

# Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS), Child Care Partnerships (CCP), and Early Head Start Expansion (EXP)



## 2026/27 Family Handbook



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Children, Inc. (4C)

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## WELCOME TO HEAD START

Head Start is a federally funded program for low-income children and children with disabilities, with an emphasis on cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and mental development for the child. Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc. (4C) is the approved non-federal entity that provides Head Start Preschool services for Osceola and Seminole counties, and Early Head Start in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties.

All agency classrooms are Cognia Accredited, reflecting our commitment to high-quality early learning environments, continuous improvement, and positive outcomes for children and families.



Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed in life. And that learning process starts at an early age. Head Start programs promote school readiness and child development for eligible low-income expectant moms and families with children from birth to 5 years old. Head Start combines services such as education, early childhood development, health, nutrition, mental health, disability services, family support, and parental involvement with the goal of enhancing the child's life and building a strong family unit. Through these services, Head Start empowers children with the confidence to excel in school and achieve self-sufficiency as adults.

Head Start (HS) encompasses the full scope of programs that include:

- Early Head Start services to expectant moms and children under 3 years old, including:
  - Early Head Start (EHS);
  - Child Care Partnership (CCP); and,
  - EHS Expansion (EXP).
- Head Start Preschool (HSP) services to children 3 to 5 years old.

### How Does 4C Head Start Make a Difference?



Our classrooms reflect the rich cultures of the families we serve and introduce children to the world around them through active hands-on experiences.



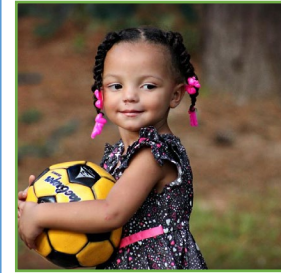
Helps to prepare children for success in school and in life

- Children receive a positive introduction to education,
- Learn to play with other children,
- Eat a variety of nutritious foods and
- Practice healthy habits.



Builds confidence in children and their parents

- Parents become involved in their children's education,
- Discover their own strengths, and
- Continue to develop to their fullest potential.



Believes parents are the primary educators of their children

- As part of its primary goal to develop confident and capable children, parents and staff create individual education goals for each child to ensure his/her success in our program.



## PROGRAM POLICIES

### Eligibility

Children are registered by providing required information including but not limited to age verification of the child, documented verification of family's income, proof of residency, and child's shot records. Registered children are placed on a waiting list. Children are enrolled into the program from the waiting list based on the agency's **Priority Weight Scale Selection Process**. For a child to be placed on the waiting list the entire enrollment packet must be completed. This includes age verification of the child, documented verification of the family's income, and the child's shot records.

To be eligible for the Head Start Program:

- Families must reside in the program's service area;
- Children must be three years old for Head Start Preschool and birth to age three for Early Head Start;
- The family's income must not exceed program guidelines; and,
- Families must meet program eligibility criteria.

### Pregnant Women Program

The program aims to improve prenatal, maternal, and child health outcomes; support social, emotional, and language development; reduce incidents of child maltreatment and injury; improve coordination with community resources; and enhance school readiness.

Service Delivery

4C Family Advocates will provide bi-weekly, 60-minute home visits to each pregnant woman and her family. These visits will typically take place in the family's home unless an alternative location is requested. In such cases, meetings may occur at mutually convenient sites such as a workplace, library, or community center.

During non-visit weeks, Family Advocates will conduct phone or virtual check-ins. These check-ins will focus on key areas such as maternal health, prenatal care, nutrition, and other essential family needs.

Home visits will include education and support on the following topics:

- Fetal development;
- Prenatal and postpartum mental health; and,
- The importance of nutrition, including breastfeeding.

Within the first 30 days of enrollment, a Nutrition Specialist will accompany the Family Advocate



on a home visit to complete a prenatal nutrition assessment and provide relevant resources. Within two weeks after childbirth, a Health Specialist will join the Family Advocate for a comprehensive postpartum home visit. This visit is designed to promote the well-being of both mother and baby, ensuring families have access to education and support. Topics covered include:

- The mother's physical and mental health;
- Newborn care;
- Safe sleep practices;
- Risks of alcohol, drug, and tobacco use;
- Benefits of substance use treatment;
- Labor and delivery experiences;
- Postpartum recovery; and,
- Parental depression.

An Inclusion Specialist will be available on an as-needed basis to support families with behavioral or mental health concerns. Family Advocates will continue to offer emotional support and engage families in discussions on topics that are relevant and meaningful to them.

The Florida State University's *Partners for a Healthy Baby* (PHB) curriculum addresses the multifaceted needs of expectant and parenting families. PHB is a "two-generational" curriculum that addresses the needs of both parents and children. This curriculum covers a wide array of issues related to Family Development and Family Health and Safety and includes content that addresses Preparing and Caring for Baby/Toddler; and Baby's/Toddler's Development.

When enrolling pregnant women, the program will ensure that it has an appropriate slot open for the baby's enrollment. Once the baby is born, a new eligibility determination is not required for Early Head Start. However, a new application for Early Head Start is required for the baby. The baby must be at least 6 weeks old before enrollment. A Family Advocate works closely with pregnant moms to ensure the baby has placement within 12 weeks of the birth if a space is available at the site requested. If the parent is requesting enrollment in the *Child Care Partnership* (CCP), they must complete all School Readiness application and eligibility requirements.

### **Fees and Fundraising**

There are no fees for children to attend Head Start. This includes, but is not limited to, application fees, uniform fees, and late pick-up fees. All events and activities are provided free of charge to the children and families in the program. There will be **NO** solicitation in the name of any 4C Head Start programs. Parents, guardians, volunteers, visitors, and other family members may not solicit, sell items, collect money, request donations, advertise businesses or services, or distribute fundraising materials on behalf of themselves, another individual, outside organization, or any 4C Head Start program. Any fundraising, donation request, collection, or community support activity connected to 4C Head Start must be reviewed and approved in advance by program leadership.



## **Child Custody**

It is our intent to meet the needs of children, especially when the parents may be experiencing life-changing situations such as a divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations may be helpful to the staff in working with your families and will remain strictly confidential. Staff cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking the child up unless furnished with legally filed, executed and current legible documents. Copies of all court documents must be submitted to the site. Parents are responsible for keeping current/updated information available to Head Start staff. If conflicting court orders are presented, our staff will follow the most recently dated order. In case of extreme conflicts, proper authorities will be contacted. If a parent is listed on a child's birth certificate, that parent is allowed access, to pick up the child and view records even if they are not listed on the enrollment, pick up, or drop off forms.

## **Confidentiality**

State and federal law requires that student education records be maintained as confidential. Individuals having access to confidential information while providing Head Start services are reminded of their legal obligation to maintain such confidence and they are prohibited from releasing, disclosing, or otherwise disseminating confidential information.

## **Smoke-Free Environment**

The health and well-being of your child is very important to us, which is why all our sites are smoke-free. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in ALL indoor and outdoor spaces utilized by the program. Please refrain from smoking and vaping within sight of children and all parking lots.

## **Safety/Security**

Please be advised that all centers are equipped with video cameras with 24-hour surveillance. The classrooms and general walkways areas are viewed as a public safe space for all children and staff. Cameras are equipped to capture video for safety and monitoring. Some of our centers are equipped with keyless entry systems at the doors. Please use your assigned code to enter and only distribute it to those you are authorized to pick up your child. For added security, we also ask that you do not hold the door open for anyone you do not recognize.

