



Empowering people, transforming lives

# Family Handbook

Early Head Start, Head Start, NC Pre-K

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# WNCSource

## Mission, Vision, Values

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### Mission

Working with communities and partners, WNCSource improves people's lives by creating pathways to self-reliance and healthier living.

### Vision

Giving people the power to transform their futures and live more fully in their community.

Through its work and partnerships, WNCSource upholds the following values:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Excellence in Service
- Progressive / Innovative
- Inclusion and Acceptance
- Safe and Caring environment for clients, employees and partners
- Responsible Stewardship of Resources

## Head Start

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### Mission Statement

Head Start promotes the school readiness of young children from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

### Whole Child, Whole Family

The premise of Head Start is simple: every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to reach their full potential.

Four major components of a Head Start Program:

**Education:** Providing a variety of learning experiences to help children grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

**Health:** Providing health services such as immunizations, dental, medical, and mental health, and nutritional services, and early identification of health problems.

**Parent Involvement:** Involving parents in the planning and implementation of activities. Parents serve on policy councils and committees that make administrative decisions; participate in classes and workshops on child development; and volunteer in the program.

**Social Services:** Provide outreach to families to determine what services they need.

## Program Goals

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WNCSource's school readiness goals are developed in order to meet the Office of Head Start mandated school readiness goals, which are defined as "the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals" and that "appropriately reflect the ages of children, birth to five, participating in the program".

For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. Head Start recognizes that parents are their children's primary teachers and advocates. As Head Start programs and schools work together to promote school readiness and to engage families as their children make the transition to kindergarten, schools will be ready for children.

### Our School Readiness Goals for 2022-2023 Year are:

1. Approaches to Learning
  - a. Children will show interest, curiosity, focus, and creativity.

2. Social & Emotional Development
  - a. Children will regulate their own emotions and behaviors
  - b. Children will establish and sustain positive relationships
  - c. Children will participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations
3. Language & Literacy Development
  - a. Children will listen to and understand increasingly complex language
  - b. Children will use language to express thoughts and needs
  - c. Preschool children will demonstrate phonological awareness
  - d. Preschool children will demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet
4. Cognitive Development
  - a. Children will remember and connect experiences
  - b. Preschool children will use number concepts and operations
5. Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
  - a. Children will demonstrate traveling skills and gross motor manipulative skills
  - b. Children will demonstrate fine motor strength and coordination

## 5 Year Program Goals:

Enhance school readiness by providing high quality early education and child development services to all children enrolled that is inclusive of those with disabilities and dual language learners and promotes children’s growth across each domain of development.

Build strong, effective partnerships with families and community agencies that supports school readiness for children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs.

In partnership with parents and community agencies, meet the health, oral health, nutritional and mental health and social emotional needs of children that support their optimal growth and school readiness.

Provide high-quality services to the children and families in our community to support school readiness.

Create a culture of wellness that improves staff and family wellness so that they are able to be present and responsive to the needs of the children and each other.

## Staff

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### Children’s Developmental or Behavior Concerns

Patty Burgess, Early Intervention Coordinator  
[pburgess@wncsource.org](mailto:pburgess@wncsource.org) 828-693-1711 Ext 152

### Volunteering in the program

Gina Dowd, Volunteer & Recruitment Coordinator  
[gdowd@WNCSource.org](mailto:gdowd@WNCSource.org) 828-450-2909

### The Home-Based Program

Claudia Campana, Family Services Coordinator (Speaks Spanish)  
[ccampana@WNCSource.org](mailto:ccampana@WNCSource.org) 828-674-3086

### Children’s Health Needs (doctor, dentist, allergies)

Dylan Allanson, Health & Nutrition Coordinator  
[dallanson@wncsource.org](mailto:dallanson@wncsource.org), 828-693-1711 Ext 131

### Enrollment Team

Kasheiva Jackson, Enrollment Coordinator (Speaks Spanish)  
[kjackson@WNCSource.org](mailto:kjackson@WNCSource.org) 828-696-6495

### Child Care Partnership Program

Kathleen McDavid, CCP Coordinator  
[kmcdavid@WNCSource.org](mailto:kmcdavid@WNCSource.org) 408-464-9331

# Locations

## Henderson County

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### Bruce Drysdale Elementary

(Ages 3-5)  
271 Bearcat Blvd,  
Hendersonville NC 28792

Classroom: 828-697-7312  
Heather Parsons, Site Supervisor [hparsons@WNCSource.org](mailto:hparsons@WNCSource.org) 828-450-3128  
Jeanette Rodriguez, Family Advocate [jorodriguez@WNCSource.org](mailto:jorodriguez@WNCSource.org) 828-676-5394

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### Clear Creek Elementary

(Ages 3-5)  
737 N Clear Creek Rd,  
Hendersonville NC 28792

Classroom: 828-699-2172  
Heather Parsons, Site Supervisor [hparsons@WNCSource.org](mailto:hparsons@WNCSource.org) 828-450-3128  
Yessica Garcia, Family Advocate [ygarcia@WNCSource.org](mailto:ygarcia@WNCSource.org) 828-490-3199

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### Dana Elementary

(Ages 3-5)  
690 Ridge Rd,  
Hendersonville NC 28972

Classroom: 828-702-8376  
Heather Parsons, Site Supervisor [hparsons@WNCSource.org](mailto:hparsons@WNCSource.org) 828-450-3128  
Yessica Garcia, Family Advocate [ygarcia@WNCSource.org](mailto:ygarcia@WNCSource.org) 828-490-3199

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### Etowah Center

(Ages 0-5)  
233 Brickyard Rd,  
Etowah NC 28729

Center: 828-890-8331  
Heather Butterfield, Site Supervisor [hbutterfield@WNCSource.org](mailto:hbutterfield@WNCSource.org) 828-890-8331  
Yadira Ortiz-Castillo, Family Advocate [yortiz@WNCSource.org](mailto:yortiz@WNCSource.org) 828-337-8989

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### Flat Rock Center

(Ages 0-3)

TEMPORARILY CLOSED

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### Fletcher Center

Ages 3-5

TEMPORARILY CLOSED

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### Hillandale Elementary

Ages 3-5  
40 Preston Ln,  
East Flat Rock NC 28762

Classroom: 828-699-0955  
Heather Parsons, Site Supervisor [hparsons@WNCSource.org](mailto:hparsons@WNCSource.org) 828-450-3128  
Jeanette Rodriguez, Family Advocate [jorodriguez@WNCSource.org](mailto:jorodriguez@WNCSource.org) 828-676-5394

