quickly to see that the 'private area' is healthy. TIP: You can use a doll or a teddy bear to show your child what to expect during their doctor visit.
3. Above all, let your child know that you are okay and comfortable with what will happen when they visit the doctor, and that you will be right there.

#### Dentist Visit:

1. Prepare your child by telling them what to expect when they visit the dentist. Explain how the dentist will examine their teeth with a light and mirror to see if they are healthy.
2. It is important that you do not over-explain the oral health visit or pass your fear of the dentist onto your child.
3. When at the oral health visit, let the dentist talk to your child and allow your child to answer; this gives your child a sense of control. The dentist will address you directly for information that your child is not able to provide.

#### Health & Developmental Screenings:

Head Start staff complete regular health and developmental screenings to make sure your child is developing as expected. You will be notified and invited when screenings are scheduled, and provided a copy of the results. If a screening result needs further action, Head Start staff will contact you.

#### Screenings completed by program staff may include:

- Vision/Hearing: This is a quick screening to identify any vision or hearing concerns.
- Non-invasive Hemoglobin: If not completed at 9 months of age and/or results not provided by your child's health care provider or WIC.
- Growth Screening: This screening monitors each child's individual growth patterns and is conducted two times a year.
- Developmental Screening (Brigance): This screening is a quick look at the following developmental areas: personal, social, fine motor, gross motor, cognitive (thinking, reasoning, and problem solving), and language.
- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): A strength-based assessment of children's social/emotional development completed by staff and parents that also screens for behavioral concerns. Program staff can address any mental wellness or social/emotional concerns you may have about your child. A list of community mental health providers is also available.

#### Behavioral Health:

One goal of Head Start is to help children cope with little problems and emotional concerns before they become bigger issues. Staff recognize that behavioral and emotional problems can interfere with your child's learning and development and believe that extra help in learning to manage emotions and behavior is simply another type of education. This education gives your child greater opportunities and prepares him/her for learning when they reach Kindergarten.

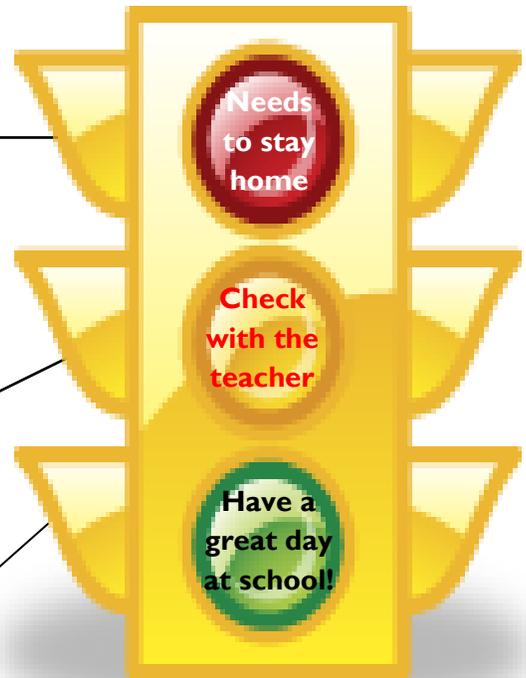
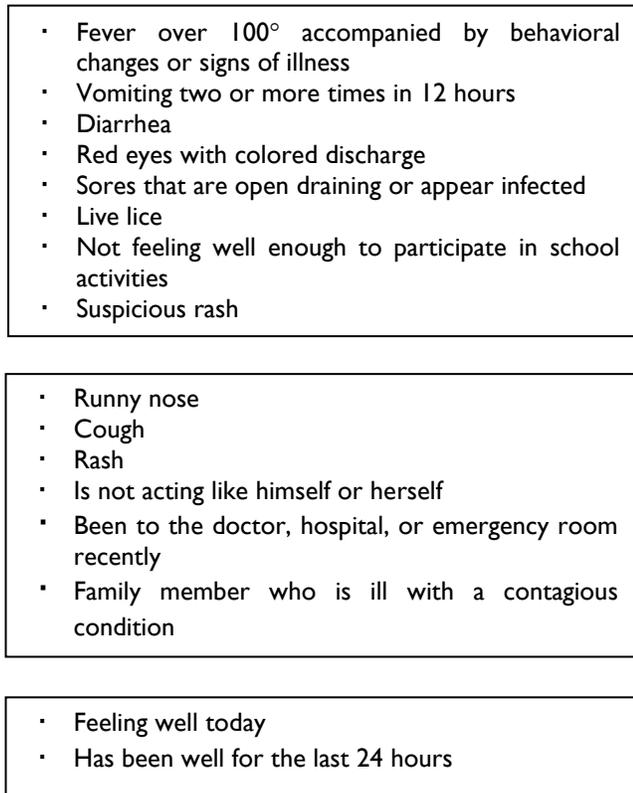
Head Start has a Mental Health consultant who visits classrooms during the year. The Mental Health consultant observes children in the classroom and then talks with teachers and parents about any behaviors or interactions that may need some extra attention. As a parent, you may also have questions or concerns about your child's behavioral health. Your child's

