

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



2026/27 Provider Handbook



Community Coordinated Care for
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.



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.



This Handbook and the Policies within supplement, but do not supersede, any contract requirement or Head Start Standards. See the 2025/26 Family Handbook for Family specific policies.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. A program must ensure all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct.
2. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior.
3. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not engage in behaviors that maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum:
 - a. Corporal punishment; or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force feeding, or dragging;
 - b. Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities;
 - c. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child;
 - d. Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to, leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as punishment or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment, or placing a child in a crib for a time-out or disciplinary purpose;
 - e. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers report reasonably suspected or known incidents of child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C. 5101 note) and in compliance with Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws;
 - f. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each individual and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;
 - g. Require staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning [personally identifiable information](#) about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part [1303](#) of this chapter and applicable Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws; and,



- h. Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised.
- 4. Personnel policies and procedures must include appropriate penalties for staff, consultants, and volunteers who violate the standards of conduct.
- 5. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers:
 - a. Communicate positively and professionally while demonstrating friendliness and sensitivity towards children, parents, staff, consultants, and volunteers.
 - b. Attire should be professional and appropriate while representing the program and agency in community and workplace environments.
 - c. The program mandates that individuals involved in the award and administration of contracts or financial awards sign statements affirming their commitment not to solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or items of significant monetary value from contractors or potential contractors.
 - d. Maintain courteous, professional, and friendly interactions with children, parents, staff, consultants, and volunteers throughout the community.
 - e. Staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to practice Active Supervision consistently.

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.

It is the responsibility of providers and their 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.

We will:

- 1. Praise and encourage children.
- 2. Set reasonable limits for children.
- 3. Model appropriate behavior for children.
- 4. Modify the classroom to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
- 5. Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to children.
- 6. Provide children with simple rules and clear directions for following them.



7. Treat children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
8. Ignore minor misbehaviors.
9. Explain things to children on their level.
10. Provide consistency in our positive guidance plan.

We will not:

1. Use any type of physical, threatening, or otherwise abusive behaviors to punish children.
2. Shame or punish children when bathroom accidents occur.
3. Relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
4. Leave the children alone, unattended or without supervision.
5. 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 child, other children and staff. Head Start staff will do their best to work with all children and families to make each child's experience a happy one.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

As mandated by statute, staff providing Head Start services are mandated reporters. Staff are trained annually on procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. If you have reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect, you are required to make a timely report to the Florida Abuse Hotline 1-800-962-2873 or 1-800-96ABUSE, Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Head Start Program Manager. All reports must be supported by written documentation on an Occurrence Report form. A copy of the form shall be sent via ShareFile immediately to 4C Quality Assurance.

RESPECT

Our program fosters 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 staff, whether it is by listening attentively during lessons, following instructions, or showing appreciation for the efforts of our educators.

Similarly, 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.



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.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parent involvement is an integral part of a successful Head Start program. Research suggests 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.

Providers are to:

- Fully involve parents in program opportunities, welcoming all parents as visitors, and encouraging parents to participate with children in activities;
- Provide comfortable and private accommodation for nursing mothers; and,



- Give families the opportunity to tour your facility.

Home Visits and Conferences

We value the partnership between teachers and families, and home visits are an essential part of our program. Each 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 development. These discussions help us tailor our approach to meet each child's individual needs and ensure their success in our program. Home visits should be conducted at the family's home or at an agreed upon location, preferably not at the Head Start site.

Male Engagement

Head Start encourages the active participation of the males involved in the lives of Head Start children. Our program will make efforts to reach out to and include fathers, supportive male family members, and/or male caregivers in parent engagement activities. Throughout the year, there are numerous opportunities for men to volunteer in the program and provide input on designing special initiatives to improve the interaction of men with children. Men are encouraged to participate with Super Dad's events offered throughout the year. Our program celebrates and enhances the male parenting role 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.