## **Lockdown Policy**

The safety and well-being of the children and staff is our top priority. In the highly unlikely event that an active threat of violence is suspected to exist within or near a Head Start program site, posing a threat to staff and children, the building will be placed in a lockdown mode. The staff will lock the doors and place children in the safest place possible in their classrooms or the nearest safe room that can be locked.



Please be advised that for the safety of children during a lockdown, no one will be permitted to enter or exit the building. The building will only be reopened upon direction from appropriate authorities. Once the situation is clear, we will send email/text messages to parents. It is crucial that you maintain up-to-date contact information on file to ensure you can be notified as quickly as possible.

### **Weather**

4C Head Start classes will close any time the county school district decides to close public schools, due to inclement weather conditions. If your local school district cancels school, your 4C Head Start class will also be canceled.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In addition to lockdown drills, we conduct monthly emergency preparedness drills to ensure that staff and children are familiar with safety protocols. These drills include fire drills, lockdown drills, and evacuation procedures.

If a disaster occurs or an emergency arises:

- The facility will activate its emergency procedures. During this time, all children will be safely guided to designated safe areas within the building.
- If a parent or guardian arrives at the facility during a drill or an actual emergency situation, they **MUST** remain in the building until the drill or emergency is concluded. This is to ensure their safety as well as the safety of the children and staff.
- We have established a designated pick-up area where parents will be able to retrieve their children once the authorities have cleared the situation. Parents will be notified of the specific location for pick-up if needed.
- For your safety and peace of mind, we encourage all parents to keep their contact information up to date with the facility. This includes current phone numbers, emergency contacts, and any special instructions related to emergency procedures.
- Please ensure that you provide a current phone number, email address, and emergency contact information to our staff. In the event of a lockdown, disaster, or emergency, this will be the primary method for us to communicate updates and instructions to you.
- Parents are encouraged to review our emergency procedures and discuss them with their children so they are also familiar with what to do during an emergency. While we have regular drills, awareness and preparedness on all fronts are essential.

### **Cell Phone Usage**

Appropriate social communication and adult/child interactions are key components in preparing your child for success. To ensure a safe and supportive transition for your child to and from our program, it is required that you refrain from cell phone use during drop-off and pick-up. When



you arrive at Head Start, please turn OFF or MUTE your cell phone. The Head Start teacher's focus is on your child. Likewise, we need your focus to be on signing in or out your child, greeting or saying goodbye to your child, and ensuring your child's safety to and from Head Start.

## **Transportation**

Our program and staff will not transport Head Start children via motor vehicles for any reason.

## **PARENT/STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

At our Head Start Program, we work together to build a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all children, families, and staff. To maintain high standards of care and community, all parents, guardians, staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers must follow the rules and guidelines below:

### **1. Positive Guidance and Child Safety**

- a) Adults are expected to use positive strategies to guide children's behavior and support their well-being;
- b) No one may use any form of corporal punishment or physical discipline. This includes hitting, kicking, biting, pushing, shaking, force feeding, or any physical actions that can harm a child;
- c) Sexual misconduct of any kind—including inappropriate touching, exposing children to sexual content, or filming is strictly prohibited;
- d) Emotional abuse such as shaming, name-calling, threatening, or humiliating a child is not allowed; and,
- e) Neglect—such as failing to feed, supervise, or meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs is not tolerated.

### **2. Reporting Child Abuse**

- a) Anyone who suspects abuse or neglect must report it immediately, in line with federal, state, and local laws; and,
- b) You can report abuse to the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873 or 1-800-96ABUSE.

### **3. Respect for Individual Differences**

- a) Everyone must treat others with respect and fairness, without judgment based on race, culture, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or family makeup.

### **4. Confidentiality**

- a) We respect your privacy. Personal information about children, families, and staff must be kept confidential and shared only as required by law.

### **5. Supervision**

- a) No child may be left alone or unsupervised at any time.

## **Parent and Visitor Conduct Expectations**

To create a welcoming and safe learning space for all:



1. **Respectful Communication**  
Parents must speak respectfully with staff, children, and other families. Swearing, threats, yelling, sarcasm, or disrespectful language are not allowed.
2. **No Threats or Aggression**  
Threatening anyone—including staff, other parents, or children—will be taken seriously and may be reported to authorities.
3. **Smoke-Free Environment**  
Smoking (including vaping) is not allowed in or around our facilities, including outdoor areas and vehicles used for transportation.
4. **Cell Phone Policy**  
Please do not use your phone inside classrooms or during drop-off/pick-up. Silence your phone during meetings and school events.
5. **Discipline**  
Physical or verbal punishment of any child is never permitted. Talk with your child’s teacher if you need support with behavior challenges.
6. **Professional Relationships**  
Parents and staff should always maintain respectful and professional relationships, in and out of the classroom.
7. **Language Matters**  
Be mindful that children copy adult behavior. Please avoid using foul or offensive language around children or other adults.
8. **Positive Role Modeling**  
Parents are expected to handle disagreements calmly and privately, never in front of children.
9. **Inclusive Communication**  
Staff support all family members in being involved in their child’s learning, including non-custodial parents.
10. **Appropriate Dress Code**  
Parents, guardians, visitors, and volunteers are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate for a child-focused, professional, and family-friendly setting. Clothing should provide proper coverage and should not contain offensive images, profanity, discriminatory language, or messages that promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, violence, weapons, gang-related activity, or sexually explicit content. Shoes and clothing should also be safe for walking through classrooms, hallways, and outdoor areas. If clothing is considered inappropriate or creates a disruption to the learning environment, staff may respectfully address the concern and ask the individual to make adjustments before entering or remaining in program areas.
11. **Language and Cultural Respect.**  
Staff and contractors are trained to understand and honor the cultural backgrounds of families.  
We make every effort to communicate with families in their preferred language. If most children in a class speak the same language, at least one staff member will speak it too.
12. **Consequences of Violations**  
Any staff member, volunteer, or parent who violates these standards may face disciplinary action, which may include being asked to leave the program or facility. Our top priority is always the safety, dignity, and well-being of the children.



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parent involvement is an integral part of a successful program for you and your child. Research suggests that children do better in school when their parents are involved. Parents are welcome in the classroom at any time unless restricted by a court order. Head Start is committed to wellness, supporting a complete vision of health for children, families, and staff. Support services are available to all program participants.

With your involvement, you will help make your child's experience in Head Start the best it can be!

**WE NEED YOU!**

**Together We are Better!**

We know that **YOU** are responsible for your children.

We know that **YOU** know your children better than anyone else

Your child's success in the Head Start program will depend largely on **YOU!**



	<b>What is it?</b>	<b>When does it take place?</b>	<b>How will I know what to do?</b>	<b>Why should I get involved?</b>
Policy Council	The Policy Council is composed of parent representatives from Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms, community members, and former Head Start parents.	The Policy Council Meets once a month throughout the school year.	Training is provided in the fall and Head Start staff are available to offer support as needed.	You will have the opportunity to collaborate with other parents and community representatives to provide input on Head Start activities and program planning.
Family Needs Assessments and Family Goals	Family Needs Assessments help identify your family’s strengths and areas of need. Based on this information, family goals are developed, discussed, and supported by Head Start staff throughout the program year.	The Family Needs Assessment is conducted twice a year. A family goal is developed on an individual basis in collaboration with your Family Advocate.	Your Family Advocate will explain and discuss the assessment with you. Together, you will work to identify resources and referrals to support you in meeting your needs.	Benefits for your family include access to community resources, support during challenging times, and overall guidance to strengthen your family’s well-being.
Parent Meetings	Parent meetings are an important part of the Head Start program. Studies show that children perform better in school when their parents are actively involved in their education.	Parent meetings are held monthly.	Your Advocate will explain and discuss this with you. Please be in attendance and feel free to ask any questions.	Learn about program information and monthly topics while getting involved in your child’s educational experience.