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### King Creek Center

Ages 0-5  
20 Fickley Rd.  
Hendersonville NC 28792

Center: 828-233-0197  
Gabriella Matayabas, Site Supervisor [gmatayabas@WNCSource.org](mailto:gmatayabas@WNCSource.org) 828-273-9455  
Yessica Garcia, Family Advocate [ygarcia@WNCSource.org](mailto:ygarcia@WNCSource.org) 828-490-3199

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### Laurie's Child Care

Ages 0-4  
108 Upward Acres St,  
East Flat Rock NC 28792

Child Care Home: 828-699-2992  
Laurie Morin, Owner  
Jeanette Rodriguez, Family Advocate [jorodriguez@WNCSource.org](mailto:jorodriguez@WNCSource.org) 828-676-5394

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### Little Red School

Ages 0-3  
604 Brooklyn Ave,  
Hendersonville NC 28792

Center: 828-693-8831  
Jill Hussey, Director  
Jeanette Rodriguez, Family Advocate [jorodriguez@WNCSource.org](mailto:jorodriguez@WNCSource.org) 828-676-5394

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### Main Street Center

Ages 3-5

TEMPORARILY CLOSED

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Sugar Hill Center Ages 0-5 2 Sugar Hill Dr, Hendersonville NC 28792	Center: 828-698-5422 Kelly Pittman, Site Supervisor <a href="mailto:kpittman@WNCSource.org">kpittman@WNCSource.org</a> 828-388-1072 Teresa Beddingfield, Asst Site Supervisor <a href="mailto:tbeddingfield@WNCSource.org">tbeddingfield@WNCSource.org</a> 828-702-0037 Adriana Abee, Family Advocate, <a href="mailto:aabee@WNCSource.org">aabee@WNCSource.org</a> 828-377-6656
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Tebeau Children's Center Ages 0-5	COMING SOON
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## Polk County

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Sunny View Center Ages 0-3	TEMPORARILY CLOSED
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## Rutherford County

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Forest City Ages 0-3	COMING SOON
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Kids Kingdom Ages 0-3 143 Henrietta St, Ellenboro NC 28712	Center: 828-453-8999 Rose Fish, Director Jeanette Rodriguez, Family Advocate <a href="mailto:jorodriguez@WNCSource.org">jorodriguez@WNCSource.org</a> 828-676-5394
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## Transylvania County

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Hillview Center Ages 0-5 181 Hillview Ext., Brevard NC 28712	Center: 828-884-2255 Lila Carter, Site Supervisor <a href="mailto:lcarter@WNCSource.org">lcarter@WNCSource.org</a> 828-747-8957 Heidi Jordan, Family Advocate <a href="mailto:hjordan@WNCSource.org">hjordan@WNCSource.org</a> 828-699-0957
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Little Blessings Ages 0-3 163 Main St, Rosman NC 28772	Center: 828-226-2266 Ashley Marlowe, Director Heidi Jordan, Family Advocate <a href="mailto:hjordan@WNCSource.org">hjordan@WNCSource.org</a> 828-699-0957
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## Main Office

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PO Box 685, 220 King Creek Blvd  
Hendersonville, NC 28793  
828-693-1711

# Program Information

## Program Options

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The program options offered to children by the WNCSource Head Start Program in Henderson, Polk, Transylvania and Rutherford Counties include the following:

1. A Home-Based program where children and families have a Parent Educator come to the home and guide educational experiences. This also includes opportunities for socialization with other Home-Based children;
2. Center based program with classrooms for children infant through 4-year-olds. Some centers have the option of wrap around services.
  - a. Head Start/NC Pre-K (3 & 4-year-olds)
  - b. Early Head Start (infants through 3 years of age)
3. Child Care Partnership sites are Centers in the community that we partner with to provide high-quality Head Start Services for children infant through 3 years of age.
4. Expectant Family program where Expectant Mothers will receive support in accessing services while reserving a space for her unborn child in our program.

## Eligibility & Application

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Families of enrollees must meet with an enrollment specialist to determine eligibility into the programs. Our program represents best practice and as such we are an inclusive program welcoming all eligible children. All of our classrooms have at a minimum 10% enrolled with diagnosed disability.

The process for enrolling children in our programs begins with the submission of a Pre-Application. This application may be found on our website at [www.WNCSource.org](http://www.WNCSource.org). If you need assistance or internet access to complete the application, you can come by our Main office or any WNCSource site or Partnership site for assistance. Once the application has been submitted, WNCSource enrollment personnel will contact the family to schedule the . All required documentation must be turned in at this appointment to process your child's application for enrollment.

## Calendar & Inclement Weather

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Services provided to infants through 3-year-olds follow a year-round schedule (Center and Home-based).

WNCSource Children's Centers serving children older than 3-years-old begin operations in August and are open for at least 160 days per year.

WNCSource observes major holidays, one week for Spring Break, approximately 2 weeks for Winter Break, and a long weekend for Summer Break. Additionally, half days and full days of professional development for our staff are scheduled throughout the year.

A calendar will be provided to families at the beginning of the program year, any deviation from this plan will be announced with as much advance notice as possible.

*For inclement weather, please watch WLOS, WNCSource website or check WNCSource's Facebook page.*

## Religious Activities

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Activities, instruction, or communications which promote religious beliefs shall not be directed toward children participating in our programs.

## Fees

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There are no fees for families for our services. Families are given opportunities to provide volunteer services to meet the program's required in-kind match.

WNCSource may only accept a fee from families of enrolled children for services that are in addition to services provided by Head Start, such as child care before or after Head Start hours (Wrap Around hours). Fees for additional services are determined by the North Carolina Child Care Market Rate, set by DCDEE.

## Wrap-Around Services:

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Available Locations can vary. Reach out to your enrollment specialist for site availability. Applicable rates are available from the Site Supervisor.

### WNCSource Payment Policy:

- All parents/guardians receiving a child care voucher are required to pay parent fees in advance of care when due.
- Payments can be made through the WNCSource online payment system. See Site Supervisor for more information.
- Payments are due the first of the month. Payments will be considered late if they are made any time after that date.
- Any parent/guardian who is 30 days late paying a parent fee must be reported to DSS or if applicable Smart Start Partnership for Children. Non-payment of fees puts you at risk for losing your child care voucher.
- Service hours that are supported by the DSS voucher or Smart Start scholarship will be suspended until all past due fees are collected. Please note that you will still be able to bring your child for the portion of the day that is covered by Head Start (8:00 to 2:30) – these services are free to enrolled families.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your Site Supervisor or Family Advocate.