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; | 10. Help plan and chaperone a field trip; |
| 2. Arrange a bulletin board; | 11. Assist in pre-trip education for children; |
| 3. Assist children in classroom activities; | 12. Assist in post-trip discussions and activities; |
| 4. Attend parent meetings or programs; | 13. Help supervise on the playground; |
| 5. Be a member of the Policy Council; | 14. Help a child with puzzles; |
| 6. Dance with children or show a classroom your ethnic dance; | 15. Lead a parade; |
| 7. Donate supplies; | 16. Participate in Male Engagement activities; |
| 8. Encourage dramatic play; | 17. Play a game; |
| 9. Help during tooth brushing time; | |



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.

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 Head Start 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 and hybrid, in person with virtual options. 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.

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. Parents who volunteer for less than 10 hours a month are exempt from background screening. Please contact your Family Advocate more information on volunteering.

PROVIDER POLICIES

Attendance Policy

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 children, 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 encouraging regular attendance will significantly contribute to the child's educational success and overall well-being.

Consistent attendance is essential to a child's progress in school. Parents must notify your classroom staff if their child is going to be absent within one hour of class start time. They are expected to give the reason for the absence and the return date. If you do not hear from a parent, staff are required to call them within one hour of the class start time. 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.

Parents are expected to keep you informed of illnesses or emergencies that will prevent their child from attending school. If a child is absent for two consecutive days without notification, has a pattern of irregular attendance, or stops attending, the Family Advocate will conduct a home visit to develop an attendance plan to improve their child's attendance. If the parent shows an unwillingness to change a pattern of absenteeism, they are notified this may result in the slot being determined vacant from the program.

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.



Documenting Attendance

Providers must document child attendance no later than 9:00 am daily using the sign-in sheet provided by the assigned Family Advocate.

1. Child location transitions after drop off, require the teacher to document child movement between classrooms and/or programs.
2. Parents of non-attending children must be called during the 1st hour of an unexcused absence and documentation notes must be updated in ChildPlus.
3. Monthly, the provider will submit the approved and accurately completed invoice template for payment.

Sign-in & Attendance Verification

Daily: children must be signed in upon arrival and signed out at dismissal every day by the adult who drops off and/or picks up. Arrival and dismissal time must be recorded at the time the child enters/exits the classroom. The time and full signature, NO INITIALS ALLOWED, must be written on the attendance sheet.

Monthly: At the end of each month, parents are required to sign a “Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate” that confirms that the child has been in the program during the month and that they wish the child to continue in the program at this school.

Tardiness & Late Pick-Up

Tardiness is defined as a 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.

First Occurrence of Tardiness

Upon five occurrences of late pick-up/drop-off within a month. 4C will provide the family with a letter and resources to help them understand the importance of being on time and picking children up as scheduled. The signed letter is uploaded into 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 an 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.

First Occurrence of Low Attendance

4C provides an ***Irregular Attendance Letter*** to parents to sign, along with resources to assist 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.

Second 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 ChildPlus 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 an expulsion according to OHS Standard 1302.16(3).

DCF Requirements

Providers and their staff must adhere to all Department of Children and Families (DCF) requirements including staff-to-child ratios, health and safety, credentials, and licensure. DCF licensure renewals and/or changes must be reported to 4C immediately.

Supervision of Children

Providers and their staff must maintain active supervision of all children entrusted to their care. Active supervision always requires focused attention and intentional observation of children. Staff position themselves so that they can observe all the children: watching, counting, and always listening. During transitions, staff account for all children with name-to-face recognition by visually identifying each child. They also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what they will do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely. As stated in the Head Start Performance Standards 1302.90(c)(1)(v) providers must ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care.

New teachers, staff, and volunteers must receive Active Supervision training by site supervisor or center director prior to entering the classroom. All staff will receive Active Supervision training at least one-time annually.