	What is it?	When does it take place?	How will I know what to do?	Why should I get involved?
Family Engagement	Orientation Literacy Days Community Events, Policy Council, and Parent Meetings	Events happen at various times Throughout the year—days, evenings, weekends, and more.	Check the Parent board in the classroom. Flyers are sent home regularly. Home Connection activities are sent weekly through Learning Genie as well as in hard copy.	To gain important information and resources These activities provide opportunities to get to know other Head Start families and spend quality time with your child.
Classroom Volunteer	Helping in the classroom, observing your child in class, and assisting the teacher with preparation of materials for activities.	Volunteers are welcome at any time during your child's classroom hours.	Please ask the classroom teacher and follow the daily classroom routines.	To support your child's development and encourage the importance of education, as well as to provide insight into the Policy Council and support the classroom.

## Male Engagement

Head Start encourages the active participation of males involved in the lives of Head Start children. Our program is committed to reaching out to and including fathers, supportive male family members, and male caregivers in parent engagement activities. Throughout the year, there are numerous opportunities for men to volunteer, provide input, and participate in special initiatives designed to enhance the role of men in children's lives. We also invite men to join our Super Dads events offered throughout the year. Our program celebrates and strengthens the role of male parenting by:

- Encouraging responsible fathering and positive male role modeling;
- Supporting healthy relationships between children and the important men in their lives;
- Educating men about parenting and child development; and,
- Creating opportunities for individual and group involvement and leadership.



## Parent Committee Meetings

Parent Committee meetings are organized and conducted by parents. They are held monthly on a regular basis, usually at program sites. The Parent Committee helps parents collaborate with each other, test ideas and participate in leadership and decision-making experiences. The Parent Committee is a great way to plan, coordinate and organize program activities for parents (with assistance from staff) and to advise staff in the development and implementation of local program policies, activities, and services. Policy Council Representatives are elected in the Parent Committee meetings. The Parent Committee meetings are the vehicle of communication from Policy Council to parents.

## Policy Council

The Policy Council is made up of parent representatives from Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms, community representatives, and former Head Start parents. Each site will have its own elected Policy Council representative. Meetings are open to all interested individuals, however, only one elected Policy Council member from each site is eligible to vote. Policy Council meets virtually once a month during the school year and is the parents' way to be involved in the shared governance of the program. This means that the parents/guardians have a voice in major program decisions including such things as recruitment and selection process, personnel policies, budgets, and funding proposals. Training is provided in the fall and Head Start staff are available to help, when needed.

## Responsibilities of a Policy Council Member

- Stay informed and communicate important issues to other parents;
- Attend meetings regularly and notify staff in advance if unable to attend;
- Advocate for the best interests of all 4C Head Start families;
- Attend Parent Committee Meetings and represent parent concerns to the Policy Council;
- Attend training and share information with other parents;
- Plan, coordinate, and organize agency-wide activities for parents/guardians with support from staff; and,
- Serve on working committees that contribute to the success of the 4C Head Start Program.

## What Support Will Be Offered?

- Training will be provided for all elected Policy Council members;
- Mileage reimbursement and travel expenses will be covered for those traveling to and from meetings;
- Parent Training and Education Funds: Limited funds are available to support parents pursuing continuing education, such as GED, computer classes, and more. Parents



- interested in accessing these funds should speak with their Family Advocate; and,
- Workshops and Trainings: Parent trainings and workshops are offered throughout the year by Head Start or in collaboration with community agencies. Some training may be held during Parent Committee meetings. Topics are based on parent interest, and parents are strongly encouraged to attend training offered to all staff.



### **VOLUNTEERING GUIDELINES**

Before a volunteer can participate in the classroom, we make every effort to ensure children are safe while in our care. One way we do this is to require that every person who volunteers in the classroom must complete a Level II background screening. Interested volunteers unable to successfully complete a background screening, can have other opportunities made available to them. Please contact your Family Advocate more information on volunteers.



## Ways Parents and Volunteers Can Help Head Start

Head Start encourages parents and volunteers to participate in the program to support child development, to encourage the importance of education, and to support classroom insight to Policy Council. Opportunities for involvement include, but are not limited to:

1. Read or tell a story;
2. Arrange a bulletin board;
3. Assist children in classroom activities;
4. Attend parent meetings or programs;
5. Be a member of Policy Council;
6. Dance with children or show a classroom your ethnic dance;
7. Donate supplies;
8. Encourage dramatic play;
9. Help during tooth brushing time;
10. Help plan and chaperone a field trip;
11. Assist in pre-trip education for children;
12. Assist in post-trip discussions and activities;
13. Help supervise on the playground;
14. Help a child with puzzles;
15. Lead a parade;
16. Participate in Male Engagement activities;
17. Play a game;
18. Play a musical instrument;
19. Organize, repair, or clean toys, books, or other equipment;
20. Setting up for an activity or event;
21. Office assistance - copying, sorting, etc.;
22. Help prepare curriculum materials;
23. Help with small groups doing an activity;
24. Help with classroom set-up and / or clean-up;
25. Share cultural heritage;
26. Share a skill, hobby, or talent;
27. Sing a song;
28. Take pictures of site activities;
29. Talk with a child;
30. Work closely with one child;
31. Get materials ready at home to bring in for the class to use or take a project home;
32. Supervise hand washing;
33. Assist children in table setting;
34. Model mealtime manners and behaviors;
35. Plan or assist with a food experience;
36. Plan a nutrition learning activity or game;
37. Serve food and help clean up after eating;
38. Assist in recruiting / outreach events;
39. Assist in spreading the word about Head Start;
40. Distribute flyers for recruiting or events.





## IN-KIND DONATIONS

In-Kind contributions are essential for matching government funding, enhancing services, building community strength, and ensuring program sustainability. We can offer this program because of the federal funding we receive each year. One of the requirements of receiving these funds is to generate what is called an “In-Kind match” in the amount of 20% of the funding. If we do not account for the In-Kind match, we must return dollars to the government and may receive less money to serve children and families the following year. Your participation supports our Head Start program's success.

We can count Family Activities, Community Volunteer Involvement, and Donations towards our in-kind match. When a family member or volunteer attends a 4C Head Start event, spends time in the classroom, helps the program by doing projects at home, or helps on a field trip, we can count their time as money toward our In-Kind match. We need your help to ensure that Head Start receives credit for all the parent time and volunteer work that is performed.

### How do I Record my Volunteer Time?

The Learning Genie Parent App replaces paper forms for recording your volunteer time for In-Kind contributions. This easy-to-use app offers the convenience of 24/7 availability, instant updates, easy entry and tracking, and access to information in your preferred language. Upon entry to the program, parents receive an invitation to access the Learning Genie parent app. Other family members can also be invited. The app allows parents and other family members to electronically log their In-Kind contributions, view history, and access support.