## Safe Sleep Policy

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A safe sleep environment for infants reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related infant deaths. According to North Carolina Law, child care providers caring for infants 12 months of age or younger are required to implement a safe sleep policy and share the policy with families and staff. A copy of this policy is posted in each infant sleep room where it can easily be read.

The full policy is signed by all families at enrollment. Site Supervisors can provide a copy of the full policy as requested.

## Smoking Policy

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WNCSource's programs and services will be conducted in a tobacco-free environment in order to promote wellness and maintain a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment. All of WNCSource's property, facilities, and vehicles are tobacco-free. Signs are posted at all WNCSource owned facilities asking employees, clients, and the general public to respect WNCSource's tobacco-free policy.

The full policy is signed by all families at enrollment. Site Supervisors can provide a copy of the full policy as requested.

## Personal Identifiable Information

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Information about personally identifiable information (PII) can be found in the Head Start Program Performance Standards. You have the right to provide written consent before WNCSource discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from your child's records, except to the extent that the Head Start Program Performance Standards authorize disclosure without consent.

The full policy is signed by all families at enrollment. Site Supervisors can provide a copy of the full policy as requested.



## Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome & Abusive Head Trauma

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WNCSource, believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is an important function of keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

SBS/AHT is the name given to a form of physical child abuse that occurs when an infant or small child is violently shaken and/or there is trauma to the head. Shaking may last only a few seconds but can result in severe injury or even death<sup>1</sup>. According to North Carolina Child Care Rule (child care centers, IOA NCAC 09 .0608, family child care homes, IOA NCAC 09 .1726), each child care facility licensed to care for children up to five years of age shall develop and adopt a policy to prevent SBS/AHT.

The full policy is signed by all families at enrollment. Site Supervisors can provide a copy of the full policy as requested.

## Photography

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To respect the safety and privacy of all children, photography and the sharing of images via mobile phone or social media is prohibited unless the photograph is taken by the family of the child pictured. This policy includes WNCSource staff, which prohibits staff from taking, posting or sharing any photos of children via electronic devices without written parental consent and immediate supervisor approval.

## Summary of Bloodborne Pathogens Compliance Program

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Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These diseases include but are not limited to HBV (Hepatitis B Virus) and HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). For purposes of infection control, it is assumed that all bodily fluids are potentially infectious.

When working in the Early Head Start/Head Start program, employees and volunteers must follow precautions including wearing disposable latex gloves when closed -

1. Wear disposable latex gloves when: a) contact with children or adults includes blood, mucous membrane, urine, feces, vomitus, and all other body fluids; and b) handling items or surfaces soiled and/or contaminated with blood and other body fluids.
2. Clean up from bodily spills promptly using disposable towels and a germicidal solution- and disposable gloves, by placing trash in a leak-proof plastic bag with string or wire closure and dispose of as soon as possible in an outside trash container with a good-fitting lid. Contaminated glass is to be picked up by tongs or a broom and dust pan, not by hand.
3. Handle contaminated laundry as little as possible (wearing disposable gloves) and place it in a leak-proof plastic bag with string or wire closure, then store in locked storage unavailable to children, and give to families as soon as possible.
4. Hand wash frequently with anti-bacterial soap and warm water when having direct contact with children and always after using the bathroom. When having direct contact with a child's bodily fluids, the child's hands must also be washed for a minimum of 15 seconds, using antibacterial soap and warm water.

# Early Childhood Programing

## Curriculum

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Our Early Head Start classrooms use *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, 3rd Edition*. Our Head Start and NCPRE-K classrooms use *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 6th Edition*. Our Home-Base program uses *Parents as Teachers*. The curriculum guides planning, individualization, and on-going assessment of each child's growth and skill development. Three times a year we gather this information to evaluate progress and prepare information to share with families and track how we are progressing as an agency in supporting our children in being school ready.

Our classroom staff supports the inclusion of the family in the curriculum by inviting families to join in activities in the classroom, participating in learning activities at home with their child, and engaging in 2 home visits and 2 family conferences each year.

## Environment

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Our teaching staff create environments for our children to feel safe and respected so that they will build relationships with the staff. As a result, the children are ready to learn. Routines and schedules will be created so that children spend most of their time in active learning of their own choosing while providing unique and individualized opportunities to learn through playing games using building toys, exploring objects from nature, acting out roles, and using art materials. Without being intrusive, staff will involve themselves actively while children play, observe their play and extend their play by adding materials and asking questions about it, and be available when needed to facilitate learning and growth through open-ended questioning, guidance and modeling. Staff will instill children with specific skills for getting along with others, solving conflicts, and acting cooperatively while giving children many opportunities to interact and to talk to each other in positive ways. Staff will also teach children correct behavior and give meaningful consequences, if needed, for continued misbehaviors while utilizing positive reinforcement techniques.

## Individualization & Inclusion

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WNCSOURCE is a full inclusion program which means that we serve children with disabilities in all of our classrooms and home-based opportunities for their full participation in all program activities. We partner with private and public agencies to determine eligibility for additional services and then we coordinate these services to the maximum extent possible to meet the child's needs through individualization of our curriculum.

WNCSOURCE also supports families through the process of identifying, referral, evaluation, and service provision for their child when there is a suspected disability. Part of the identifying process is screening all of our children using a developmental screener in conjunction with the family. This allows us to get a snapshot of how the child is developing and how we can support their growth while in our program.

## Arrival and Departure

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When families transport their children to and from the centers, the arrival and departure times offer opportunities for communication about the children and the program. Families are urged to take a few extra minutes to speak with center staff at these times.

In order to assure that the child's center arrival and departure are pleasant and safe experiences, the following procedures have been established. Safety aspects of these procedures are mandated by the NC licensing regulations.

Children participating in classroom activities are expected to depart from the center no later than the center's Head Start closing time. In the event that a family has an emergency which will delay picking up the child, the family needs to notify the center staff by telephone.

Families must come inside centers with their children at delivery and pick-up times. Each guardian must

1. Ensure that staff know when the child is arriving and departing
2. Sign in and out the child
3. Allow staff to complete a daily health check upon arrival.

## Release of Children:

Children are released from the care of the program only to the authorized individuals noted in the child's file. Staff asks the family to list the names and contact information for these "authorized" persons. A family can amend their child's list at any time by requesting the information from the teacher. It is very important that these lists, maintained by Head Start staff, are current. New lists are to be completed and given to Head Start when the child is initially enrolled, when the child returns to Head Start for the second year, and any time when there has been a change in who is authorized to be responsible for the child.

## Telephone Numbers:

Families should keep the phone number for their child's teacher. In addition, families are asked to keep teachers informed of a current phone number where they can be reached in the event of an emergency.

