



# PARENT 2011 - 12 HANDBOOK

Sequatchie Valley  
Head Start

**Head Start teacher's aide Brenda Rollins supervises the** excited play of Alexis Picket (left) and Bonnie Kilgore (right) while comforting Cameron Rogers on the playground at the Head Start center in Jasper.

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# Sequatchie Valley Head Start

**It's All About Children and Families**

## **WHAT TO DO WITH THIS PARENT HANDBOOK AND YOUR PARENT PACKET**

We hope this parent handbook will be a useful resource for you. You may want to put all your Head Start information (such as the community resource guide, Head Start staff names and phone numbers) in your parent packet along with this handbook. Since the Head Start staff will review this handbook information with you on several occasions, each page has a space for your initials and the initials of the staff member reviewing it with you. That way, we'll know when we've covered it all.

Please feel free to ask questions. We appreciate your willingness to be **the *most important* member of your child's success team**. Keep your packet safe and handy (on top of the refrigerator, in a kitchen drawer). You can even keep your child's favorite artwork in it so you will be able to look back and fondly remember the "Head Start years" as your child grows up!

The mission of Sequatchie Valley Head Start is to create a nurturing place where children, families, and staff can work through community partnerships to exceed **Head Start's** national goals.

Sequatchie Valley Head Start

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**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

# YOUR HEAD START

The Head Start Office is located at 170 Smith Lane in South Pittsburg. If you have any questions about the Head Start program that your center staff is not able to answer, or if you have any concerns about the program, please feel free to contact any of the following staff members. Any staff member can be reached by emailing [HeadStart@svpda.org](mailto:HeadStart@svpda.org).

<b>Head Start Office</b>	<b>(423) 837-6724 or 1-800-762-8432</b>
<b>Judy Graham</b>	<b>Head Start Director / Chief Operating Officer</b>
<b>Judy Flegel</b>	<b>Early Childhood Mentor Teacher</b>
<b>Christy Vandergriff</b>	<b>Early Childhood Mentor Teacher</b>
<b>Julie Tiller</b>	<b>Family &amp; Community Partnerships Mgr.</b>
<b>Carolyn Cole</b>	<b>Special Services Coordinator</b>
<b>Jamie Burnette</b>	<b>Health Services &amp; Transportation Manager</b>
<b>Alyson Riley</b>	<b>Translator / Health Clerk</b>
<b>Crystal Samples</b>	<b>Special Projects / Training Manager</b>
<b>Amanda Gill</b>	<b>Human Resource Specialist / Admin Asst</b>
<b>Paul Frank</b>	<b>Communications / Outcomes Specialist</b>
<b>Vicki Mears</b>	<b>Finance Officer</b>
<b>Elaine Duke</b>	<b>Information Manager / Fiscal Specialist</b>
<b>Peggy Long</b>	<b>Fiscal Assistant</b>
<b>Debbie Quinn</b>	<b>USDA (Food Program) Specialist</b>
<b>Debra Bennett</b>	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>Dee Harwell, R.D.</b>	<b>Registered Dietitian</b>
<b>Susan Merrell, R.N.</b>	<b>Nursing Consultant (not on site)</b>
<b>Volunteer Behavior Management System</b>	<b>Licensed clinical social work / mental health</b>

## Head Start Central Office Hours

**Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Central time (9:00 am to 5:30 pm Eastern time)**

**Staff members are frequently available both early in the morning and late at night, but if the phone is not answered, please leave a detailed message.**

General e-mail address is [HeadStart@svpda.org](mailto:HeadStart@svpda.org)

**Find us on the web at [www.SequatchieValleyHeadStart.org](http://www.SequatchieValleyHeadStart.org)**

*The Sequatchie Valley Planning and Development Agency is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant criteria. The Agency promotes affirmative action for minorities, women, disabled persons, and veterans. The Agency is a smoke-free environment and, as such, prohibits smoking in all facilities. The Agency is a drug-free workplace.*

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# WHAT IS HEAD START?

Head Start was created in 1964 under the Economic Opportunity Act. The program was designed to provide preschool children from economically limited families with a “head start” on formal education. This goal was to be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive child development program which would provide for the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth of the children, with strong parent involvement. The vision of Sequatchie Valley Head Start is that children and families appreciate learning, and children will be ready for school, entering kindergarten with the skills and knowledge necessary for learning as well as an enthusiasm that promotes success. Strong families will participate in their children’s education and in their community.