teacher or the Mental Health consultant can help with setting goals, providing strategies, providing information, and assisting in accessing resources or referrals.

Exclusion Policy (refer to Sick Child Exclusion Guidelines):

It is important to ensure the safety and health of all of the children attending Head Start/Early Head Start. For this reason, it is important for parents to know and understand the policy to temporarily dismiss a child from the classroom. It begins by determining if their condition poses a health hazard to other children and staff. A list of cases where a child would be temporarily excluded from class is noted in the Sick Child Exclusion Guidelines.

**Is your child well enough to be in school today? As a quick reference, use the traffic light below.**



If you think/know your child has an illness that can be spread to others, please keep them home. Call your child's Family Advocate, Teacher or Nurse to let them know that your child will be absent and why. The decision to phone a parent and ask them to pick-up their sick child is based on both the needs of that child and the need to protect the other children in the classroom from any exposure.

Parents will be called to pick-up their child if:

- Child's illness prevents him/her from participating in activities offered.
- Illness requires more care than staff can provide without compromising the appropriate supervision of others.
- Keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to that child or to the other children and adults with whom the child comes in contact.

**We must all work together to keep our children, families, and staff healthy!**

### Health Emergency Policy:

As a parent, feeling confident in the safety of your child at the center they attend is extremely important.

Head Start has two Nurses that monitor our 5 locations. Each center has staff that are knowledgeable and well-trained to respond quickly to health emergencies to ensure the health and well-being of children and are prepared to protect the children in their care.

Center-based staff possessing current certification in infant and child CPR and first aid will provide first aid in health emergencies and will be on site during the hours that the program serves children. Designated staff will possess Medication Administration Training (MAT) certification and will be on site at any time that a child with a medication order is in attendance.

Emergency first aid procedures and pertinent emergency phone numbers are posted prominently at each center.

The program relies on parents to share updated emergency contact information whenever there is a change to ensure that staff are able to contact you in an emergency.

In the event of an emergency:

1. Staff will call the child's primary emergency contact person.
2. If the primary emergency contact cannot be reached, the secondary contact will be called.
3. Center staff will continue to call the parent(s)/emergency contacts until someone is notified of the emergency.

Staff will call 911 for professional medical emergency assistance and will notify parent(s)/emergency contact(s). If necessary, a designated staff person will accompany a sick/injured child on an ambulance ride and will stay with the child until a parent/guardian or parent-designee arrives

## **Medication Administration**

Whenever possible, medication is to be administered at home. In the event that medication needs to be administered while your child is at Head Start, please speak with your child's Nurse **prior** to bringing in the medication for your child. New York State Day Care Regulations and Head Start Program Performance Standards have **specific requirements** that must be completed **prior** to administration of any medication (including over the counter medication). These requirements **MUST** be met in order for your child to attend programming.