### Learning Genie Support

We have a Data Training Specialist dedicated to help train parents in the use of Learning Genie. Training will be offered at scheduled Parent Meetings during the year and may be on-site or remote as determined by the need, goals, timing, and participant group(s). You can request assistance with specific training needs or questions at other times, through your teacher or Family Advocate, and arrangements will be made to assist you.

Even when we don't hear from you, the Data Training Specialist will make regular contact with teachers to ensure parents have the training and resources to develop a comfort level in using the Learning Genie Parent App.

If you prefer to learn through videos, Parent training for the Learning Genie app can be found on the 4C website at <https://4cflorida.org/families/early-head-start-and-head-start-ehs-hs/head-start-parent-provider-training/>.



We encourage parents to make their own electronic entries for their time in Learning Genie, through a computer, cell phone, or other mobile device. If parents are unable to do this or select not to do so themselves, teachers can submit time for classroom help, parent meetings, or educational activities so that your site receives full credit for all participation.

### Parents Can Set a Preferred Language in Learning Genie

To increase ease of use, Learning Genie offers parents the option to set a preferred language in the Parent App so you always receive information in that language. Instructions for selecting your preferred language can be found at <https://4cflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Learning-Genie-parent-app-preferred-language-20250124.pdf>.

## EMPLOYEES

### Employee Record Checks

Head Start will conduct a pre-employment background check, including state criminal history and child abuse/dependent adult abuse according to the Florida Department of Children and Family Services Child Care Licensing rules. Federal background checks will be completed on all new hires according to the licensing rules.

## EDUCATION

### Education Program Overview for Early Head Start Children (0-3 Years)

At our childcare centers, we are committed to providing your child with a nurturing and enriching learning experience. For our youngest learners, aged 0-3 years, we proudly utilize the **Frog Street** curriculum, a research-based program designed to optimize early childhood development. The **Frog Street Infant Curriculum** emphasizes caregiver-child interactions to foster rich oral language, vocabulary, and strong social-emotional connections. With a focus on activities that can be seamlessly integrated into daily routines, caregivers are equipped to support your child in meeting important developmental milestones.



### Key Features of Frog Street Infant Curriculum

Research-based activities tailored to children aged 0-18 months;

- Bilingual program available in English and Spanish;
- Easy-to-use activity cards aligned with developmental domains;



- Emphasis on physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development;
- Aligned with Head Start School Readiness Goals; and,
- Embedded with Conscious Discipline for social-emotional development.

For children aged 18-36 months, our curriculum transitions to the ***Frog Street Toddler*** program, which continues to prioritize early brain development and joyful learning experiences. With activities organized around five developmental domains and differentiated instruction options, toddlers engage in exploratory play that promotes cognitive growth, language development, and social-emotional skills. The curriculum is designed to seamlessly integrate into daily routines, offering children opportunities to learn and grow in a language-rich environment.

### **Key Features of Frog Street Toddler Curriculum**

- Activities tailored to toddlers aged 18-36 months;
- Emphasis on language-rich environment and physical development;
- Cognitive activities to support problem-solving and foundational skills;
- Focus on social-emotional development and impulse control; and,
- Available in English and dual language versions.

With our comprehensive curriculum for infants and toddlers, we are dedicated to fostering the holistic development of your child, laying the groundwork for a lifetime of learning and success.

### **Education Program Overview Head Start Children (3-5 Years)**

We are excited to share with you our selected research-based curriculum, ***Connect4Learning*** (C4L), designed to provide your child with a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. Developed with support from the National Science Foundation, C4L aims to nurture your child's growth across four key areas: mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional development.



### **Key Features of Connect4Learning (C4L)**

- Interdisciplinary approach integrating math, science, literacy, and social-emotional learning Based on research findings highlighting the importance of early academic skills and play in childhood development;
- Addresses concern about the imbalance of instructional time in preschool, emphasizing math and science alongside literacy;
- Focuses on providing rich and interconnected experiences within each domain, supporting school readiness; and,



- Demonstrates how focused math and science experiences can support the development of all four domains.

At our centers, your child will engage in hands-on activities, play-based learning, and intentional instruction to foster their holistic development and prepare them for success in school and beyond. We are committed to providing your child with a nurturing environment where they can explore, learn and grow every day.

### **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: HOME VISITS AND CONFERENCES**

We value the partnership between our staff and families, and home visits are an essential part of our program. We encourage you to participate in home visits with your child's teachers and Family Advocate. These visits can be scheduled at a time that works best for you, and we kindly ask for advance notice if rescheduling is needed. Home visits can take place at your home or another agreed-upon location.

Throughout the year, we conduct two home visits and two in-classroom conferences with families. During these meetings, families play a crucial role in establishing their child's school readiness goals, providing valuable information about their child, and receiving updates on their child's development. These discussions help us tailor our approach to meet each child's individual needs and ensure their success in our program. We appreciate your active participation in these meetings as they contribute to your child's growth and development.

### **POSITIVE GUIDANCE PLAN**

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of discipline and positive guidance for children. When young children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, Head Start will practice the following ***Positive Guidance Plan/Discipline Policy***.

It is the responsibility of our staff to maintain a safe and orderly environment for each child. In maintaining discipline, no physical punishment, profane language, threats, derogatory remarks, or shaming/put-downs are not allowed. The reinforcement of positive behavior, clear classroom limits, redirection of attention/behavior, and one-on-one interaction by staff are the primary means of classroom management. Serious or repeated behavior problems are always discussed with the child's parent. These guidelines will also be followed during Pregnant Mom Home Visits.

#### **We will**

- Praise and encourage children;



- Set reasonable limits for children;
- Model appropriate behavior for children.
- Modify the classroom to attempt to prevent problems before they occur;
- Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to children;
- Provide children with simple rules and clear directions for following them;
- Treat children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings;
- Ignore minor misbehaviors;
- Explain things to children on their level; and,
- Provide consistency in our positive guidance plan.

#### **We will not**

- Use any type of physical, threatening, or otherwise abusive behaviors to punish children;
- Shame or punish children when bathroom accidents occur.
- Relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping;
- Leave the children alone, unattended or without supervision; and,
- Inappropriately discipline children.

Parents will be contacted immediately if a child's behavior consistently endangers his/her safety or the safety of others. In certain circumstances, short-term suspension or modified schedules may be used to temporarily help a child transition into a classroom easily for program participation to protect the health and safety of all children and staff.

Head Start staff will do their best to work with a child and family to make the child's experience a happy one.

As mandated by statute, all Head Start employees who have reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must make a report. Staff are trained annually on procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

### **INCLUSION SERVICES AND DISABILITIES**

4C Head Start is dedicated to promoting the mental health and well-being of our children and families. The Inclusion Department provides mental health services through our partner, Kinder Konsulting, and provides referrals for children and families, whenever necessary. These services aim to support children in developing behaviors conducive to cooperation, friendship-building, making appropriate choices, and regulating their emotions.

**KINDER**  
**KONSULTING**

Kinder Konsulting is available to assist teachers and parents in fostering positive behaviors and addressing mental health concerns. This consultant collaborates with staff, families, and children to provide guidance and support. During program enrollment, on-going



assessments can also help identify mental health risks of children. If it is determined that a child could benefit from individual attention, parental permission will be sought before any additional services are offered.