Know Your Count

- Teaching teams ensure that there are always two teachers in a classroom.
- Teachers and all personnel who enter the classroom are to know how many children are always in the classroom.
- The sign-in and out sheets must match the daily count in the classroom. If a parent forgets to sign-in during the morning, teachers are to put the time child entered the classroom and initial on the comments section. The count changes as each child enters.
- The Know Your Count Poster Includes number of children in classroom and the number of children in therapy.
- Know Your Count Posters are located by each (or the main) entry and exit way in the classroom to ensure it is visibly seen by all personnel. Teachers are to use a dry erase marker to write the number of children on the poster, to ensure all children are accurately accounted for.
- Teachers are to immediately add the number of children to the poster as they enter the classroom.
- If a child must leave for any reason such as on-site therapy, teachers are to write the physical number of children in their care and write the number of children in a therapy session on the side.
- When entering the playground staff must take a head count and confirm the total count with all teaching staff. When staff leave the playground and enter the classroom, they must confirm the count with all teaching staff and ensure the correct number is written on the know your count poster and attendance sheets.
- Head counts are performed throughout the day in the classroom and on the playground.

See, Say, Touch

- See, Say, Touch is used when lining children up for a transition. See, Say, Touch must be used before going outside, when entering the playground, leaving the playground, and re-entering classroom.
- The teachers prepare for the transition by gathering all equipment and supplies to prevent waiting.
- SEE: The transition to line up will be an intentional activity that encourages parading around, rhythmic chants, songs, short story, or an interactive activity following one teacher while the 2nd teacher gathers the equipment. This strategy eliminates waiting and transitions children into a line that can be seen by the teachers.
- SAY: Head counts are performed. One teacher stands in front of the line. The second teacher counts or has the children count aloud.
- TOUCH: As the count is conducted the second teacher touches or holds hand over each child's head, demonstrating one-to-one correspondence. Children follow the teacher in front of the line outside the door. The second teacher is at the end of the line.



- The total number of children in line is confirmed by checking the know your counts poster and to a face to name check on the attendance sheet when arriving on playground and returning to the classroom.

Active Supervision At-A-Glance: Six Strategies to Keep Children Safe

Refer to ECLKC Site: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/safety-practices/article/active-supervision> and <https://headstart.gov/safety-practices/article/keep-children-safe-using-active-supervision>

Set Up the Environment

Staff set up the environment so that they can supervise children and always be accessible. When activities are grouped together and furniture is at waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children.

Positioning of Staff

Staff carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to protect children from harm. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Staff stay close to children who may need additional support.

Scan and Count

Staff are always able to account for the children in their care. They continuously scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing. They count the children frequently. This is especially important during transitions when children are moving from one location to another.

Listen

Specific sounds or the absence of them may signify reason for concern. Staff who are listening closely to children immediately identify signs of potential danger. Be proactive to children's behavior and interaction to eliminate potential incidents. Implement strategies to safeguard children. For example, bells on doors to help alert staff when a child enters or leaves.

Anticipate Behavior

Staff use what they know about each child's individual interests and skills to predict what he/she will do. They create challenges that children are ready for and support them in succeeding. But they also recognize when children might wander, get upset, or take a dangerous risk. Teaching staff complete a daily health check for each child.



Use information from health checks to anticipate behavior. (e.g.: illness, allergies, lack of sleep, or food.) Staff who know what to expect are better able to protect children from harm.

Engage and Redirect

Staff use what they know about each child's individual needs and development to offer support. Staff wait until children are unable to solve problems on their own to get involved. They may offer different levels of assistance or redirection depending on each individual child's needs.

Environment and Safety

Supplies

Providers supply and provide all preschool diapers, pull-ups, wipes, and all necessary hygiene materials; as well as dental hygiene supplies (toothpaste, toothbrushes, and tooth brush storages) for all HS children. HS parents are not required to provide these. Parents may be asked to supply special bedding for rest time, as well as an extra set of clothing and/or footwear.

Meals

Meals and snacks must meet USDA Child Care Food Program (CCFP) requirements. Children must be fed following USDA CCFP guidelines for meals and snacks times. Parents are not required to provide food. See additional information in the Nutrition section.

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. If the child can roll from front to back and back to front, the "I can roll by myself" sign must be posted on or above the child's crib.