## Attendance

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All families are encouraged to maintain consistent attendance in our program. Consistent attendance is defined as present or participating in *at least* 85% of expected hours. Families are to be informed about the attendance policy during the enrollment process by the enrollment specialist.

Families are asked to notify the center staff when their child must be absent and give the reason for the absence. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of the program's start time, staff will attempt to contact the family to ensure the child's well-being. If a child continues to be absent without explanation (such as two consecutive days), staff will conduct an educational home visit or make other direct contact with the family. If a child is at risk of missing 10% of available program days, staff will work with families to develop strategies to improve identified barriers.

Should the absences continue without improvement, the child's enrollment in the program may be at risk.

The full policy is signed by all families at enrollment. Site Supervisors can provide a copy of the full policy as requested.

## Emergency Preparedness & Response

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In an effort to provide a safer environment for our WNCSource classrooms, we have developed a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Plan for each site in connection with local fire, police, emergency medical services and other responding agencies and in accordance with NC child care licensing rules and regulations.

Following is the information you, as a WNCSource family, will need to know and follow in the event of an emergency at your child's school. Please keep us up-to-date on any changes to your contact information and your child's medical information. To help prepare your child for any emergency, we will have monthly fire drills and periodic (quarterly) safety drills.

### Lock Down Emergency

During a lockdown all exterior and interior doors are locked and children are confined to their classrooms. No entry or exit of the facility is allowed. A lockdown takes place if a threat or possible threat is identified inside the school. Main entrance doors will be locked during a lockdown and a sign will be posted at the main entrance if possible. If you are notified of a lockdown at the school, do not come to the school, stay in a location where you can get further information. Children will not be released until the incident has ended- per our Emergency Preparedness Response plan and school policy.

## Shelter-In-Place Emergency

During a shelter-in-place, children are taken to an inner hallway or a room with few to no windows and take refuge there until it is safe to release them. Shelter-in-place takes place if there is threat of a tornado or high winds or if there is hazardous material released into the atmosphere and it has been determined, with the assistance of outside agencies, that evacuation or early dismissal could possibly place children in danger. During a shelter-in-place, children will not be released until the incident is over and we are cleared to do so by local law enforcement officials.

## Fire Emergency – Building Evacuation

In the event of a fire we will evacuate the children from the classrooms using the outside door exits where they will wait until the clear signal has been communicated from the conductor of the drill and/or the local fire department. In the circumstance where we are not allowed back in the building, we will proceed to take the children to an alternate location as described in our EPR plan.

## Social, Emotional Supports

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In collaboration with each child’s family, WNCSource ensures that all children are screened on their emotional skills and behavioral needs. This helps to inform the teachers on appropriate learning activities to include in the curriculum as well as partner with families to locate strategies that the family could benefit from.

Every classroom has a space where children can utilize to calm their bodies and regulate their emotions and/or sensory needs. These designated options may include soft pillows, emotions pictures, and other sensory items/materials that are appropriate for calming and regulating emotions in young children. The sensory areas will be designed and equipped to be utilized both inside and outside of the classroom. Children will be able to use these areas to learn how to de-escalate their behaviors and regulate their emotions. Teachers will be educated on the procedures by the Early Intervention Behavior Specialists in how to appropriately utilize these spaces so it is used to its fullest and intended potential.

## Discipline

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Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of the behavior management of children. When 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, this facility will practice the following discipline and behavior management policy:

### WE DO

- Praise, reward and encourage all of the children.
- Reason with and set limits for the children.
- Model appropriate behavior for the children.
- Modify the program environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
- Listen to the children.
- Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior.
- Explain to the children the natural and logical consequences of their behavior.
- Treat the children as individuals and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
- Ignore minor misbehaviors.
- Explain things to the children on their levels.
- Stay consistent in our behavior management program

### WE DO NOT

- Spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap or otherwise physically punish the children.
- Make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
- Shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
- Deny food or rest as punishment.
- Relate discipline to eating, resting or sleeping.
- Leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
- Place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
- Allow discipline of children by children.
- Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children’s parents, families, or ethnic groups

## Challenging & Extreme Behavior

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We believe that all behavior is communication and that some behaviors are challenging to the adult more than they are to the child. We recognize that there will be children in our programs that display challenging and extreme behaviors and we are committed to working in partnership with the family to understand and decrease challenging and unsafe behaviors while fully supporting the family in finding and coordinating appropriate resources and maintaining clear communication.

Challenging behaviors refer to a pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults. These behaviors interfere with children's learning, development, and success at play.

We work as a team with families when there are challenging behaviors occurring on our sites or in your homes. We implement training for teachers, develop Child Support Plans with families, and Collaborate with our Mental Health Consultant and the local education agencies.

Sometimes these behaviors are extreme in nature meaning that they endanger or potentially endanger the safety of peers, staff or themselves. If this happens, after consultation with our Early Intervention Coordinator or Program Support Services Manager, we may alert the family that they should come and pick up their child from school to help them regulate for the next day.

If all available supports are in place and an appropriate, team-generated plan is being followed both at home and at school and the behavior continues to be a safety concern; a team-based decision will be made to determine whether another more appropriate placement is necessary to meet the child's identified developmental/behavioral unmet needs.

The full policy is signed by all families at enrollment. Site Supervisors can provide a copy of the full policy as requested.

## Field Trips

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Field trips to nearby places of interest are included in the children's curriculum. Examples of field trips include visits to the public library, local farms, supermarkets, etc. Teachers notify families in advance of all field trips and urge caregivers to accompany the children on the field trips.

The following procedures apply to all field trips:

- Center staff plan field trips well in advance of the event. Supervisory staff will have knowledge of the field trip and will have approved the plans.
- Teaching staff arrange for enough families and volunteers to accompany the children and staff to provide good supervision of the children.
- Center staff arrange for safe transportation. WNCSource vehicles used to transport Head Start children meet and maintain safety inspection standards and all other applicable North Carolina and federal regulations concerning transportation of passengers. WNCSource insures these vehicles for liability as required by State law.
- A first-aid kit is located in each WNCSource vehicle used to transport children. In addition, teachers bring emergency and identification information about each child on the field trip.
- Each person in the vehicle sits in the manufacturer's designated areas and each passenger is restrained with an individual seat belt or child restraint device. All children use an appropriate child restraint "five-point harness" according to the Head Start Performance Standards.
- Teachers obtain written parental permission for each child to attend the field trip prior to the event.

All of our staff and children engage in bus & pedestrian safety training & practice annually and prior to any field trips.

