



Empowering people, transforming lives

Family Handbook

Early Head Start, Head Start, NC Pre-K

Dear Families,

As the Children's Services Director, I am thrilled to welcome you to the 2025-2026 school year. WNCSource programs provide a comprehensive learning environment that promotes school readiness, fosters a love for learning, and supports the growth and development of every child.

WNCSource is dedicated to offering high-quality education for children, and engaging families through a variety of opportunities at our sites, in our classrooms, and through serving on our Policy Council. Our programs ensure children have access to health insurance, developmental screenings, immunizations, well-child visits, dental and nutrition services, necessary medical attention, healthy meals, and connections to other social service programs. Our goal is to ensure that each child is equipped with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in school and beyond.

This school year, we are excited to share our theme is "Growing". Growing in knowledge, resiliency, teamwork, partnerships, communications, professional development, family engagement, connections to community resources, play, creativity and joy. Our staff are the backbone of our services. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a talented and caring group of individuals working together to provide the best possible care and education for our children. Their dedication and hard work do not go unnoticed, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

We are committed to creating a collaborative and supportive community where every child can reach their full potential. We look forward to working together with you to make this school year a success. Please feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or concerns. Your involvement and feedback are crucial to our programs success.

Thank you for being a part of the WNCSource family. Here's to a fantastic new school year!

Warm regards,

Linda Carter
Children's Services Director

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WNCSource Mission, Vision & Values

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 & Acceptance
- Safe and Caring environments for clients, employees and partners
- Responsible Stewardship of Resources

Head Start

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.

Contact Information to Know

Center Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Site Supervisor: _____

Family Advocate: _____

If you are interested in volunteering or working with WNCSource, please contact the Site Supervisor.

Locations

Henderson County

Bruce Drysdale Elementary - Ages 3-5
271 Bearcat Blvd, Hendersonville NC
28792

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

Columbus Children's Center - Ages
0-3
11 Hope Valley Ln, Columbus NC
28722

Dana Elementary - Ages 3-5
690 Ridge Rd, Hendersonville NC
28972

Edneyville Elementary - Ages 3-5
2875 Pace Rd, Hendersonville NC
28792

Etowah Children's Center - Ages 0-5
233 Brickyard Rd, Etowah NC 28729

Flat Rock Children's Center - Ages 0-3
130 Eagles Reach Dr Flat Rock NC
28731

Hillandale Elementary - Ages 3-5
40 Preston Ln, East Flat Rock NC
28726

King Creek Children's Center - Ages
0-5
20 Fickley Dr. Hendersonville NC
28792

Laurie's Child Care - Ages 1-4
108 Upward Acres St, East Flat Rock
NC 28726

Little Red School - Ages 0-3
604 Brooklyn Ave, Hendersonville NC
28792

Sugar Hill Children's Center - Ages
0-5
2 Sugar Hill Dr, Hendersonville NC
28792

Tebeau Children's Center - Ages 0-5
911 Tebeau Dr, Hendersonville, NC
28791

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

Rutherford County

Forest City Children's Center - Ages 0-3
483 South Broadway St, Forest City, NC 28043

Transylvania County

Hillview Center - Ages 0-5
181 Hillview Ext, Brevard, NC 28712

Program Information

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. This section will provide an overview of the program with important policies.

Program Options

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

1. **Center based program** with classrooms for children, infants through 4-year-olds. Some centers have the option of wrap around services.
 - a. **Head Start** (3-year-olds)
 - b. **NC Pre-K** (4-years-old on or before 8/31)
 - c. **Early Head Start** (infants through 3 years of age)
 - d. **Developmental Day** - serves children ages 3-5 in an inclusive environment. 50% of the children have an IEP and are selected by HCPS. The remaining 50% of students must be typically developing.
2. **Child Care Partnership sites** are Centers in the community that we partner with to provide high-quality Head Start Services for children, infants through 3 years of age. Family Child Care Homes 6 weeks to age four.