Personal Belongings

Children will have a designated "cubby" space to store their belongings, including a shelf for their work and a hook for their jacket or sweater. Providers should encourage parents to check their child's cubby each day for any papers or items sent home. For safety reasons, children may not use pacifiers with strings, cords, ribbons, clips, or other attachments while in care, as these may pose a choking or strangulation hazard.

Dress Code for Children

A child's safety and comfort are our top priorities. To ensure they are well-prepared for outdoor activities, children should be dressed 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, children should have a warm coat. Some days require parents to send a light jacket to ensure their child's comfort for weather changes.

For their safety, children should wear closed-toed shoes. If a 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.

Change of Clothing

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



Fees and Fundraising

There are no fees for children to attend Head Start/Early 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.

Cell Phone Usage

Appropriate social communication and adult/child interactions are key components in preparing children for success. Providers and their staff's focus must remain on the education and safety of the children entrusted to their care. To ensure a safe and supportive environment while performing Head Start services, it is required that you refrain from cell phone use, so please turn OFF or MUTE your device. Teaching staff may not wear earbuds while caretaking for children.

Smoke-Free Environment

The health and well-being of children 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.

Safe Environment

Providers agree to adhere to a drug-free workplace policy and assume responsibility for performance of environmental lead water/paint testing with testing results reported to 4C.

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, agreeing not to use or disclose any information concerning a recipient of services. They agree to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII) for all children. PII is defined as any information that could identify a specific individual, including but not limited to a child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child. PII may also include photographs. Upon hire, annually thereafter, all staff complete Data Security training and sign agreements.

Safety/Security

Some sites are equipped with cameras to capture video for safety and monitoring. Providers are required to allow 4C access their camera system to view an incident upon request. Some sites are equipped with keyless entry systems at the doors. Please distribute access codes only to those authorized to pick up children. For added security, sites are required to train staff not to hold the door open for anyone they do not recognize or prop the door open.

Transportation

Providers will not transport Head Start children via motor vehicles for any reason.

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.

Lockdown Policy

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 important for providers to help parents keep the most current information on file so they can be notified.



In the event of a disaster, emergency procedures will be activated. All emergency drills are conducted monthly. If a parent enters the building during a drill or actual emergency, the parents **MUST** stay until that drill or an emergency is complete!

Insurance

Provider/owners are required to maintain insurance coverage, including Worker's Compensation, at contractual requirement amounts.

Records Retention

Providers will keep one year of previous child files on site. Providers and their staff agree to retain all financial records, statistical records, supporting documents, including attendance and sign-in/sign-out sheets and any other documents pertinent to the provision of Head Start services for a period of five (5) years following the end of a contract period, and potentially longer for unresolved audit findings. Records shall be retained in a locked secure cabinet.

INVOICING FOR SERVICES

Providers are required to submit accurate monthly invoices for each classroom and program. Invoices must reflect daily attendance and be submitted after the last classroom day of the month, but never in advance. An authorized signer attests to the accuracy of the information submitted and the complete invoice is uploaded to ShareFile.