### **Disabilities**

Screening is conducted in various developmental areas to identify children who may require additional support. We work collaboratively with agencies such as Early Steps and the Public School Districts in Orange, Seminole, and Osceola Counties to provide comprehensive services for eligible children with special needs and disabilities. With your cooperation and support, eligible children will participate in developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to address their specific needs and integrate them into classroom activities. If you feel your child could benefit from inclusion services please reach out to your child's teacher or an Inclusion Specialist.

## **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

4C Head Start knows how important it is for children to be healthy. Being healthy enables children to reach their potential. A child who is not feeling well is not able to learn.

### **Health**

We know how important it is for children to be healthy to reach their potential. A child who is not feeling well is not able to learn. 4C Head Start requires each child to:

- Complete medical and dental examinations. Following the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT)/Medicaid Schedule of visits at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, 30, and 36 months is highly recommended;
- Receive follow-up medical treatment as needed;
- Maintain current immunizations (required prior to the child's entry into the classroom);
- Complete Lead Screenings at 12 and 24 months; and
- Receive dental screenings:
  - Head Start: every 6 months; and,
  - Early Head Start: annually.

4C Head Start staff will work with parents to obtain appointments, transportation, and medical coverage. Our goal is to provide every child with a "medical home" that will allow access to medical services after the child leaves our program. Parents are involved in their child's health by preparing their children for screenings and exams, giving authorization for their child to receive health services, scheduling and accompanying their children to appointments, and by participating in parent trainings. Healthy habits are established in the classroom with daily tooth brushing and an emphasis on hand washing and education on health and nutrition.



Health Services include:

- Wellness, safety, and nutrition education for families and children;
- Vision and Hearing screenings;
- Dental referrals; and,
- Assistance in locating a medical home for Well Child medical check-ups and immunization.

All medications must be in a prescribed box with a prescription label on it, to be administered to children, after the parent and Health Specialist must complete the ***Authorization for Medication Form***.

Stay healthy and wash your hands. There may be children who are currently attending your child's program who may not have current immunizations.

As a participant in the program, your child will receive screenings and examinations listed below. These services have been recommended as necessary and advisable by the Head Start program for the purpose of determining if additional educational services, support services, and/or therapeutic services are needed to provide a more effective comprehensive program.

- Developmental Screening;
- Vision Screening;
- Hearing Screening;
- Lead Screening (if applicable);
- Hemoglobin Screening (if applicable);
- Speech /Language Screenings;
- Mental Health Classroom Observation;
- Height/Weight Measurements; and,
- Dental Screening and Exams (if applicable).

Parents will sign a consent for their child to receive a lead screening while the parent is not present. A Registered Nurse will clean your child's finger and then prick the tip of it with a tiny needle, called a lancet, to collect a blood sample. The nurse will use the lead test machine to determine if your child needs to visit their Primary Care Provider (PCP) due to a high lead level reading. It is the parent's responsibility to follow up with your child's PCP if their lead level is deemed outside of the normal range.

### **Sick Policy and Communicable Disease**

While good attendance habits are important, children do tend to share, so it is vital for children to stay home when sick, to stop or slow down the spread of illnesses. Teachers are required to perform health checks on the children each day.



If a child has had the following symptoms within 24 hours or displays any of these symptoms at school, the parent will be called to pick him/her up.

- Severe coughing that causes a child to become red or blue in the face, makes a whooping sound, or causes difficult or rapid breathing;
- Stiff neck;
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period);
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher in conjunction with other signs of illness;
- Pink eye;
- Exposed, open skin lesions;
- Excessive wound drainage;
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
- Yellowish skin or eyes;
- Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness; or,
- Lice - child can return to school after treatment with an anti-lice shampoo

Re-admittance to the site requires the child be symptom-free/treated for 24 hours or cleared by the physician (optional). If we have a concern about a child's ability to safely return to school after illness or injury, the Health Specialist will request a note from the child's doctor clearing him/her for participation in school.

In cases of communicable disease, parents should take their child to see a doctor and follow their advice. Children are unable to attend school when they are ill.

### **Diapers**

The Head Start program will provide diapers, pull-ups, and wipes for your child(ren). Parents are not required to provide these.

### **Nutrition**

We recognize the critical role of nutrition in fostering the health and well-being of children. Research underscores the significance of a balanced diet in supporting both physical health and cognitive development. To uphold these principles, we ensure that each class day includes nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks, with specific meal times outlined in your child's classroom schedule. In line with our commitment to promoting healthy eating habits, we actively discourage the use of food as a form of punishment or reward.

Furthermore, to maintain a consistent environment conducive to health and safety, we do not permit parents, volunteers, or staff to bring food into the classroom. Additionally, any food provided by the program must remain within the classroom premises. We integrate nutrition education and experiences into our classroom activities, reinforcing the importance



of making nutritious food choices. This comprehensive approach not only addresses the immediate nutritional needs of children but also empowers them with the knowledge and skills to make healthy lifestyle choices in the future.

**Formula, Bottles, and Cups:** The Head Start program provides formula, bottles, cups, and other required feeding items for children while they are in care. Parents/guardians are not required to purchase or provide these items. All items provided by the program will be handled, cleaned, stored, and used according to program health, safety, CACFP, and USDA guidelines. If a child has a special feeding need, allergy, medical requirement, or dietary restriction, parents/guardians must notify program staff and provide any required documentation so appropriate accommodations can be made.

### **Special Dietary Needs**

If your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions, you must provide a doctor's note or **Medical Provider Acknowledgment Form** describing the restriction. We accommodate special dietary needs and ensure that all children receive meals that meet their nutritional requirements. Each child's food allergies are posted prominently in the kitchen and classroom and shared with substitutes or volunteers. We maintain written care plans for children with food allergies, including verification of the allergy's severity signed by a doctor and updated emergency contact information. A Nutrition Specialist is available to help you with any questions or concerns about feeding your child.

### **Milk Substitution Requests:**

Parents/guardians requesting a milk substitution for their child must complete the required milk substitution form before the program can provide an alternative. Requests may be based on medical, dietary, or religious needs. If the request is due to a medical condition, allergy, or intolerance, additional documentation from a medical provider may be required. Parents should submit the completed form to the Family Advocate, classroom teacher, or Nutrition Specialist. Milk substitutions will be reviewed and provided according to program, CACFP, and USDA guidelines.

### **Breastfeeding Support**

Breastfeeding is encouraged and accommodated in our program. We follow strict protocols for the preparation and storage of expressed breast milk to ensure the health and safety of all infants.

### **Height, Weight, and Hemoglobin Monitoring**

We regularly monitor children's height and weight to track their growth and development. Referrals to the WIC program are made for children who qualify for additional nutritional support. We ensure the children's hemoglobin is up to date and provide onsite testing.



## **Family Style Dining**

Children, teaching team members, volunteers, and visitors eat together family-style, promoting social interaction and healthy eating habits. We share the same menu to foster a sense of community and inclusivity. Please do not give your children food to bring in the morning. Gum, candy, juices are not allowed. For Early Head Start, mealtime is also a learning time. Opportunities are available for children to learn feeding skills, practice sitting skills, try new tastes, assist serving and cleaning up after themselves.