## Outdoor Learning Environments (OLE)

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WNCSource believes that **outdoor learning environments** are so much more than just a playground. These spaces are designed and created with intentionally selected **natural elements** that **spark curiosity and discovery** while offering age-appropriate and safe play. These spaces include diverse features designed to promote structured and unstructured physical activity, and learning. Playing and learning outside also helps children to understand and respect nature, the environment and the interdependence of humans, animals, plants, and life cycles.

The core values of our curriculum resonate with long-standing key concepts of outdoor learning such as providing challenges, enjoyment, relevance, depth, development of the whole person and an adventurous approach to learning. These are at the center of our outdoor learning "school of thought".

A well thought-out and intentional OLE should enhance children's development through learning and play, influencing how children feel, act, and behave.

WNCSource believes that the most powerful nature-connection experiences need to meet certain criteria:

- In a natural and inclusive setting
- Focused on nature rather than some non-nature activity
- Recurring, so that they become a regular part of the child's life
- Providing opportunities for a child to learn skills, feel successful, and have other highly affirming experiences
- Supported by a caring and helpful adult

## Clothing, Jewelry & Safety Considerations

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Teachers for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area, equipment and children's attire. Your child's attire should be age appropriate and fit correctly. Children's personal items such as barrettes, hair ties, earrings, necklaces, and beaded jewelry are also strongly discouraged. Footwear safety is also a priority. Shoes should be comfortable and provide adequate protection for the feet during outdoor play. It is requested that all children wear a pair of closed toed shoes. Flip-flops, slip-on shoes, open-toed sandals, jelly shoes and any shoes with heels are highly discouraged as they present a safety hazard. We will take all precautionary methods to be certain that your child's belongings are well cared for; please keep in mind, clothes that look a little less clean at the end of the day are a sign that your child was actively engaged in learning

## Family School Agreement

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Before the beginning of the program year, there will be an open house to highlight key components and services of the program, introduce staff, and review policies and procedures as applicable. It is an opportunity for families to ask questions and provide valuable input.

### Home Visits

The opportunity for your child's teacher to visit with you in your home is a key step in building a strong family/school partnership. Seeing your child in their home environment allows the teacher to gain important knowledge to help your child learn and grow at school. Your child's teacher will contact you to set up a home visit soon after your child has enrolled and each year thereafter during the re-enrollment period.

### Family Conferences

Teacher-Family conferences are held twice a year (fall and spring) or more often if needed. This is a time to continue to get to know the children and their families. You are also able to exchange information with teachers, touch base, set goals, and report on the child's activities in the classroom. Teachers should schedule times individually with families. It is important to know that teachers are available to meet with all families, but that they prefer not to discuss problems or the child in the classroom or during the day since the conversation may be interrupted or overheard.

## Assessment

WNCSource uses a variety of assessment methods that are sensitive to and informed by a family's culture, experiences, children's abilities and disabilities, and home language. The program uses an ongoing systematic, formal and informal approach to assessment that provides information on children's learning and development that considers the cultural context in which children develop.

# Families & School

## Standards of Conduct

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WNCSource Standards of Conduct is signed by all Head Start staff, parents, consultants, contractors, and volunteers. A copy is available through the site supervisor at your child's center. WNCSource is committed to ensuring the safety of children, families, visitors, and staff in all of our facilities. In order to maintain an open, orderly, respectful and secure environment, it is essential that all families are aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the standards of conduct.

Families are expected to:

- Behave in a respectful manner on school property and when attending school functions.
- Recognize that the education and safety of children is a joint responsibility between families and staff.
- Know and help their children understand our classroom's principles
  - We take care of ourselves, others, and our things.
- Support our spaces being focused on children by refraining from cellphone use.
- Refrain from giving personal gifts to employees. They are not allowed to accept them.
- Convey to children a supportive attitude toward education and the Head Start program.
- Build good relationships with staff, other families, and their children's friends.
- Respect that our facilities and campus are all tobacco-free

No person shall:

- Intentionally injure another person or threaten to do so.
- Disrupt classes, school programs or other school activities.
- Intimidate, harass, or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute, or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or be under the influence on our campus or at any school function
- Possess or use weapons or tobacco products in or on school property or at a school function.

If a family member appears to be engaging in any prohibited behavior, they will be asked to leave the premises immediately and if necessary, law enforcement will be called so that we maintain our first priority of the safety of children and staff.

Follow up conversation will occur with the family to discuss the specific concern and request their input in resolving the issue. If this fails to result in changed behavior, the family member will be asked to meet with staff to create a written behavioral contract with the family to define appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and consequences for any violations which could include exclusion of the family member from our spaces. This is signed by staff and family as appropriate.

## Confidentiality

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Enrollment for a child in the Head Start center requires a considerable amount of information about the child and their family. Staff keeps this information confidential within the Head Start Program, and the information is used only for the purposes of assisting the child and his family to receive the benefits offered by the Head Start Program.



## Family Committees

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Every children's center (including the Home-Base Program) have a family committee composed of all the parents/caregivers of the children who attend that center. The Committee works with the Site Supervisor and Family Advocate to plan Monthly Family Meetings and Monthly Family Engagement Activities. Meetings can include

- Opportunities for families to discuss classroom activities, center events, and program initiatives;
- Educational topics based on parent interest as determined by information provided through Parent Training Surveys, Family Strengths and Needs Assessments, and/or Family Partnership Agreements;
- Educational topics to support parent-child relationships and child development, including language, dual language, literacy, bi-literacy development and Kindergarten Readiness
- Information/activities from the parenting curriculum, ReadyRosie
- Meetings can also include speakers from various local community agencies who share information about their agencies' services, areas of specialty, etc.

## Policy Council

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If you are interested in leadership, then the Policy Council is for you. You will be elected by your peers to represent them. You will be trained in your role and may receive financial support to help offset the costs associated with attending monthly meetings. As an Early Head Start or Head Start parent, you have an opportunity to participate on the Policy Council - to make important decisions about how the program operates. The Policy Council meets once a month to:

- Approve the Head Start and Early Head Start budgets
- Approve grant and contract requests
- Approve the hiring and firing of staff
- Approve Policies and Procedures
- Develop the annual child enrollment plans
- Work in partnership with the Head Start Board of Directors

Parent Leaders on the Policy Council

- Are elected in September by parents from your child's site at the first Family Meeting
- Attend monthly Policy Council meetings from September to September
- Attend monthly Family Meetings at your child's site to inform other families about the Policy Council activities and gather information from the parents to take back to the Policy Council.

