

HEAD START of LANE COUNTY

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This is a guide to help you in understanding the Head Start program along with your Parent Handbook that we hope you will read and use as a guide to our program.

1. Head Start program consists of these major components: Early Childhood Special Education Services, Education Services, Family Services, Health/Nutrition Services, and Parent Involvement.
2. Head Start is a program designed for limited income families. Income eligibility is based on Federal guidelines.
3. Information gathered is done in order for Head Start to completely understand the needs for your child/family and work together to meet those needs. All information obtained from you is completely confidential. At the end of the school year, this information is kept locked at the Central Office. After five (5) years it is destroyed.
4. Records will only be sent to another agency with written permission of the parents or legal guardian. Only the parent or guardian signing the enrollment form will have access to the records.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Each child in the Head Start program will receive a screening in the following areas: cognitive development, motor development, speech and language, hearing and social emotional development. If there are concerns in any area, you will be notified and given information and resources to assist you and your child.
2. All service for any of the above areas will require your prior notification and written consent (permission) **before** they can be given.
3. Individual and group consultation with mental health specialists is available.
4. Speech and Language Pathologists, and mental health consultants routinely observe classrooms and make recommendations to the teaching team, which are available to you.
5. Each child with Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) needs will be identified and a team consisting of you (the child's parent/guardian), the classroom teacher, and the ECSE specialist will develop an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to address the identified goals.
6. All families receiving services will be assisted with the process of transitioning their child to the public school system. Your ECSE service coordinator facilitates this process.

EDUCATION

1. The educational team . . .
 - ☆ . . . supports you in your role as your child's primary educator.
 - ☆ . . . works with you to establish and work on goals for your child's growth and development.
2. Classroom Schedule:
 - ☆ Part-day Program: 4 days per week experience, 3½ hours a day.
 - ☆ Combination Program: a 90 minute Home Visit every week to once a month depending on whether your child participates in 1, 2, or 3 three-hour group experiences a week.
 - ☆ Full-day Full-year Program (Child Care Program): sites are open from 7:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday.

3. All children will have opportunities to learn and develop skills, through hands on learning activities, in the following areas of development: language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical health and development.

FAMILY SERVICES

1. Head Start staff members are advocates in obtaining necessary services for all enrolled families and will develop Family Partnership Goals with each family.
2. A Resource Directory of community agencies and services, along with instructions for its use will be distributed to all families at orientation.
3. Consistent attendance is important for children and parents to obtain maximum program benefits. Consecutive absences or erratic attendance will be cause for re-evaluation to determine if your place in the program could be better utilized by another family. Head Start will make every effort to be flexible in meeting the needs of individual families.
4. Selection of children to be enrolled is done on the basis of age and income, and family circumstances.
5. Head Start does not discriminate on basis of sex, national origin, religious preference, or physical or mental abilities.
6. While parent participation is voluntary, it is essential for the growth of your child and the program. The partnership with parents through home visits, parent meetings, goal setting and volunteering is what makes the program work best.
7. Head Start staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse as required by Oregon law.

HEALTH / NUTRITION

1. Assistance in establishing a medical and dental home.
2. Assistance to families in accessing community health resources for follow-up treatment.
3. Treatment planning with RN available for children with chronic health conditions.
4. One meal and one snack each class day plus nutrition education for your family is offered. Individualized nutrition counseling is available.
5. Wellness education for families and children including medical/dental care, fitness, nutrition, safety and stress reduction.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

1. Parents being involved is an integral part of the Head Start program. (Your input is **crucial**.)
2. Parents meet together for meetings, educational programs, and special interest parent gatherings. These are an extremely important part of the Head Start program.
3. Parents become involved in all phases of the program such as participating in home visits, classroom volunteer, home teacher, suggesting curriculum ideas, observing and recording the child's development, determining education plans, participating in fund raising activities and forming program policy through Head Start's Policy Council.
4. "In-Kind" is the matching funds required by the Federal government and equal to 20% of the funded amount. Parents provide a large part of this "In-Kind" by volunteering in the classroom or office, serving on the Policy Council, getting donations from the community, helping on field trips, doing jobs at home for the teachers, home visit time, and many other ways.
5. Honoring the importance of both parents, Head start will make efforts to involve both custodial and non-custodial parents, whenever feasible.