WNCSource Summer Care program serves ages 3 to 5, prioritizing rising kindergartners. Announcements will be made in February concerning sites and the enrollment cutoff date. Child care vouchers must be updated. Please reach out to your child care subsidy provider 1 month prior to the first day of the Summer program. A \$50.00 registration fee is required per enrollee. The payment is nonrefundable but will go toward June's program fees.

Calendar & Inclement Weather

Services provided to infants through 2-year-olds follow a year-round schedule.

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 1½ 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

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

Fees

There are no fees for Early Head Start, Head Start or NC PREK 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 our programs, such as child care before or after the Early Head Start, Head Start or NC PreK hours (known as Wrap Around hours). Fees for Wrap Around hours are determined by the North Carolina Child Care Subsidy Market Rate, set by DCDEE.

After School Program

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 of 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.

Participation in the After-School Program may be suspended if the child is picked up after the after-school program hours.

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

Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy

A safe sleep environment for infants reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related infant deaths. According to N.C. 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 parents/guardians and staff. WNC Source implements the following safe sleep policy:

Safe Sleep Practices

1. We train all staff, substitutes, and volunteers caring for infants aged 12 months or younger on how to implement our Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy.
2. We always place infants under 12 months of age on their backs to sleep, unless:
 - the infant is 6 months or younger and a signed ITS-SIDS Alternate Sleep Position Health Care Professional Waiver is in the infant's file and a notice of the waiver is posted at the infant's crib.
 - the infant is 6 months or older (choose one) ☐ We do not accept the ITS-SIDS Alternate Sleep Position Parent Waiver.* ☐ We accept the ITS-SIDS Alternate Sleep Position Parent Waiver. We retain the waiver in the child's record for as long as they are enrolled.
3. We place infants on their back to sleep even after they are able to independently roll back and forth from their back to their front and back again. We then allow the infant to sleep in their preferred position.

- ☐ We document when each infant is able to roll both ways independently and communicate with parents. We put a notice in the child's file and on or near the infant's crib.*
- 4. We visually check sleeping infants every 15 minutes and record what we see on a Sleep Chart. The chart is retained for at least one month. ☐ We check infants 2-4 month of age more frequently.*
- 5. We maintain the temperature between 68-75°F in the room where infants sleep. ☐ We further reduce the risk of overheating by not over-dressing infants*
- 6. We provide infants supervised tummy time daily. We stay within arm's reach of infants during tummy time.
- 7. We follow N.C Child Care Rules .0901(j) and .1706(g) regarding breastfeeding. ☐ We further encourage breastfeeding in the following ways:*

Safe Sleep Environment

- 8. We use Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) approved cribs or other approved sleep spaces for infants. Each infant has his or her own crib or sleep space.
- 9. We do not allow pacifiers to be used with attachments.
- 10. Safe pacifier practices: ☐ We do not reinsert the pacifier in the infant's mouth if it falls out.* ☐ We remove the pacifier from the crib once it has fallen from the infant's mouth.*
- 11. We do not allow infants to be swaddled. ☐ We do not allow garments that restrict movement.*
- 12. We do not cover infants' heads with blankets or bedding.
- 13. We do not allow any objects other than pacifiers such as, pillows, blankets, or toys in the crib or sleep space. ☐ We do not allow any weighted blankets or clothing in the crib.*
- 14. Infants are not placed in or left in car safety seats, strollers, swings, or infant carriers to sleep.
- 15. We give all parents/guardians of infants a written copy of this policy before enrollment. We review the policy with them and ask them to sign the policy. ☐ We encourage families to follow the same safe sleep practices to ease infants' transition to child care.*

16. Posters and policies:

- **Family child care homes:** We post a copy of this policy and a safe sleep practices poster in the infant sleep room where it can easily be read.
- **Centers:** We post a copy of this policy in the infant sleep room where it can easily be read. □ We also post a safe sleep practices poster in the infant sleep room where it can easily be read.*

Communication

17. We inform everyone if changes are made to this policy 14 days before the effective date.

- We review the policy annually and make changes as necessary.*

*Best practice recommendation

Reference: N.C. Law G.S. 100-91 (15), N.C. Child Care Rules .0606 and .1724, Caring for Our Children

Updated December 2022

Smoking & Tobacco Policy

All WNCSource 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. The term "tobacco-free" refers to all forms of tobacco and nicotine products, consumed by smoking or non-smoking means, such as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, vaping, e-cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, etc. This policy applies to all persons in the WNCSource's facilities.