The Policy Council Representatives and Alternates role is to:

- Listen carefully and respect the opinions of other.
- Respect and support the majority decision of the Policy Council.
- Stay informed on issues that come to the Policy Council.
- Attend monthly meetings and your site family activity events.
- Alert staff about issues that can harm the organization.
- Refer complaints to the correct person.
- Represent the WNCSource agency in a professional manner at all times.
- Help other parents become involved and stay informed.

## Volunteers

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As a Head Start program we have an "open door" policy in our classrooms and encourage family participation/volunteering on a frequent and/or regular basis. Families are free to visit their child's center unannounced at any time when it is in operation. Families are also welcome to have lunch with their child, but a day's advance notice is necessary to order the additional lunch. There are many ways to contribute to the classroom learning environment. Talk with your Child's teacher and your Family Advocate to find ways to be involved!



## Parenting Curriculum

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Family Advocates use **Ready Rosie** as a parenting curriculum that helps families create meaningful home-learning environments and promote school readiness. Modeled Moment videos are sent to families through text, email, or an app on a weekly basis. Family Workshops are also provided to address topics of interest throughout the school year. Family Advocates customize the materials provided based on the needs of the family.

Family Advocates and Parent Educators provide additional opportunities to learn about parenting skills, community resources, and children's health and safety throughout the year. Family Committees help determine the topics that are covered which includes at a minimum vehicle and pedestrian safety.

## Communication

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Communication between staff and families is important for the success of the child's school readiness. Program staff and caregivers have frequent informal communication. Some of this communication is verbal and occurs through brief chats during pick-up/delivery time, telephone calls, etc.; other communication occurs through written notes and flyers. Caregivers are asked to read the messages that children bring home. Information shared regularly between staff and parents includes details of special events as well as day-to-day happenings, such as changes in the child's physical or emotional state, their eating habits, and any injuries the child has received. Staff also give caregivers ideas about ways to work at home with their children to promote their healthy development.

All families receive information the center through newsletters, Family Meeting minutes, Policy Council minutes, Verbal announcements, and information boards/space. Texting and email are also used with families who opt in to those services.

## Family Services

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The Head Start program has several components, each of which makes a major contribution to the child's development and offers benefits to the family. These components include: education, family engagement/social services, health/nutrition, mental health, and disabilities.

Each Center-Based family is assigned a Family Advocate (FA) who will develop a professional relationship with families to assist them in accessing resources to meet needs, and identifying and accomplishing goals. Family Advocates make every effort to conduct at least three home visits per year. FAs provide transportation to medical and other related appointments as needed and should have monthly contacts with the families. Contact can happen in various forms: center visits, phone calls, text messages, and home visits. Parent Educators serve as the Family Advocate for children enrolled in the Home-Based program.

## Celebrations

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As a Head Start program we avoid endorsing commercialism surrounding holidays. Our focus is about learning and celebrating in an inclusive manner. Holidays are not a major part of the curriculum. They are integrated within the total curriculum with no more than a few days and few activities are dedicated to any holiday. Holidays are not a theme and the whole room is not to be decorated reflecting a holiday. We ensure that every group represented in the classroom, engagements, and socializations are honored without assuming any individual family's traditions and holidays are celebrated the same way.

The focus on birthday celebration is on the uniqueness of the child. We do not change the daily routine or planned activities to accommodate birthday celebrations to ensure that children who need consistency and routine are provided that every day. To ensure the focus remains on the child and promote healthy eating at meals, we do not use food in our celebrations. Some suggestions include:

- Giving and/or reading a book to the child and classmates
- Bringing educational toys to share
- Bringing a baby book or other symbolic item, or a special family story to share

- Lead a game
- Birthday Child receives a book made by classmates, each student colors a page of the book highlighting a quality of the birthday child. Staff puts the pages together into a book and the child gets to take that keepsake home to share with his or her family.
- Invite families to share with the group about the birth of the child or something unique about him/her. Share traditions on how birthdays are celebrated in the family.

## Transitions

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Transitions within our program from one classroom to another as well as transitions from our program to other care and educational opportunities are an important part of our programming. For every transition our teachers, site supervisors, and family advocates partner with you to ensure that the transition is smooth, there is open communication, and time is available for conversations and planning on how to support the child and family through the transition.

Staff communicates with families to ensure that children who leave their centers have smooth transitions to other programs, such as the public kindergarten. Visitation activities are frequently planned to acquaint the children with the new program they will attend.

## Social Media

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WNCSource recognizes that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc. We also understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share one's life and opinions with family and friends around the world. However, employees' use of social media can also pose risks to WNCSource's confidential information, goodwill and reputation, and can jeopardize compliance with certain laws and regulations applicable to our organization.

To minimize these business and legal risks, to avoid loss of productivity and distraction from employees' job duties, WNCSource expects all staff, including employees, volunteers, interns and contract employees, to adhere to the following guidelines and rules regarding use of social media. Social media should never be used in a way that violates any other WNCSource policies. For example, employees are prohibited from using social media to

- Violate confidentiality and proprietary rights.
- Engage in any discriminatory or harassing conduct.
- Circumvent ethics and standards of conduct.
- Violate any other laws or ethical standards (for example, using social media in a false, deceptive or misleading way).

# Health Services

Physical and oral health are critical to preparing children to be ready to learn and grow. WNCSource encourages families to follow the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule for physical exams (also known as well-child visits) and the North Carolina Dental Periodicity schedule for dental exams. The Health Team will request the child's physical exam, immunization record, and dental exam directly from the provider as soon as we receive a signed consent form. The consent form allows permission to request medical information from your child's medical providers.

## Health Assessments & Screenings

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WNCSource provides high quality health, oral health, and nutrition services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate that supports each child's growth and school readiness. In partnership with families, we ensure that the child has ongoing and accessible health care and health insurance. We then support families in ensuring that their child stays up-to-date on well-child visits and dental exams throughout their time in our program.

In collaboration with each child’s family, WNCSource performs evidence-based hearing and vision screenings to ensure there are no sensory concerns that could impact the child’s growth and school readiness. If any concerns are found during the screening process, WNCSource refers the child to their health care provider for a complete evaluation.

## Nutrition Services

WNCSource offers nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack daily. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which plays a critical role in supporting the wellness, health, and development of children through the provision of nutritious foods. We feel we have a powerful opportunity to instill healthy habits in young children that serve as a foundation for healthy choices in life. Considerations for family preferences and accommodations are made for children with food allergies, but we require a note from the child’s pediatrician or a written preference note from family to document this for our records. As a participant in the CACFP program, we are required to have updated CACFP forms each year.