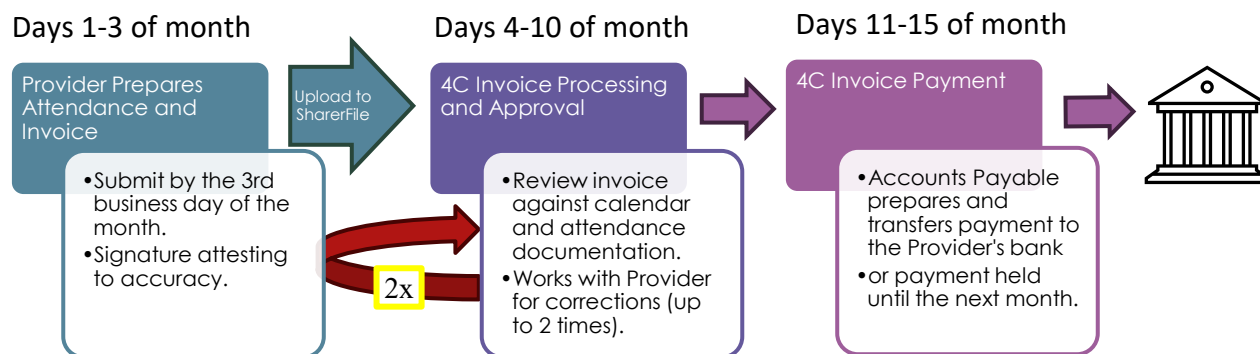
New invoice requirements this year

- Invoices are due in ShareFile by the 3rd business day of the month;
- You will be reporting classroom teachers assigned to each class on the respective invoice;
- During invoice processing, we will assist you through two rounds of corrections, if any are needed; and,
- Invoices requiring more assistance will have payment held until the following month for time to schedule and hold training with you.

Invoice Instructions and Training

Instructions for [preparing accurate invoices](#) can be found on the 4C website, along with instructions for the [2305 Attendance Report in ChildPlus](#). To receive prompt payment, it is important to prepare your invoice carefully and double check before submitting it via ShareFile.

If you need invoice preparation training, please submit a request through ChildPlus or contact 407-532-4151. Training will be provided within 30 days of the request and be held before or after invoice processing dates. It is important that anyone involved in invoice preparation receives training to ensure accuracy for timely payment.



If an invoice is held for the next month's payment period, you will be notified by 4C and be given the reason.

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 the help of providers to ensure that Head Start receives the credit for all the parent time and volunteer work that is performed.

How to Use Learning Genie for Recording In-Kind Match

We use Learning Genie software to record parent volunteer time and other types of in-kind match. The Data Training Specialist will train parents and your staff in its use. Training can be offered at scheduled Parent Meetings, or you can request assistance with specific training needs or questions. Throughout, a staff member will guide you to success. Even when we do not hear from you, a staff member will make regular contacts to ensure you have the training and resources to develop a comfort level in using Learning Genie.

The Learning Genie Parent App replaces paper forms for In-Kind contributions, offering convenience of 24/7 availability, instant updates, and easy tracking. 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 to electronically log their In-Kind contributions, view history, and access support.

Provider and parent training for using of the Learning Genie app to record in-kind match 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/>.

Learning Genie Support

A Data Training Specialist will meet with you during the year to train parents in the use of Learning Genie. Training may be on-site or remote as determined by the need, goals, timing, and participant group(s). You'll receive regular reporting of your site's in-kind submissions and trends so we can share in celebration of successes, set site-specific in-kind goals, and suggest activities to increase in-kind contributions, while identifying and addressing any support needs.

We encourage parents to make their own entries for their time in Learning Genie, but if parents select not to do so themselves, providers can submit time for classroom help, parent meetings, or educational activities so that your site receives full credit for all participation. Similarly, you can record community volunteers' time or send them a link to record their own time in Learning Genie.

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. Instructions <https://4cflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Learning-Genie-parent-app-preferred-language-20250124.pdf>

When Teachers are Also Parents

Learning Genie has both Teacher and Parent Apps. When one individual has both roles, Learning Genie requires separate user ID and password setups so access and entry are uniquely defined for the separate roles.

Donations

Donations made for in-kind match require additional documentation and must follow specific requirements. When donations are received, please work with your Family Advocate or the Data Training Specialist.



EMPLOYEES

Compliance Head Start Policy, Procedures, and Requirements

All employees must comply with Head Start Policies and Procedures. 4C will train staff on requirements and the expectation is that staff will review, understand, and comply, including adapting to changes or modifications that may occur. Training on requirements occurs at quarterly Director meetings, pre- and in-service days, and training modules, such as through Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Staff Training and Required Activities

In addition to staffing as per DCF and HS requirements, the provider's monthly payment for Head Start services includes financial support to ensure staff training and required activities.

For Head Start Preschool:

- Two hours of compensated teacher planning time per instructional day for a minimum of 170 days;
- Two paid and properly credentialed per classroom;
- Paid attendance at Staff Onboarding, Pre-service. In-Service and Teacher Workdays;
- A minimum of two home visits per child, pre year; and,
- A minimum of two Parent-Teacher conferences for each child.