1. No one may use tobacco anywhere on WNCSource's premises at any time, except for nicotine patches. There are no designated smoking or tobacco areas.
2. Employees who want to use tobacco during work hours must leave the premises (building and property) during designated unpaid meal periods.
3. Supervisors are responsible for overseeing compliance with this policy.
4. Complaints for violation of this policy should be submitted to your supervisor.
5. Any employees in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including an unpaid suspension or termination.

Personal Identifiable Information

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.

WNCSource will comply with the Head Start Performance Standards 1303 Subpart C, Protection of Child Records to: Protect the confidentiality of all personally identifiable information (PII) included in the child's records; Respect parent's rights to the child's record; and Maintain accurate and secure child records.

Child Records are directly related to the child and are maintained by WNCSource as written or digital information. We keep all child records securely locked or maintained in password protected databases (ChildPlus, Teaching Strategies, & Video Surveillance).

WNCSource will share information about your child with outside agencies with parent's signed and dated written consent. Sharing of such information is voluntary and can be revoked at any point in time.

There may be times when an exception to this policy may occur and the Family Services Manager approves the sharing of information with outside agencies in the following situations. When this occurs copies of the information shared are also provided to the parent.

1. To share information with appropriate parties in order to address suspected or known child maltreatment as relates to applicable federal, state, and local laws on reporting child abuse & neglect
2. When the request is made in order to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
3. When the request is made in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency and is necessary to protect the health or safety of children or other persons
4. The information is requested by a caseworker or other representative from a state, local, or welfare agency, including if the child is in foster care, the individual is legally responsible for the child's care and protection or the individual has the right to access a case plan for the child.

Whenever information is shared, we will only disclose the information relevant to the request.

The full details of the policy "12.4 Protections for Privacy of Child Records" are available upon request from the Site Supervisors.

Photography

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.

Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids

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 Head Start program, employees and volunteers must handle exposure to blood and bodily fluids consistent with standards of the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA). All WNCSource Employees must complete the yearly Avoiding Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens training provided by Human Resources.

Staff will clean up any body fluids immediately and completely using disposable gloves, disposable towels, and disinfectant solution.

Individuals will wear disposable gloves any time they are in contact with a child or adult's blood, mucous membrane, urine, feces, vomit, or any other body fluids or handling items or surfaces soiled and/or contaminated with blood or other body fluids.

Additional requirements for cleaning include:

- Disposable gloves must be used only once and should not be washed for reuse.
- Place all contaminated items, including disposable gloves, in a leak-proof plastic bag and dispose of as soon as possible in an outside container with a secure lid.
- Broken glass is to be picked up by tongs or a brush and dust pan. Do not pick up with your hands.
- Wear disposable gloves before touching any contaminated laundry
- Contaminated laundry should be handled as little as possible. Do not agitate/shake the laundry.
- If a child's belongings are contaminated, bag all contaminated laundry in a leak-proof plastic bag with a secure closure (string, wire, etc.) and store the bag in locked storage. Return to parents as soon as possible.

In the event of exposure to body fluids from another individual, Head Start employees and volunteers are required to:

- Wash exposed area (hands and other skin surface) with bacterial soap and warm water
- If eyes are exposed: Flush exposed mucous membranes with large amounts of water or eye wash solution
- Seek emergency medical help if needed by calling 911
- Report the incident to your immediate supervisor

Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome & Abusive Head Trauma

WNCSource believes 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.

Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma including irritability and/or high-pitched crying, difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, poor feeding/sucking, no smiling or vocalization, inability of the eyes to track and/or decreased muscle tone. Bruises may be found on the upper arms, rib cage, or head resulting from gripping or from hitting the head.

If SBS/AHT is suspected, staff will call 911 immediately upon suspecting SBS/AHT and inform the director, call the parents/guardians and If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Instances of suspected child maltreatment in child care are reported to Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling 1-800-859-0829 or by emailing webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov. Instances of suspected child maltreatment in the home are reported to the county Department of Social Services.

We implement prevention strategies to assist staff in coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child. Staff first determine if the child has any physical needs such as being hungry, tired, sick, or in need of a diaper change. If no physical need is identified, staff will attempt one or more of the following strategies:

- Rock the child, hold the child close, or walk with the child.
- Stand up, hold the child close, and repeatedly bend knees.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the child with a rattle or toy.
- Take the child for a ride in a stroller.
- Turn on music or white noise.

- Call a resource person from that facility to provide additional support (Site Supervisor, Floater, and etc.)

WNCSource allows for staff who feel they may lose control to have a short, but relatively immediate break away from the children and provides support when parents/guardians are trying to calm a crying child and encourage parents to take a calming break if needed. Resources are available to staff and families as needed including:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics Resources <https://www.healthychildren.org/>
- The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome <https://www.dontshake.org/>
- The Period of Purple Crying <http://purplecrying.info/>
- Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/Abusive-Head-Trauma.html>

The full details of the policy "8.3 Prevention & Reporting of Child Abuse" are available upon request from the Site Supervisors.

Early Childhood Programming

Curriculum

Our Early Head Start classrooms use *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, 3rd Edition*. Our Head Start and NCPReK-K classrooms use *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 6th Edition*. 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

Our teaching staff create nurturing and responsive environments to help children feel safe, respected, and ready to learn. Teachers implement well-organized learning environments with developmentally appropriate materials, schedules, lesson plans, and indoor and outdoor learning experiences that provide opportunities for child choice of play and exploration as well as times for intentional teaching through interactions and planned experiences. Classrooms are equipped with blocks, pretend play materials, toys and games, science/nature/discovery materials, music, art, sand/water/sensory play, and books. Teaching staff interact with the children, observe and extend their play by adding materials or asking questions, and model critical thinking and problem-solving. Staff promote social emotional skills such as getting along with others, solving conflicts, and acting cooperatively while giving children opportunities to interact and talk to each other in positive ways. They also promote physical development, language development, and cognitive development. Classroom materials and teacher planned experiences provide opportunities for content learning such as literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, technology (use of simple tools), the arts, and process skills.

Individualization & Inclusion

WNCSource is a full inclusion program which means that we serve children with disabilities in all of our classrooms 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

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

WNCSource encourages all families to have their children attend all class days for the full day. There are many benefits for children who attend school regularly. Some benefits include but are not limited to: exposure to language and language development, math and reading skills, and social skills. If families are having challenges with attendance, WNCSource will make all efforts to support families in maintaining regular attendance.

If your child will be absent:

- Let your teacher or family advocate know ahead of time if possible.
- Let your child's teacher or family advocate know why your child is absent and when he/she will return.
- Call your child's center/classroom within one hour of the classroom's start time. If a child is unexpectedly absent and a parent has not contacted the program within one hour of

the program's start time, the Family Advocate and Supervisor will continuously contact the family to ensure the child's well-being.

Studies show that children who are chronically absent find it harder to develop reading and math skills, and to be prepared for Kindergarten. Poor or inconsistent attendance creates patterns that can be hard to break.

Attendance becomes a concern when:

- There are absences without family contact.
- There are frequent absences during an extended period of time.
- Your child misses 2 or more days within a month.
- Your child is not participating in the full Head Start day from 8:00am - 2:30pm.