## Physical Exams - Well-Child Visits

Each child is required to have a recent physical exam and immunization records by the 30th day of enrollment. If your child does not have a recent physical exam and immunizations by this deadline, they cannot return to the classroom until the Health Team receives these records. The schedule below shows each age that your child should visit the pediatrician for a physical exam. Call your doctor when your child enrolls to make sure your child is up to date for their age based on the schedule below and schedule your next appointment to keep them on this schedule. Please remember that physical exams are not the same as sick-child visits, so talk to your doctor to make sure your child is up to date.

2 mo	4 mo	6 mo	9 mo
12 mo	15 mo	18 month	
24 month		30 month	
3 year			
4 year			
5 year			

Head Start benefits include medical, dental, and mental health services. Children receive screenings, examinations, and treatment as needed. Families are encouraged to go with their children to medical and dental appointments.

Based on North Carolina Child Care regulations, a current (within the last full year of the first day of school) physical examination record and an up-to-date immunization record must be on file no later than 30 days following enrollment. Physical exams must be repeated every twelve months. Each child must receive immunizations as required by Head Start and North Carolina regulations. Families that wish to waive this immunization regulation due to religious objections must request a waiver *before* enrollment.

As part of the Head Start standards, family cooperation is expected when additional medical, dental, psychological, and mental health services are recommended. It is further expected that families will apply for their child to receive Medicaid or Health Choice services.

When Head Start vehicles are used to transport children to health appointments and services, the parent must accompany the child in the vehicle. The same safety precautions used for transporting children on field trips are also used for transporting children to health appointments.

## Medication

Staff may administer medication to enrollees ONLY when the following criteria are met:

1. The medicine must be prescribed by a health care provider and in a pharmacist’s packaging labeled for the child only.
2. Complete directions must be on the bottle.
3. In the case of a non-maintenance medication, the medicine has to have been filled less than two weeks prior to administration at the center and cannot be given after the expiration date.

4. The family must completely fill out the Head Start medication permission form before the medicine can be accepted by Head Start staff.

We regret that for the safety of your child, there can be NO exceptions to the above rules. Additionally, Head Start staff cannot:

1. Give the initial dose of any maintenance medication; however, if the medication is considered a rescue medication (such as: Albuterol inhaler, Diastat, EpiPen) we can administer it when needed.
2. Share medication between siblings.
3. Give medication in the center that is ordered less than 3 times daily unless the time to be given is specified by the physician.
4. Give over-the-counter non-prescription medications.

For children diagnosed with asthma, allergies, or a medical condition, an allergy/asthma/medical action plan is required before the child can start attending in the classroom.

Please feel free to call the WNCSource Health and Nutrition Coordinator at 828-693-1711, if you have any questions.

Per Head Start requirements, families who would like for us to use diaper cream, sunscreen, and/or insect repellent on their child, we require signed permission from the family and the child's doctor or health professional. We have a letter and form that would need to be completed by the family and health professional before we are able to apply these items to your child.

## Sick Child Exclusion

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When a child becomes ill but does not require immediate medical help, a determination should be made regarding whether the child should be sent home (i.e., should be temporarily excluded from child care). Most illnesses do not require exclusion. The caregiver/teacher in collaboration with supervisor should determine if the illness:

1. Prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities
2. Results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
3. Poses a risk of spreading of harmful diseases to others

If any of these criteria are met, the child should be excluded, regardless of the type of illness. We use Federally and State recognized resources to support the decision making about sending a child home who is ill. Staff members use "Symptoms or Suspected Illness" form to facilitate communication with the family at pick up.

When the child's health changes, we expect families to share with WNCSource staff at the Daily Health Check. When a child has a new diagnosis (such as for an allergy or medical condition) a child may need to be excluded from the site until staff have the necessary documentation for the child to stay on site.

All confirmed cases of vaccine preventable diseases/illnesses are posted in the classroom in order to inform families. These include: Chicken Pox, German Measles, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Influenza, Measles, Meningitis, Mumps, Tuberculosis, and Whooping Cough. Forms to provide this information are provided by the Health Team. No other illnesses need to be posted in the classroom.

## Common Symptoms

All current resources state that if a child (older than two months) is found to have a temperature of 101° F or higher by any method, the child should be excluded from the child care setting. For infants two months and younger, fever is considered 100.4° F or higher by any method.

If a child is found to have sudden onset of diarrhea characterized by more than two instances of abnormal bowel movements, they must be excluded and may return when no longer exhibits diarrhea and has had a normal stool.

Exclusion for Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) is not required. However, if two or more children in a group develop conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) in the same period, the center will contact the Health Team.

Children are not excluded immediately or sent home early from care and education due to the presence of head lice. We will provide literature for you should lice be suspected or seen on the child.

## Dental

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Children brush their teeth once daily with fluoridated toothpaste in the program. Caregiving adults sign a permission form for their child to use fluoridated toothpaste at each enrollment meeting. Families that wish to decline the use of fluoridated toothpaste may do so, and the child will brush with water only.

All children must have an up-to-date dental exam on file or receive an exam by a dentist within 90 days of enrollment. The Head Start Standards define up-to-date as within the past 12 months when referring to dental health.

Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease, but it's preventable. Children with dental pain often do not have the ability to articulate this pain and can have trouble speaking clearly, eating, and learning. Children should begin going to the dentist by 12 months of age and receive dental exams every 6 months. If your child is 12 months or older and does not have a dentist, the Health Team and your Family Advocate can help connect you with a local pediatric dentist that accepts your insurance. As soon as your child gets a new dentist, please notify your family advocate.

## Health & Safety

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It is our highest priority to create a safe and healthy environment for all children and families. WNCSource's COVID-19 policies follow the guidance and recommendations of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services through the NC Strong Child Care Public Health Toolkit. Please review your classroom's COVID-19 Procedure, and contact your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns. Updates to this procedure will be made as North Carolina Child Care guidance changes, and you will be notified of these changes as they occur.

The most effective way to end the COVID-19 pandemic is to get vaccinated. All staff and families are encouraged to get vaccinated to protect themselves, their community, and the children who are not yet eligible for the vaccine. If you have any questions about the vaccine or if you would like to make an appointment for your first or second dose, please contact your local health department or health care provider. The WNCSource Health Team would also be happy to help you find your nearest vaccination clinic.