For Early Head Start:

- One hour of compensated teacher planning time per instructional day for a minimum of 230 days;
- Two paid and properly credentialed per classroom;
- Paid attendance at Staff Onboarding, Pre-service. In-Service and Teacher Workdays;
- A minimum of two home visits per child, pre year; and,
- A minimum of two Parent-Teacher conferences for each child.

Staffing changes are to be reported to 4C, in writing, within twenty-four (24) hours of changes to individuals working with HS children. Additionally, teaching staff are to be reported by classroom on monthly invoice.

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.



Health Requirements

Teaching staff are required to maintain current First Aid/Pediatric CPR Certifications, TB tests and physicals with initial employment. It is also expected that staff will follow the same communicable disease guidance required of families.

Dress Code for Staff

Providers set the dress code for their employees but we encourage a professional business, casual appearance to represent Head Start in a positive way to families and community partners. As a role model, you are helping children get ready for success. Dress, including footwear, should be appropriate for working actively with children, allowing for flexible movement and safety.

Guidelines

- Jeans are permitted unless otherwise specified;
- Must wear non-slip, closed toe shoes, with straps that are suitable for job duties and are not considered a liability in the performance of duties at all times;
- Open sandals with or without straps are not permitted in the classroom;
- Employees must maintain a clean, neat appearance;
- All clothing must be clean, free of rips and holes, and in good condition;
- Nails need to be appropriate length, for safety in the classroom and with children. Nails must not be more than ¼ of one-inch from fingertip for all teaching staff, volunteers, and classroom personnel;
- Jewelry must be at a length, shape, and texture that would not cause safety concerns;
- Business-Casual attire is mandatory for all staff present during:
 - Trainings such as Pre-service and In-Service;
 - Board of Directors Meetings;
 - Professional Community Events and Functions;
 - Training or Business Conferences; and,
 - Audits/reviews or when interaction with state and/or local officials is anticipated.
- All employees must pay close attention to personal grooming, hygiene, and appearance. In addition to the guidelines listed above.

Dress not permitted in the classroom

- Large/Medium hoop earrings, long dangling earrings/ necklaces, and/or bracelets that are not secure are not permitted;
- Tattoos that contain offensive or inflammatory messages and/or graphics must be covered or otherwise not visible to the public or to co-workers;
- Undergarments cannot be exposed and must be appropriate to outer garments being worn;



- Leggings (thin material, see through);
- Halter tops;
- Tops that expose midriff;
- Shorts, skirts, or pants approximately 4 inches above the knee;
- Athletic wear/ sweat pants;
- Tight-fitting or other revealing clothing;
- Baseball caps and other head gear (unless permitted for special activities);
- Clothing that has inappropriate and/or offensive messages; and,

EDUCATION

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

We are committed to providing children 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 children in meeting important developmental milestones.

Key Features of Frog Street Infant Curriculum

1. Research-based activities tailored for children aged 0-18 months;
2. Bilingual program available in English and Spanish;
3. Easy-to-use activity cards aligned with developmental domains;
4. Emphasis on physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development;
5. Aligned with Head Start School Readiness Goals; and,
6. 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

1. Activities tailored to toddlers aged 18-36 months;
2. Emphasis on language-rich environment and physical development;



3. Cognitive activities to support problem-solving and foundational skills;
4. Focus on social-emotional development and impulse control; and,
5. Available in English and dual language versions.

With our comprehensive curriculum for infants and toddlers, we are dedicated to fostering the holistic development of children, 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 children with a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. Developed with support from the National Science Foundation, C4L aims to nurture child growth across four key areas: mathematics, science, literacy, and social-emotional development.

Key Features of Connect4Learning (C4L)

1. 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;
2. Addresses concern about the imbalance of instructional time in preschool, emphasizing math and science alongside literacy;
3. Focuses on providing rich and interconnected experiences within each domain, supporting school readiness; and,
4. Demonstrates how focused math and science experiences can support the development of all four domains.