Excess or expired medication, prescribed or over the counter, will be returned to the child's family. Medication not retrieved by the parent within two weeks of notification or the child's last day in the program will be properly disposed of by center staff.

### **ALLERGY AND ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY**

#### **Anaphylaxis Prevention**

- Upon enrollment and whenever there are changes, parents/guardians will be required to provide the program with up-to-date information regarding their child's medical conditions, including any allergies the child may have and any emergency medications prescribed for potential anaphylaxis. The parents/guardians will work in conjunction with the program and the child's physician to complete the documents required for any allergy that the child may have. These documents will guide all staff in the necessary actions to take during an allergic or anaphylactic reaction. The program will keep these documents and any emergency medications in a designated area known to all staff members as outlined in the program's healthcare plan and will ask for updated paperwork when necessary. All emergency medications (Epi-pen, rescue inhaler, etc) must be in the school's possession prior to student starting.

## **Documents**

- Any child with a known allergy will have the following documents on file when applicable:
  - NYS OCFS form 7006- Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Healthcare Needs or approved equivalent
  - NYS OCFS form 6029- Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan or approved equivalent
  - NYS OCFS form 7002- Medication Consent Form or approved equivalent

These forms will be completed by the child's parents in conjunction with the program and the child's physician. In the event of an anaphylactic reaction, staff will call 911 and follow the instructions outlined in these documents.

## **Staff Training**

- All staff members will be trained in the prevention, recognition and response to food and other allergic reactions and anaphylaxis upon hire and at least annually (ex; Pre-Service trainings) thereafter. In addition, at least one staff-member will complete the required NYS training on allergies and anaphylaxis. Staff must also maintain certifications in CPR & First AID and Medication Administration (MAT). If a child with an allergy requires the administration of Epinephrine or other emergency medications, the parents, with the help of the program's health care providers (Fulmont ECS nursing staff) will be required to train any staff member caring for that child on the administrations of the prescribed medication.

## **Strategies to Reduce the Risk of Exposure to Allergic Triggers**

- Each classroom will have a posting with a list of individual children's allergies that is visible to all staff and volunteers caring for the child. All staff will take steps to prevent exposure to a child's known allergy, including but not limited to reading food labels. Handwashing, cleaning and all other regulations related to allergies and anaphylaxis as outlined in the OCFS Childcare Regulations will be followed by all staff and volunteers.

## **Communication**

- Upon enrollment of a child with a known allergy, all staff and volunteers will be made aware of the child's allergy and associated medication needs, as well as ways to reduce the risk to exposure to said allergen. In addition, during enrollment and Health History, all parents and children will be made aware of potential allergies and the actions being taken to reduce exposure (e.g., no outside food or drink allowed) in program. Parents with children in a classroom with another child with a severe allergy will be made aware of specific allergen to further ensure zero contact with diagnosed allergen in building. Confidentiality will be maintained when discussing any child's allergy with parents and other children.

## **Annual Notification to Families**

- Families will be given a copy of the program's Allergy and Anaphylaxis Policy. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually. Families will receive an up to date copy of this policy in their parent handbook annually and whenever changes are made.

## **FAMILY SERVICES**

Each family in Head Start is assigned a Family Advocate, whose role is to support your family during your time in the program. This staff is available to help with:

- Enrolling your child in the program/transitioning your child into Head Start/Kindergarten.
- Communicating with classroom staff and program Specialists.
- Setting goals and working towards them.
- Providing referrals to community services.

- Organizing parent education workshops and parent committee activities.
- Emergency needs like food, housing, or clothing.

In Head Start, Family Advocates visit your home at least twice a year, but are available if you would like more support.

### **TRANSITIONING**

Head Start provides opportunities for you and your child to prepare for the transition to Head Start and/or Kindergarten. Activities like reading about Kindergarten, meeting school district staff are some of the ways children learn what to expect when they enter public school. You will also have opportunities to participate in the transition process through meetings and activities that support your role as your child's primary educator.