Your Family Advocate will work with you to ensure your child's attendance is preparing you and your child for success in Kindergarten and life. This may include supporting you in the development of goals and support around attendance.

If your child's attendance does not improve, enrollment in the program may be at risk. If services are terminated and the family later wants to re-enroll a child, the family will be required to go through the enrollment process again to determine eligibility.

Emergency Preparedness & Response

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

One of our roles is to help children learn social and emotional skills to get them ready for life. We see your child as their own unique person within the context of school and your home. Their personality is an important piece in how they understand and feel about themselves and how they interact with the world around them.

We understand 'behavior' is communication. This means that behavior isn't really good or bad, but is a child communicating a need for something. Infants cry when they are hungry. Toddlers curl into your lap when they need to feel loved. Children sometimes act out when they want attention. Even screaming, hitting, temper tantrums, and avoiding people are behaviors that are communicating something. Every behavior is a way for children to communicate with us what they need. The key is to figure it out.

In our programs we work to focus on what your child is doing well and help them build on those skills so they can learn how to communicate their needs in productive ways. We want your child to see themselves as valued, safe, capable, and loved. We can do this when we work together.

In collaboration with families, we ensure that all children are screened on their emotional skills and behavioral needs. This helps inform teachers about appropriate learning activities to include in the curriculum as well as strategies and supports for your family.

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.

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, our staff follow our Standards of Conduct as provided on page 16.

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 at 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 HS/NCPK Program 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.

You know your child best and so we are asking you to partner with us. Help us understand you and your child and we can partner with you in learning ways to understand your child's behavior as communication and build on your relationship. We are here to partner with you to develop plans that can decrease problems in the classroom and at home.

The full details of the policy "7.2 Challenging Behaviors" are available upon request from the Site Supervisors.

Off-Premise Activities

Activities away from the classroom or the enclosed fenced area are included in the preschool curriculum. These may be a nature walk, trip to the cafeteria or library (in the elementary school-based classrooms), or to the parking lot to see the visiting fire truck and do not require

parent signature for each individual activity. You will be alerted when these activities are occurring and may be asked to volunteer to participate.

Field Trips to nearby places of interest may include visits to the public library, local farms, supermarkets, etc. These activities will require parental permission for each child to attend the field trip prior to the event.

For all off-premise activities:

- Activities are planned well in advance of the event. Supervisory staff will have knowledge of and approve the plans.
- Teachers bring emergency and identification information about each child to any off-premise activity.
- 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.
 - 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.

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

Outdoor Learning Environments (OLE)

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

Family School Agreement

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 meet staff, ask questions and provide valuable input.

Home Visits

The opportunity for your child's teacher and family advocate 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.

Clothing, Jewelry & Safety Considerations

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.

Families & School

Each Center-Based family is assigned a Family Advocate who will develop a professional relationship with families to assist them in accessing resources to meet needs, and identifying and accomplishing goals. Family Advocates as well as being in communication with you regularly, they make every effort to conduct at least one home visit per year and can provide transportation to medical and other related appointments as needed.

Standards of Conduct / Discipline Policy

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.

Staff & 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 cell phone 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 staff or 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 or staff member to discuss the specific concern and request their input in resolving the issue. If this fails to result in changed behavior, the individual will be asked to meet with staff to create a written behavioral contract with the individual to define appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and consequences for any violations which could include exclusion of the individual from our spaces.

Family Committees

Family Committee is a group of parents and family members at each center who meet monthly to discuss educational and parental skills topics as well as plan Engagement activities, workshops, and family meetings.

The Family Committees are family led and give families opportunities to discuss:

- Classroom Activities (ex.: bringing learning activities to the home, fall festival, painting with parent)
- Center Events (ex: Kindergarten Readiness Meeting, Literacy Event, Fiesta!)
- Program Initiatives (ex: outdoor learning gardening project, topics about child development)
- Educational and Literacy Topics (ex: Book marathon, story walks, ReadyRosie workshops)

- Community Agency Outreach - Inviting a community agency to come to the center to learn more about their services
- Specific Topics (ex: dental, health, positive self-esteem, meal planning, budgeting, child development)

Family Meetings occur monthly at the center at a time convenient for the families. By being a part of the Family Committee, you can:

- Develop Leadership Skills
- Learn to be an advocate and plan events at your child's center
- Network with other families and build friendships
- Represent the voice of the children and families at your center.