## **Child Care Food Program (CACFP)**

Our program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which promotes healthy meals and snacks for children in child care settings. Our menus meet CACFP and USDA guidelines and are designed to provide balanced nutrition for children.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## **What is Women Infant and Children (WIC)?**

WIC stands for Women, Infants, and Children and is a special supplemental food program for those who qualify. WIC gives special types of food to pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to five years of age. Fathers can also bring their children to apply for WIC. WIC also teaches nutrition education classes to participants.

## **How can WIC help my family?**

WIC provides certain nutritious foods for growing families, information on healthy eating, help for breastfeeding moms and babies and referrals to health care.

## **Who Qualifies for WIC?**

Families do not have to be on a public assistance program to qualify for WIC. Instead they qualify based upon residential and income requirements.

## **Who Receives WIC?**

- Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or have recently had a baby;
- Infants who are less than one year old; and,



- Children who are between one and five years of age.

### At the Clinic

When you go to a WIC clinic, you will need to bring proof of your income. This may be a check stub or a letter telling the clinic that you are getting Medicaid, AFDC, or Food Stamps. The clinic will help you if you are not able to provide proof of income. Information on current WIC income guidelines can be found [here](#).

### What are WIC foods?

WIC is a supplemental food program. This means that WIC will give you a part of the foods you and your children need in your diet.

County	Telephone Number
Orange	407-858-1494
Osceola	407-343-2085
Seminole	407-665-3705
TDD Accessible	407-885-1400

### Where do I apply for WIC?

Most WIC clinics are part of the health department. WIC also has special clinics for migrants and Native Americans. To apply for WIC or for more information, call your local health department or TDD Accessible.

## TRANSITION SERVICES

Parents of children transitioning from Early Head Start into Head Start will receive a packet of information that will assist them in preparing for the next placement and answer questions concerning that placement.

- At 30 months, the transition options are reviewed with the parents;
- At 33 months all health, nutrition and mental health concerns are addressed; and,
- At 36 months a Specialist Review is conducted, **Authorization for Release of Information** is completed, and parent-child visitation schedules are created.

## ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Never Leave Children Unattended! In the car, in the store, on the playground, or ANYWHERE! Using active supervision, our staff ensures the safety and well-being of all children in our care. Staff position themselves strategically to observe all children continuously, actively watching, counting, and listening. During transitions, staff account for each child through name-to-face recognition, visually identifying every child.



Our staff also utilize their understanding of each child's development and abilities to anticipate their actions, intervening and redirecting when necessary. This vigilant approach promotes safe learning environments for children.

At our centers, all Head Start staff, volunteers, and parents share the responsibility of ensuring no child is left unsupervised. Active supervision is a proven strategy applicable in classrooms, family child care, playgrounds, buses and even at home.

To ensure consistent implementation, all staff receive active supervision training at least once annually and during their onboarding prior to their first day in a classroom.

## RESPECT

At our centers, we foster an environment of mutual respect between staff, children, and families. We believe in the importance of treating everyone with dignity and kindness. We encourage families and children to demonstrate respect towards our staff, whether it's by listening attentively during lessons, following instructions, or showing appreciation for the efforts of our educators.

Similarly, our staff members uphold the same principles of respect towards children and families. They strive to create a nurturing and inclusive atmosphere where every child feels safe, valued, and supported. Our commitment to mutual respect extends to caring for our environment as well. We teach children the importance of taking care of classroom materials, furniture, and shared spaces, instilling a sense of responsibility and stewardship from a young age. Together, we cultivate an atmosphere where respect is at the core of everything we do.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Attendance

- The Office of Head Start requires programs to maintain at least 90% attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality will be monitored closely throughout the school year.
- Excessive absences or tardiness may require an attendance meeting and an attendance improvement plan.

### Meals

- We proudly provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack each day at no cost to families.
- Meals, classroom staffing, and program resources are planned based on student attendance. When children are absent, these valuable resources often go unused, creating unnecessary costs for the program.

### If Your Child Will Be Late or Absent

Please notify your child's teacher by 8:15 a.m. by:

- Calling the teacher, or



- Sending a message through Learning Genie.

Participation in Head Start is associated with positive developmental outcomes for children. Regular attendance in early childhood programs promotes better social, emotional, and cognitive development compared to irregular attendance or lack of access to such programs. Attendance is crucial for children in Head Start programs. According to attendance data, children who miss 10 percent or more of the school year tend to arrive at kindergarten with lower levels of school readiness. Additionally, those who are chronically absent for more than one year are less likely to read proficiently by the end of third grade and more likely to be retained. Establishing a regular school routine provides numerous benefits for your child, including opportunities for peer socialization, academic skill development, structured meal times, and participation in health activities.

While we recognize that sickness or emergencies may occasionally cause absences, we encourage families to schedule appointments and family trips at times that do not disrupt their child's attendance. Your cooperation in ensuring regular attendance will significantly contribute to your child's educational success and overall well-being.

Consistent attendance is essential to your child's progress in school. You must notify our classroom staff if your child is going to be absent within one hour of class start time. Please give the reason for the absence and the return date. Staff are required to call you within one hour of the class start time if they do not hear from you. Parent contact regarding an unexplained school absence will be made via a phone call or a text message using Learning Genie. Reasons for missed classes are recorded daily.

A child who has ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absences, with an unwillingness to change the pattern of absenteeism, or if a child's attendance does not resume, the program may consider this slot vacant. Your Family Advocate will contact you to discuss the absences if you do not contact us. Please keep us informed of illnesses or emergencies that will prevent your child from attending school. If your child misses school frequently, you will be contacted by your Family Advocate to develop an attendance plan to improve your child's attendance. If your child is absent for two consecutive days without notification, has a pattern of irregular attendance, or stops attending, a home visit will be conducted by the Family Advocate.

Note: Chronic Absenteeism is defined as an extended period of unexcused absences or a pattern of inconsistent attendance that is negatively impacting the usefulness of the program services to the child or family. When a child misses 10% or more of class **for any reason**, it is considered chronic absenteeism.

### **Tardiness & Late Pick-Up**

Tardiness is defined as late drop/pick up of 15 minutes or greater from the start or end of scheduled class time. Families and authorized pick-up are required to sign children in/out of the classroom within the designated window. Special circumstances are considered and documented for allowances based on family needs.



### **1st Occurrence of Tardiness**

Upon five occurrences of late pick-up/drop-off within a month will provide family a letter and resources to help families understand the importance of being on time and picking children up on time. The signed letter is uploaded in Child Plus.

### **Second Occurrence of Tardiness**

With three additional occurrences of late pick-up/drop-off, the family will be put on an action plan. If a child's tardiness does not improve the program may consider this slot vacant. This action is not considered expulsion according to OHS Standard 1302.16(3).

### **Attendance Monitoring**

When the average attendance for an individual falls below 90% the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism. Monitoring begins the first day of enrollment and is ongoing throughout a participant's enrollment.

### **1st Occurrence of Low Attendance**

4C provides an ***Irregular Attendance Letter*** to parents to sign along with resources to assist families in understanding the importance of regular attendance. The signed letter is uploaded into Child Plus. Ongoing monitoring will continue for those participants who continue to fall under attendance thresholds.

### **2nd Occurrence of Low Attendance**

During the second occurrence of low attendance a parent meeting is held and an action plan is established. This meeting and action plan is uploaded into Child Plus ensuring a documented time line and follow-up action plan. If the chronic (severe) absenteeism persists and the program has made appropriate efforts to reengage the family, and attendance does not resume, the slot may be considered vacant. This action is not considered expulsion according to OHS Standard 1302.16(3).