In the Head Start program, children 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 children with a nurturing environment where they can explore, learn, and grow every day.

Inclusion Services

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

The mental health consultant, 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 as needed. Through on-going assessment of children throughout a child's duration within the program, we are able to assess the mental health needs 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.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

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 complete the ***Authorization for Medication Form***.

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 to 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.

Screening of Head Start Participants

Participants in Head Start receive the screenings listed below:



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

These services have been recommended as necessary and advisable by the Head Start program for the purpose of determining if additional educational, support, and/or therapeutic services are needed to provide a more effective, comprehensive program.

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.

Nutrition

At 4C Head Start, 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 a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks, with specific meal times outlined in your 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. Moreover, we integrate nutrition education and experiences into our classroom activities, thereby reinforcing the importance of making nutritious food choices. This comprehensive approach not only addresses the immediate nutritional needs of the 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 a child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions, parents 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 to be 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 children.

Child Care Food Program (CACFP)

Programs are highly encouraged to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which promotes healthy meals and snacks for children in childcare settings. All meals must meet CACFP and USDA guidelines.

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.

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.

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. Parents cannot give their 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.



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. WIC also teaches nutrition education classes to participants.

How can WIC help a family?

WIC provides certain nutritious foods for growing families, information on healthy eating, help for breastfeeding moms and babies and referrals to health care. See [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Who Receives WIC?

- Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have recently had a baby;
- Infants who are less than one years of age; and,
- Children who are between one and five years of age.

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.

Income Screening

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

Where do Parents 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, contact the local health department.

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

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.
- At 35 months a Specialist Review is conducted, ***Authorization for Release of Information*** is completed, and parent-child visitation schedules are created.

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 a resolution cannot be achieved, supervisors are available to assist. If issues remain unresolved after informal discussion, parents or staff may submit a formal written grievance to the designated Senior Program Managers or the Head Start 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.

PARENT CONSENT AND RIGHTS

Disclosure with Parental Consent

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

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

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



Disclosure without Parental Consent

Parents give consent for personnel to review their child's records to comply with auditing protocols. The 4C Head Start program may disclose a child and family's information without further consent to:

- Contractors and sub-recipients if they are providing services;
- Officials from a federal or state entity for the purpose of an audit or evaluation of education or 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.
- Officials from a federal or state entity to conduct a study to improve child and family outcomes, including improving the quality of programs.
- Appropriate parties to address a disaster, health, or safety emergency during the period of the emergency, or a serious health and safety risk.
- Comply with a court order. Parents sign and understand the program will make a reasonable effort to notify them 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.
- 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.
- 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

Parents have the right to:

- Inspect their child's records.
- Ask the program to amend information in their child's record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading or violates their child's privacy.
- Request a hearing to challenge information in their child's record.
- A copy of their child's records that have been disclosed to third parties, with their 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.

Parents sign an understanding that:



- Teachers will make 2-3 home visits to discuss their child's progress and to share activities to do at home to promote their child's growth and development.
- Parents will allow their child's teacher to set these appointments at their convenience. The Family Advocate will also do home visits as needed.
- All Head Start program staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse.
- They agree to strive towards the goals set with them in their **Family Partnership Agreement**. They also agree to be available quarterly to complete their Family Outcomes.
- They realize the importance of their child attending Head Start daily and maintaining attendance of 90% or above.
- They will contact the teacher every day that their 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.
- They will contact their Family Advocate if their child will be absent more than 3 consecutive days.
- They agree to report any problems or needed assistance to ensure that their child attends class, and that these things will also be reported to their Family Advocate.
- Failure to do any of the items mentioned here may result in possible termination of their child's participation in the 4C Head Start program.
- They agree that an adult or someone 16 years of age or older, and listed on the child pick-up sheet, must pick up their child from the center on time. When their child is brought to the program 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.
- They agree to volunteer in the program and will provide a background screen as required by the program or will designate a person to volunteer on my behalf. They will contact their Family Advocate if assistance is needed.
- They realize that continuing their education by attending classes sets a good example for their child(ren). To assist 4C Head Start in paying for these courses, they agree to complete the **Parent Continuing Education Verification** form and submit all supporting documentation to their Family Advocate. They agree to make every effort to attend other activities offered by the program.
- They understand that any information provided to their Family Advocate, including verbal and written material, will be kept confidential. An exception to the confidentiality policy is if they tell the Family Advocate, they are going to hurt themselves or someone else.