Policy Council

The Policy Council is an elected group of parents in the WNCSource Early Head Start/Head Start Program and local service agencies who meet monthly to discuss the program's policies and the way our agency will develop.

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, grant and contract requests, the hiring and firing of staff, and changes to policies
- Plan activities for family engagement
- Discuss program recruitment, selection, and enrolment priorities
- Review recommendations on service areas
- Work in partnership with the Head Start Board 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
- 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.
- Report on center activities and concerns.

The Policy Council Representatives and Alternates role is to:

- Listen carefully and respect the opinions of others.
- 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.

Volunteer

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

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 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

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/drop-off, 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 from the center through newsletters, Family Meeting minutes, Policy Council minutes, verbal announcements, and information boards/space. Texting and email are also used with families.

Celebrations

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 being 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 of the 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

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

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.

WNCSource expects all staff to adhere to the Human Resources approved policy on Social Media in which staff will not communicate with their families through social media, know and follow the rules presented in the guidelines, be respectful, honest and accurate, and refrain from using social media while at work.

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

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 to the right 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				

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.

Daily Health Check

Every day when your child is brought to school, teachers will complete a health check with you to ensure we are aware of any changes to the child's health since the last time they were at school. This includes letting us know of any new bumps and bruises.

When the child's health changes and 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.

When to Keep Your Child Home From Child Care

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-and-child-care/Pages/when-to-keep-your-child-home-from-child-care.aspx>

When kids spend time close together, germs can spread between them. This is especially true for infants and toddlers, who often share toys that have been in their hands or mouths. Knowing when to keep your little one home sick from child care and school helps protect other children from illness. It can also give your child a chance to get extra rest they may need to recover.

Common illnesses in child care

The viruses responsible for colds or the flu cause the most common illnesses in child care settings. Even though your child has had immunizations, they can still get sick with colds, sore throats, coughs, vomiting and diarrhea.

Children of any age will experience a lot of infection in their first year of group child care. For kids whose first year of child care is during infancy, bouts of illness may be even more frequent. In fact, they may have as many as 8 to 12 more colds than a child cared for at home without exposure to siblings or other children.

The good news: during the second year of attending child care, the number of respiratory illnesses begins to fall. This is because exposure to so many germs causes rapid development of the immune system.

The typical child will also get diarrhea once or twice a year.

Why keep your child home?

The main reasons to keep your child home are that an illness can:

- prevent the child from participating comfortably in activities
- make them need more care than staff members can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- pose a risk of spread of harmful disease to others (see list of these conditions below)

American Academy of Pediatrics child care exclusion recommendations

Any child with respiratory illness symptoms (cough, runny nose, or sore throat) and a fever should not attend their child care program. They can return once their fever associated with these symptoms has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Your child should also stay home sick from child care if they have these symptoms:

- **Signs of severe illness** such as being unresponsive, irritable, crying more than usual, having difficulty breathing, or has a quickly spreading rash.
- **Fever** (temperature above 101°F [38.3°C] by any method) and a change in behavior or other signs and symptoms (such as a sore throat, rash, vomiting or diarrhea).
- **Diarrhea**, defined as having more frequent and loose stool (poop) than usual that's not caused by a change in diet. Children should stay home if their stool is not contained in the diaper, or if they are toilet-trained but having "accidents" from diarrhea. Other reasons for child care exclusion: having more than 2 stools above their normal per 24-hours, or stools that contain more than a drop of blood or mucus.
- **Vomiting** 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours. The exception is if the vomiting is found to be caused by a non-infectious condition, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- **Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours**, or abdominal pain that comes and goes, along with fever or other concerning symptoms.
- **Mouth sores with drooling that the child cannot control**, unless their doctor or local health department authority states that the child is noninfectious.
- **Rash with fever or behavioral changes**, until a primary care provider determines that the illness is not a communicable disease. If your child has a new, rapidly spreading rash that resembles bruising or small red or purple "blood spots," call 911.
- **Skin sores that are weeping fluid** located on an exposed part of the body that cannot be covered with a waterproof bandage.