# Concerns & Questions

## Grievance Procedures for Families and Community Members

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The Head Start Program at WNCSource encourages open communication among all local citizens in an effort to resolve Head Start issues, and therefore provide the best possible services to children and families. It is the policy of WNCSource that complaints and grievances between individuals can usually be resolved by discussion about the conflicts between or among the persons involved. When issues cannot be resolved in this manner however, these procedures are to be followed:

1. A complaint or grievance involving a staff member should be directed to the staff member's supervisor. If it is not clear who the supervisor is or if the supervisor does not provide satisfactory resolution of the problem, the complaint or grievance should be addressed verbally or in writing to the Children's Services Director.
2. Grievances or complaints not involving Head Start employees should be directed verbally or in writing to the Children's Services Director.
3. Should the Children's Services Director not provide satisfactory resolution or explanation of the problem, the complaint or grievance should be directed in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of WNCSource.

4. Should the WNCSource Chief Executive Officer (or his/her designee) not provide satisfactory resolution to a grievance (see definition below); the grievance should be addressed in writing to the WNCSource Executive Board (via Chairperson) with a copy to the Policy Council. The WNCSource Board Chairperson and the Policy Council Chairperson then appoint three representatives from each of their groups who form a committee to study the grievance. The final results of this joint committee are taken to each body for final action. If either of the bodies does not agree with the joint committee's decision, procedures outlined in the WNCSource Board of Directors and Head Start Policy Council – Dispute Resolution Policy will be followed.

*Definition of Complaint:* An expressed feeling of dissatisfaction about some aspect of the WNCSource Head Start Program and its delivery of services.

*Definition of Grievance:* Any actual or perceived action that does not comply with WNCSource or Head Start policy.

*Time Periods:* Head Start staff will respond to a complaint or grievance from families or community members within two weeks. The WNCSource Chief Executive Officer will respond to a complaint or grievance within two weeks after receiving the complaint or grievance.

## Allegations made against WNCSource Children's Services Staff

If a family has reason to suspect or knowledge that a child(ren) is being abused and/or neglected by a staff member, he or she must report this to the local Department of Social Services.

The Children's Services Director will be notified of any allegations and charges of child abuse and/or neglect against an Early Head Start/Head Start staff member with as little involvement from other staff as possible in order to maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved. The Children's Services Director will follow applicable state laws and the agency's Personnel Policies in addressing the allegations, charges, and any substantiated cases

From WNCSource Personnel Policies: "Child Services personnel and volunteers charged with any form of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, or any violent felonies must contact Human Resources and their supervisor immediately or the next working day."



### Space and Equipment

There are space requirements for indoor and outdoor environments that must be measured prior to licensure. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well maintained, and developmentally appropriate. Indoor and outdoor equipment and furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

**Licensed centers must also meet requirements in the following areas.**

### Staff Requirements

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must complete a minimum number of training hours, including ITS-SIDS training for any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. All staff who work directly with children must have CPR and First Aid training, and at least one person who completed the training must be present at all times when children are in care. One staff must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training and create the EPR plan. All staff must also undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter.

### Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. The minimum staff/child ratios and group sizes for single-age groups of children in centers are shown below and must be posted in each classroom. The staff/child ratios for multi-age groupings are outlined in the child care rules and require prior approval.

Age	Teacher: Child Ratio	Max Group Size
0-12 months	1:5	10
12-24 months	1:6	12
2 to 3 years old	1:10	20
3 to 4 years old	1:15	25
4 to 5 years old	1:20	25
5 years and older	1:25	25

### **Additional Staff/Child Ratio Information:**

*Centers located in a residence that are licensed for six to twelve children may keep up to three additional school-age children, depending on the ages of the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group.*

### **Reviewing Facility Information**

From the Division's Child care Facility Search Site, the facility and visit documentation can be viewed. A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every licensed center or family child care home. These files can be viewed during business hours (8 a.m. -5 p.m.) by contacting the Division at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829 or requested via the Division's web site at [www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov).

### How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a licensed family child care home or child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be issued an administrative action, fined and/or may have their licenses suspended or revoked.

Administrative actions must be posted in the facility. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the requirements described in this pamphlet, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Child Development and Early Education

# Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules (Center and FCCH)

Division of Child Development  
and Early Education

North Carolina Department of  
Health and Human Services  
333 Six Forks Road  
Raleigh, NC 27609

Child Care Commission  
<https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/Child-Care-Commission>

Revised January 2021

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or provision of services.

## What is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis - at least once a week
- for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is done through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110.

The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

## Family Child Care Homes

A family child care home is licensed to care for five or fewer preschool age children, including their own preschool children, and can include three additional school-age children. The provider's own school-age children are not counted. Family child care home operators must be 21 years old and have a high school education or its equivalent. Family child care homes will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Licenses are issued to family child care home providers who meet the following requirements:

## Child Care Centers

License as a center is required when six or more preschool children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose to meet the standards of the Notice of Compliance rather than the Star Rated License. Recreational programs that operate for less than four consecutive months, such as summer camps, are exempt from licensing. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

## Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a family child care home or center at any time while their child is present.
  - Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
  - Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.
- The laws and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. Check the telephone

directory or talk with a child care provider to see if there is a Child Care Resource and Referral agency in your community. For more information, visit the Resources page located on the Child Care website at: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhs.gov/>. For more information on the law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919 814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829 (In State Only), or visit our homepage at: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhs.gov/>.

## Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, appropriate discipline, or when a child is abandoned. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any maltreatment complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report the case to the county department of social services.

## Transportation

Child care centers or family child care homes providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratios must be maintained.

## Record Requirements

Centers and homes must keep accurate records such as children's, staff, and program. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma policy must be developed and shared with parents of children up to five years of age.

## Discipline and Behavior Management

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in the discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers and family child care homes. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

## Training Requirements

Center and family child care home staff must have current CPR and First Aid certification, TT-SIDS training (if caring for infants, 0 to 12 months), prior to caring for children and every three years thereafter. Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training is required and each facility must also create an EPR plan. Center and home staff must also complete a minimum number of health and safety training as well as annual ongoing training hours.

## Curriculum and Activities

Four- and five-star programs must use an approved curriculum in classrooms serving four-year-olds. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to get a quality point for the star-rated license. Activity plans and schedule must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet, and indoor and outdoor activities. A written activity plan that includes activities intended to stimulate the development domains, in accordance with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore, use materials on their own and have choices.

## Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed family child care home and center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. For Centers and FCHs, meals and snacks must be nutritious and meet the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed centers to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather permitting) for at least an hour a day for preschool children and at least thirty minutes a day for children under two. Children must have space and time provided for rest.

## Two through Five Star Rated License

Centers and family child care homes that are meeting the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one-star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five-star license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet and the program standards met by the program, and one quality point option.

## Criminal Background Checks

All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every three years thereafter. This requirement includes household members who are over the age of 15 in family child care homes.