Child Care Partnership Parents

Parents participating in Child Care Partnership program:

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



Readiness.

- Understand if they lose School Readiness funding, they have **three (3) days** to inform their Family Advocate and will make a plan with them to reapply for School Readiness.
- Received a copy of the ***Program Calendar*** from their Family Advocate listing what days the program is closed and open.
- Understand that by enrolling in EHS-CCP, they are enrolled in part time School Readiness care. However, when the program is closed, they are entitled to full time (or part time-based on eligibility worksheet) School Readiness and their parent fees will be as reflected on the certificate from School Readiness.
- Understand that they will be required to pay weekly parent fees or risk losing School Readiness.

FAMILY ADVOCATES AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

4C Head Start is committed to supporting families. We will help parents identify goals and support in reaching them by using their family strengths. This will reinforce the gains made by their child at 4C Head Start. Family Advocates are available to help with information and resources to support their 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 the family or child may have;
- Encouragement and support for their own efforts to obtain quality services;
- Development of goals and strategies that the parent identifies 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 all families have strengths and will continue to build on these strengths. Families have the power to ensure their success!

- Parents are a child's first teacher/expert and will share responsibility for their child's outcomes.

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 for 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.

Pregnant Women Program

1. I will do my best to help myself/my unborn 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 newborn I am 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 the children and families we serve!



PARENT RESOURCES

Health Departments	Services	Contact Information
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
Crisis/Info Hotlines	Services	Contact Information
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
Food	Services	Contact Information
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 supple- mental 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
Legal	Services	Contact Information
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
Public Schools	Services	Contact Information
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



PROVIDER RESOURCES

4C – information about	Department and website information	Contact Information
Attendance	Family Advocate Manager	407-532-4267
General Information	Program Manager	407-532-4296
Education	Education Manager	407-532-4236
Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance Manager	407-532-4137
Family Services	Family Advocate Manager	407-532-4267
Health	Health Manager	407-532-4270
Nutrition	Nutrition Manager	407-532-4270
Inclusion	Inclusion Manager	407-532-4296
Training (Invoice and In-kind)	Data Team https://4cflorida.org/families/early-head-start-and-head-start-ehs-hs/head-start-parent-provider-training/	Submit request via ChildPlus
Payment	Accounting	407-532-4129
DCF Training/Credentials	Child Care Training https://4cflorida.org/providers/child-care-training-exams/education-and-training/	407-532-4158
DCF Competency Exams	Child Care Training https://4cflorida.org/providers/child-care-training-exams/child-care-exams/	888-352-2842 or 407-532-4158
Child Care Food Program	Training and Forms https://4cflorida.org/providers/child-care-food-program-ccfp/	407-532-4234
Neighborhood Centers for Families	Help for Orange County Residents https://4cflorida.org/families/neighborhood-centers-for-families-ncf/	See website for location contacts
Other Contacts		
Florida Abuse Hotline	Reporting Child Abuse	800-962-2873 or 800-96ABUSE
Domestic Violence Hotline	Domestic Violence Information	800-500-1119
Suicide Prevention		988
Get Connected: 211	Community Resource Information https://uwcf.org/211/	211
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	https://www.myflfamilies.com/	



Orange County Head Start		407-836-6590
Early Learning Coalition of Orange County	https://elcoforangecounty.org/	407-841-6607
Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County	https://www.elcosceola.org/	407-219-6300
Early Learning Coalition of Seminole County	http://www.seminoleearlylearning.org/	407-960-2460