If your child is diagnosed with these conditions, they should not attend child care:

- Streptococcal pharyngitis (such as strep throat or other streptococcal infection), until at least the first 12 hours after antibiotic treatment has started.
- Head lice, scabies and ringworm until after the first treatment. Child care exclusion is not necessary before the end of the program day. When treatment starts between the end of the program day and beginning of the next day, no exclusion is needed.
- Chickenpox (varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after onset of rash) and no new lesions have shown for at least 24 hours.
- COVID (coronavirus disease 2019), Until a minimum of 24 hours has passed. Can return after 24 hours fever free and other symptoms are improving.

- Hepatitis A virus infection, until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice or as directed by the health department

When it's OK to stay at child care

Children with the conditions below do not necessarily need to stay home from child care, as long as they feel well enough to participate in regular activities. However, it also depends on whether staff members determine they can care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of other children.

- Coughs or colds without fever or other signs of illness
- Runny noses (regardless of color or consistency of nasal discharge)
- Yellow, green, white, or watery eye discharge without fever, even if the whites of the eyes are red
- Ear infection, unless the child has a change in behavior or cannot participate as usual
- Fever in children older than 4 months above 101°F (38.3°C) taken from any site (axillary, oral or rectal) *without any signs or symptoms of illness or behavior changes*. Note: the child may be excluded if they have not completed the recommended vaccine series until it is clear that they do not have a vaccine-preventable illness.
- Rash without fever and without behavioral changes. The exception would be a child with a new, rapidly spreading rash that resembles bruising or small red or purple 'blood spots.' In that case Emergency Medical Services (911) should be called.
- Thrush
- Fifth disease
- All staphylococcal infections. This includes Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) carriers or children with colonization of MRSA but without an illness that would otherwise require exclusion
- Molluscum contagiosum (wart)
- Hand-Foot-and-Mouth disease. No exclusion is needed unless the child has mouth sores with constant drooling or has other symptoms like fever. In some cases, the local health department may require children with hand-foot-mouth disease to stay home to control an outbreak
- Children who have no symptoms but are known to have a germ in their stools that causes disease. The exception is when they have an infection with a Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC), Shigella or Salmonella serotype Typhi. In these types of bowel infections, follow health department guidelines for return to child care.

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. Staff members use "Symptoms or Suspected Illness" form to facilitate communication with the family at pick up.

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.

Dental

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

It is our highest priority to create a safe and healthy environment for all children and families. WNCSource's policies follow the guidance and recommendations of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services & The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Health Services Advisory Committee

WNCSource relies on the advice from professionals of several different organizations, and parents of enrolled children to meet the important health needs of our children and families. The Health Services Advisory Committee meets quarterly in a virtual/in person setting to go over goals for the health program and give updates on the progress of meeting the health standards for Head Start. The Health and Nutrition Coordinator presents data and problems during meetings to seek expert advice from members. Parents are the real-life experts of their child and are an important part of the committee. Please consider joining the HSAC if you have a strong interest in shaping the Health Program at WNCSource.

Concerns & Questions

Grievance Procedures for Families and Community Members

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.

Definitions:

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.

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 cited for violations of child care requirements and 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 February 2025

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

Licensure 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.

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, ITS-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 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 FCCHs, 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

Criminal background qualification is a **pre-service requirement**. All staff must undergo a criminal background check initially, and every five years thereafter. This requirement includes household members who are over the age of 15 in family child care homes.