## **Parent Involvement**

Head Start acknowledges that you know your child best, are your child's primary educator, and should be involved in all decisions about their education and health. Head Start wants you to be involved in your child's education and encourages you to communicate regularly with the classroom team, participate in classroom activities, and to volunteer.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

You are an important part of Head Start and are encouraged to participate in programming any way your schedule allows. Some people choose to work directly with children, others like to work on classroom support activities (e.g., cutting, copying, coloring, etc.), and others may want to be involved in various parent committees.



Volunteering your time not only gets you more involved in your child's education, but it also helps the program meet funding requirements. Head Start is required to match 20% of its Federal funding with local dollars and donations (also known as "in-kind"). Each time you or a community member volunteer your time, the program is able to claim an hourly rate towards meeting this requirement. **Donated time means Head Start can continue to provide future services to children and families in our community.**

Head Start also welcomes other family members, such as grandparents, aunts, or uncles, to volunteer. Each center can provide training to help volunteers learn about the classroom and how to appropriately interact with children in that setting. Please talk with your center's On-Site Supervisor to learn more about volunteer opportunities and on-site training possibilities.

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**Parent Committees:** You will automatically become a member of a center's Parent Committee once your child is enrolled in Head Start. Parent Committees, with support from the Family Advocate, plan activities and events that are of interest to families, and elect parent and community representatives to serve on Policy Council. Only parents/guardians of currently enrolled children are eligible to be members of that Parent Committee; however, invited guests may attend.

**Parent Committee Fundraising:** Parent Committee may choose to engage in fundraising activities that result in cash and non-cash donations to the Head Start program. Head Start cannot, in any way, be involved in fundraising, including, but not limited to, posting fundraisers on the agency Facebook page or using the agency logo. All fundraisers must be presented to and approved by Policy Council prior to the fundraiser taking place.

Policy Council: Policy Council is the governing body of Head Start and helps make decisions concerning the entire program. Policy Council approves budgets, funding applications, program policies, selection/termination of program staff, and participates in the annual self-assessment process.

Policy Council is composed of representatives from each Head Start center, past Head Start parents and community members. Representatives are elected to Policy Council at the beginning of the program year by a majority vote through each center's Parent Committee. It is expected that Policy Council will have parent representatives and a community representative for each center.

Health and Nutrition Advisory Committee: The Head Start Health and Nutrition Advisory Committee (HNAC) meets two times a year to discuss health issues (mental, nutrition, oral, and physical) that affect families in our community. The committee consists of the Nurses, Health Care Consultant, professional members of the health community, and parents.

The HNAC strives to maintain primary intervention and health promotion measures for the families and community we serve. The committee reviews program policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state and Federal regulations and explores opportunities to provide health education and services to the community. If you are interested in participating on the HNAC, let your Family Advocate know or contact the Nurses at Head Start.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH THE CLASSROOM TEAM**

Head Start offers many opportunities to discuss your child's education, growth, development, and any concerns you may have. Ways of communication include:

- **Head Start Staff:** Teachers and Family Advocates are available to answer questions and to offer you and your family support. This may require scheduling an appointment with staff in order to ensure they are providing you with their undivided attention and can secure a quiet space to discuss matters confidentially.
- **Notes and Flyers:** These will be distributed many times throughout the year to notify you of upcoming activities, announcements, and special events.
- **Lesson Plans:** Teachers will post weekly planning forms in the classroom. You will also be invited to participate in planning lessons for your child through TS GOLD, the web-based program used by Head Start that allows parents and teachers to collaborate for curriculum development.
- **Newsletters:** Each classroom distributes a monthly newsletter with ideas/activities to do with your child to reinforce learning at home. The newsletter also contains information about the classroom, activities, upcoming events, and menus.
- **Home Visits:** Family Advocates and Teachers will each arrange home visits two times per year. Meeting in the home allows your family and staff to build rapport and work together to discuss and establish your family and personal goals in a comfortable setting.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Conferences will be conducted two times a year at your child's center. During the conference, teachers will share information about your child's development and ask you to help set goals for the next period. Teachers may also share samples of your child's work and observations from the classroom.