## **NAPPING**

In our program, we adhere to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) requirement of providing daily quiet time or napping time for all children. This quiet time is incorporated into their daily routines. We ensure a balance between active play and quiet rest while adhering to their schedule for sleep. While preschool children are not required to sleep, they are encouraged to rest quietly to respect the needs of others who may be sleeping.

Each child is provided with their own cot or crib, and we kindly ask parents to provide a sheet/blanket for their child's comfort. In Early Head Start classrooms, cot sheets are washed



on-site once a week or as needed, while Head Start children's blankets and bedding supplies are sent home weekly for parents to wash.

### ***Safe Sleep Practices for Infants***

To ensure a safe sleeping environment for babies, please follow these important guidelines:

- **Keep the crib clear:** Do not place pillows, blankets, crib bumpers, stuffed animals, toys, soft objects, or loose bedding in the baby's sleep area. These items increase the risk of suffocation or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- **Place babies on their backs:** All infants should always be placed on their backs to sleep. This "Safe to Sleep" position significantly reduces the risk of SIDS and should be followed consistently unless otherwise instructed in writing by the child's pediatrician.



### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Your child will have a designated "cubby" space to store their belongings, including a shelf for their work and a hook for their jacket or sweater. We encourage parents to check their child's cubby each day for any papers or items sent home.

### **DRESS CODE FOR CHILDREN**

Your child's safety and comfort are our top priorities. To ensure they are well-prepared for outdoor activities, please dress your child appropriately for the weather each day. While outdoor play is an essential part of our program, we refrain from outdoor activities during extreme weather conditions. On colder or rainy days, please dress your child in a warm coat. Some days require parents to send a light jacket to ensure your child's comfort for weather changes. Additionally, parents should apply sunscreen for sun protection.

For their safety, children should wear closed-toed shoes. If your child wears Crocs or similar footwear, they must have a strap around the heel to keep them securely in place. Please note that head beads, hoop earrings (studs are allowable), necklaces, and/or acrylic nails are not permitted in our classrooms due to choking hazards. Our preference is no jewelry due to the risk of it getting lost or falling off and becoming a choking hazard for others.

**Hair Accessories and Beads:** For safety reasons, children may not wear hair beads, rubber, string beads, or other small hair accessories that may come loose and create a choking hazard in the classroom, playground, or nap area. Families are encouraged to use simple hairstyles that are secure, comfortable, and safe for daily classroom activities. If a child arrives with



unsafe hair accessories, staff may ask the parent/guardian to remove them before the child enters the classroom or may contact the parent/guardian to pick up or replace the item.

**Pacifiers:** Pacifier strings, clips, cords, ribbons, necklaces, or any attachment that goes around a child's neck or can become loose are not allowed due to choking and strangulation hazards. Children over the age of 1 may have a pacifier while in care when it is needed for comfort, rest time, or as part of an individual care plan. Pacifiers must be safe, clean, labeled with the child's first and last name, and used according to program health and safety practices. Staff may ask that unsafe pacifiers or attachments be removed before the child enters the classroom.

### **Change of Clothing**

Please bring a change of clothes for your child for both summer and winter. For children who are not completely toilet trained, send two complete changes of clothes is recommended. All clothing should be marked with the child's name. These clothes will be kept in your child's cubby.

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

Our program maintains a positive and safe learning environment by upholding three key classroom expectations: be respectful, be safe, and be a team player. We emphasize mutual respect among children, teachers, and parents, ensuring everyone feels valued and heard.

Safety is our top priority, and we take proactive measures to create a secure space for all children. We encourage teamwork and collaboration among children, teachers, and families, fostering a sense of community and support within our program.

Furthermore, we strive to promote independence and autonomy among children by arranging all areas of the classroom to support independent work. This approach allows teachers to spend less time managing children and more time facilitating their learning experiences, empowering children to make their own choices throughout the daily routine. By prioritizing independence and collaboration, we aim to create a nurturing environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all children in our program. When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, we will explore all possible steps to address these issues while ensuring the child's safe participation in our program. Temporary suspension may only be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a safety threat that cannot be reduced by reasonable modifications. If temporary suspension is necessary, we will work with parents and mental health consultants, develop a written plan, provide necessary services, and assist families with



accessing appropriate resources. It is important to note that we will never expel or unenroll a child from our program due to behavior issues.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

At 4C, we are committed to ensuring a transparent and fair process for addressing grievances raised by parents and clients participating in our Head Start program. Our goal is to promptly and effectively resolve concerns, complaints, or disputes to ensure the well-being of children and families. If you have a grievance with the program and feel you can amicably handle the situation, we encourage families to make reasonable efforts to address concerns informally with staff members, maintaining open communication throughout the process with the proper parties.

If resolution cannot be achieved, supervisors are available to assist. If issues remain unresolved after informal discussion, parents or clients may submit a formal written grievance to the designated Senior Program Managers or the HS Director. All grievances will be followed up within three (3) business days. The written grievance should include a detailed description of the issue, any relevant supporting documentation, and the desired resolution.

## **CONSENT AND RIGHTS**

### **Disclosure with Parental Consent**

4C Head Start is committed to maintaining the privacy of your child's information. The program creates records regarding your child and the services provided. The program may use and disclose your child's information to provide, coordinate, or manage his/her health care and any other related services. The program may disclose your child's information to other providers for purposes related to your child's treatment. You have the right to review your child's records at any time. Your consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

### **Disclosure without Parental Consent, but with Parental Notice and Opportunity to Refuse**

4C Head Start may disclose your child's information without your consent with officials at a program, school, or school district in which you seek to enroll your child or where your child is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is related to the child's enrollment or transfer. You have the opportunity to challenge, and can refuse, disclosure of the information in the records.

### **Disclosure without Parental Consent**

I understand that I give consent for personnel to review my child's records to comply with auditing protocols. The program may disclose my child and family information without my consent:



- To contractors and sub recipients if they are providing services;
- With officials from a federal or state entity for the purpose of an audit or evaluation of education, child development programs, or for enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements of the program, as well as other programs that require grant funds;
- With officials from a federal or state entity to conduct a study to improve child and family outcomes, including improving the quality of programs;
- With appropriate parties in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency during the period of the emergency, or a serious health and safety risk;
- In order to comply with a court order. I understand the program will make a reasonable effort to notify me in advance of the compliance, unless:
  - A court has ordered that the information provided is not to be disclosed;
  - The disclosures are in compliance with a court order obtained concerning investigations or prosecutions of an act of terrorism.
- To The Secretary of Agriculture or an authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service to conduct program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements for the Child and Adult Care Food program. The food is catered by our vendor Second Harvest Food Bank.
- With a caseworker or other representative from a state, local, or tribal child welfare agency, who has the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement.

## Parent Rights

I understand that I have the right to:

- Inspect my child's records.
- Ask the program to amend information in my child's record that I believe is inaccurate, misleading or violates my child's privacy.
- Request a hearing to challenge information in my child's record.
- A copy of my child's records that have been disclosed to third parties, with my consent, unless the disclosure was for a court that ordered neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information furnished in response to be disclosed.
- Review any written agreements with third parties.

I understand that:

- Teachers will make 2-3 home visits to discuss my child's progress and to share activities that I can do at home to promote my child's growth and development.
- I will allow my child's teacher to set these appointments with me at my convenience. The Family Advocate will also do home visits as needed.
- All Head Start/ Early Head Start Employees are mandatory reporters of child abuse.
- I agree to strive towards the goals that I have set in my **Family Partnership Agreement**.



I also agree to be available quarterly to complete my Family Outcomes.

- I realize the importance of my child attending Head Start on a daily basis and maintaining attendance of 90% or above. I will contact:
  - the teacher every day that my child is absent due to illness or unforeseen circumstances within the first hour of service time, to be in compliance with DCF standards for attendance and safety purposes.
  - My Family Advocate if my child will be absent more than 2 consecutive days. If I have any problems or need assistance to assure that my child attend class, these things will also be reported to my Family Advocate.
- Failure to do any of the items mentioned here may result in possible termination of my child in the 4C Head Start Program.

I agree that:

- An adult or someone 16 years of age or older, and listed on the child pick-up sheet, must pick up my child from the center on time.
- When my child is brought to the center in the mornings, the drop-off procedure for that site will be followed; including:
  - the daily parent communication log (if applicable) and
  - the daily sign-in/sign-out sheets.
- I will volunteer in the program.
- I will provide a background screen as required by the program or I will designate a person to volunteer on my behalf.
- I will contact my Family Advocate if assistance is needed.

I realize that continuing my education by attending classes sets a good example for my child(ren). To assist 4C Head Start in paying for these courses, I agree to:

- Complete the ***Parent Continuing Education Verification*** form and submit all supporting documentation to my Family Advocate.
- Make every effort to attend other activities offered by the program.

I understand that any information I provide to my Family Advocate, including verbal and written material, will be kept confidential. An exception to the confidentiality policy is if I tell my Family Advocate, I am going to hurt myself or someone else.

**FOR Child Care Partnership Parents only:**

I understand:

- It is my responsibility to maintain my School Readiness (childcare subsidy) funding and report any changes in my employment, household, pregnancy and marital status to the eligibility personnel for School Readiness, as applicable. I will submit necessary documents to the eligibility staff within the timeframe given to maintain my School



Readiness.

- If I lose my School Readiness funding, I have **three (3) days** to inform my Family Advocate and will make a plan with them to help me become eligible for School Readiness.
- I have received a copy of the ***Program Calendar*** from my Family Advocate that lists what days the program is closed and open.
- That by enrolling in EHS-CCP, I am enrolled in part time School Readiness care. However, when the program is closed, I am entitled to full time (or part time-based on eligibility worksheet) School Readiness and my parent fees will be more as reflected on the certificate from School Readiness.
- That I will be required to pay my weekly parent fees or I will risk losing School Readiness.

### FAMILY ADVOCATES AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

4C Head Start is committed to supporting family. We will help you identify your goals and support you in reaching them by using your family strengths. This will reinforce the gains made by your child at 4C Head Start. Family Advocates are available to help with information and resources to support your own personal growth and independence. Services include:

Home visits by the Family Advocate and/or virtual appointments by video or phone to include but are not limited to:

- Help in identifying concerns, needs, and goals your family or child may have;
- Encouragement and support for your own efforts to obtain quality services;
- Development of goals and strategies that you identify as areas for personal growth;
- 4C Head Start sponsored classes and informative workshops;
- Support for child development and discipline issues; and,
- Literacy funds for GED, ESL (English as a Second Language), computer classes and others.

#### Parent/Guardianships Responsibility

Head Start supports the understanding that all families have strengths and will continue to build on these strengths. You have the power to ensure your family's success!

You are your child's  
first teacher!

#### Family Advocates Responsibility

- Share responsibility with the family in achieving specific attainable goals by sharing resources and ideas;
- Help parents in enhancing their leadership skills to advocate effectively for themselves



- and their children; and,
- Help parents understand their own beliefs about teachers, education, and their role in their child's education.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

In accordance with Federal law, this institute is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).

### **Parent's Pledge of Cooperation**

1. I will do my best to help my child get the most from the Head Start program.
2. I will make sure that my child attends school every day on time and is picked up on time at the end of class.
3. I will speak to my child directly and listen when my child speaks to me.
4. I will put my cell phone away and keep the television off as much as possible.
5. I will read to my child daily.
6. I will value the items my child makes in school and display them for a reasonable amount of time.
7. I will provide many trips and experiences outside the neighborhood as my time and resources permit.
8. I will attend Parent Committee Meetings and communicate regularly with the teachers.
9. I will show my child that I am interested in their activities at school by asking questions, listening when my child speaks, visiting the classroom, and getting to know the teachers.
10. I will see that my child leaves school clean, healthy, and properly dressed.
11. I will read all emails, text messages, and notes sent home from school, and return them with my signature when required. Additionally, I will respond to text and email messages.
12. I will see that my child has dental and medical checkups and receives all his/her immunizations.
13. I will complete the 45-day requirements, including home visits and screenings.
14. I will participate in home visits and parent conferences.
15. I will request a parent conference if needed to support my child's education.

### **Pregnant Women Program**

1. I will do my best to help my child get the most from the Early Head Start program.
2. I will make sure that I will be fully engaged with the Family Advocate during out bi-weekly, 60-minute home visit.
3. I will put my cell phone away and keep the TV off as much as possible during home visits.
4. I will work on lesson plan activities between our bi-weekly home visits and complete my



**Family Outcomes Assessment.**

5. I will show my child I'm interested in being responsive to his/her needs.
6. I will see that my child has regular well-baby checkups and receives all his/her immunizations.

**Let's work together to provide a wonderful and productive year for you and your child!**

**PARENT RESOURCES**

<b>Health Departments</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Orange County	Immunizations, low-cost health services	407-858-1430
Osceola County	Immunizations, low-cost health services	407-343-2000
Seminole County	Immunizations, low-cost health services	407-665-3000 407-665-3700
<b>Crisis/Info Hotlines</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Emergency	Fire, police, etc.	911
Florida ABUSE Hotline	Report, child, adult or elder abuse or exploitation	800-962-2873
Osceola Pregnancy	Counseling, baby items and referrals	407-846-9101
JMJ Life Center	Crisis pregnancy center, counseling, baby items, mentoring and educational services	Orange 407-839-0602 Osceola 407-201-5085
Opioid Treatment	Medication assistance treatment	Orange 407-245-0014 Seminole 407-323-2036 Osceola 407-875-3700 Ext 4350
<b>Food</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Christian Service Center	Food pantry	407-425-2415
Community Action	Rental, food, energy and prescription assistance	407-836-8484
WIC (Women, Infants & Children)	Nutrition education, and supplemental food items for a healthy diet	407-343-2085
Christian Sharing Center	Food, utilities, rent assistance, Rx depending on situation and funding	Longwood 407-260-9155 Sanford 407-324-5765
Loaves and Fishes	Clothing, food, medical and educational services	407-886-6005
<b>Legal</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Central Florida Legal Society	Free legal services, assistance in housing, public benefits, education and senior concerns	Orange 407-841-7777 Osceola 407-847-0053 Seminole 407-322-8983



Legal Aid	Free help to seniors, family law, landlord and tenant disputes	Orange 407-841-8310 Seminole 407-834-1600
<b>Public Schools</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Orange County	Elementary, Middle, and High School Education	407-317-3200
Seminole County	Elementary, Middle, and High School Education	407-870-4600
Osceola County	Elementary, Middle, and High School Education	407-320-0416