### **HEARING PARENT CONCERNS**

Should you have a concern about the functioning of the program, please follow the steps below:

1. Discuss the issue with the person/persons involved (e.g., if you have a concern about the classroom, talk to the Classroom Teacher first). If that does not resolve the problem...
2. Talk to the On-Site Supervisor. If the problem persists...
3. Speak to the Fulmont ECS Director

***Your opinion and viewpoint are important to us and we invite you to share your suggestions.***

# Family Code of Conduct

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

- With courtesy;
- With respect;
- With patience;
- By treating people, the way, you want to be treated;
- By modeling how we want our children to treat others;
- By acknowledging and celebrating the cultures and practices of other people and families;
- By dressing appropriately.

**Under no circumstances will the following behaviors be tolerated:**

- Physical or verbal punishment of children;
- Threats to staff or parents/guardians;
- Swearing or cursing;
- Smoking;
- Quarreling, verbal fighting, raising of voices with staff or parents/guardians;
- Violation of center/program safety practices and policies;
- Bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons to centers or events.

If these behaviors occur, the person in violation will be asked (privately if possible) by a staff person to stop the inappropriate behavior. If individuals continue to quarrel, verbally fight, or threaten, staff will call the police. Head Start reserves the right to terminate service to any client who violates this code of conduct.

We encourage families to be part of daily and special activities and understand that parents/guardians may be taking photographs of their child during these times, however, we ask that you respect the confidentiality of other children attending the program by only taking photographs of your child.

## Behavior Management Procedures

Rationale for Head Start Behavior Management Procedures:

Head Start recognizes that children are learning how to function in a classroom setting. They need opportunities to learn what appropriate behavior for school is. School should supplement parents' efforts in teaching children how to behave. Cooperation between home and school is critical. The following procedures are aimed at creating an ideal atmosphere in which your child can learn.

Each classroom implements these three rules:

- 1. Be safe.**
- 2. Be responsible.**
- 3. Be respectful.**

The classroom team, along with the children, will give examples of behaviors for each rule that support a cooperative, safe classroom.

If a behavior for a specific child interferes with learning or safety for that child or others, an individual behavior plan will be implemented through a meeting between Head Start/Early Head Start staff and the parents/guardians to address the areas of concern. Staff will monitor and reinforce appropriate behaviors on an individual basis in the classroom. Staff will strive

to teach the child age-appropriate behavior and social skills to get along with other children and adults and maximize learning. Additional resources, such as a Wellness Consultation, will be offered to support the child and family.

## Child Abuse and Neglect & Domestic Violence

It is the responsibility of the Head Start staff to help keep children safe. Sometimes a staff member may suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. Sometimes children will tell a teacher, other staff members, or other adults that they have been abused.

New York State Law requires that any Head Start staff member who **suspects** that a child has been abused or neglected **must** report the circumstances to the proper authorities. Fulmont Early Childhood Services employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. By law, a mandated reporter is required to report any suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect. All reports are kept confidential.

Being a parent is a tough job and sometimes it becomes overwhelming. If you feel that you or someone in your family needs help to avoid abusing your child, or if you have issues of domestic violence in your home, talk to a member of your classroom team or to your Family Advocate who can direct you to someone who can help you.

If you or someone in your family has been reported to Child Protective Services and you feel that you need support, please contact your Family Advocate for assistance, information, and guidance.

## Notification of Information Collected

Head Start is required to collect personal information about yourself, your child, and other members of your household. The purpose of requesting this information is to determine program eligibility, identify household needs, satisfy state and Federal reporting requirements, and get needed services in place.

## My Center's Contact Information

Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Main Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

On-Site Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number/Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Advocate: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number/Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number/ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Some of these policies and procedures may be different during COVID 19 pandemic.**