Head Start staff members offer your child quality care, respect, nurturing, guidance, and a developmentally sound learning experience. Head Start provides the experience of success while having fun and learning to get along with others. Head Start actively involves parents (or guardians), family, and community in each center. Our program actively encourages parents to become Head Start volunteers. In fact, many staff members began their career as a parent volunteer.

The eleven centers operated directly by our agency are located in Bledsoe, Grundy, Marion, Rhea, and Sequatchie counties. We also cooperate in a partnership class at Rigsby Elementary School in Bledsoe County. Head Start is operated by the Sequatchie Valley Planning and Development Agency, a “River Basin Authority” whose board of directors is made up primarily of mayors from the counties and cities of the service area. The Sequatchie Valley Head Start program has a total funded enrollment of 377 children, though we typically serve well over 400 children and their families. All basic services are free to qualified families. A federal grant requires parent and community support, usually provided by donations that include free space in buildings and volunteer services.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## FREQUENTLY USED HEAD START WORDS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND THEIR MEANINGS

**Assessment** – the process of determining the stage of development of a child. We are required to do major, written assessments of each child three times each year. The results of the assessment are used to develop an individualized program for educating your child. We use several different assessments, including the “LAP-D” which looks at small and large muscle skills, math skills, language skills, as well as social, emotional and self-help skills. We also assess each child’s progress as they lay the foundations for learning to read. Assessment results are shared with parents during conferences and home visits.

**CDA (Child Development Associate)** - an entry level credential that usually requires six college classes in early childhood and on the job training. An evaluator reviews work samples and interviews and tests the CDA applicant.

**CSR (Child Safety Restraint System)** - a combination of car seats and seat belts to ensure the safety of the child, based on age, height, and weight of the child. Tennessee law requires the use of CSRs in buses and private cars.

**DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment)** - a standardized behavior screening tool we use to determine a child’s needs in the areas of attachment, initiative, self control, and behavior. Both parents and teachers provide information about the child for this screening. Any concerns that arise may be addressed using DECA resources and/or mental health referrals.

**Family Partnership Agreement** – a process in which the Family Partnership Assistant helps a parent assess his or her strengths and needs so they can set goals for the family or for individuals in the family.

**FPA (Family Partnership Assistant)** - the family worker for the center your child attends. The job of the FPA includes working with families to complete social services, medical services, and many other center tasks. FPAs may also substitute in the classroom and will encourage the involvement of parents.

## FREQUENTLY USED HEAD START WORDS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND THEIR MEANINGS (CONTINUED)

**Health Advisory Committee** – a required advisory committee made up of Head Start parents, Head Start staff, and community representatives who work in health-related fields. The committee members review the health, nutrition, mental health, and disabilities policies and procedures and make recommendations for Head Start.

**LAP-D (Learning Accomplishment Profile – Diagnostic)** - the trade name for the main developmental screening and developmental assessment that we use.

**LEA (Local Education Agency)** - a local public county or city school system.

**NAEYC**— The National Association for the Education of Young Children is the professional association that sets standards for early childhood education centers, and accredits outstanding centers. All classrooms directly operated by Sequatchie Valley Head Start are accredited by NAEYC.

**Performance Standards** – Head Start regulations given by the federal government that our agency must follow.

**Policy Council** – a committee of Head Start parents and community representatives from each of the Head Start centers. This elected committee is responsible for carrying out many important functions for Head Start, including approval of personnel decisions, program plans, and requests for budget and program improvement.

**Screening** - a short testing tool used to quickly determine if a child might need further evaluation in areas such as a developmental learning, speech and language, hearing and vision. Results may also be used to help measure program effectiveness.

**Star Rating System** – a ranking process that the state Department of Human Services uses to recognize quality child care centers. Three stars is the highest rating.

**Transition** – the process of moving into the Head Start program from home or another child care program or moving from Head Start to kindergarten or another child care agency.

**WIC (Women, Infant, Children)** - a food supplement program for young children and pregnant women that provides a voucher for specific foods such as formula, fresh fruit, juice, fortified cereals, and cheese. Contact the local health department to apply.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## Head Start Parent Code of Ethics

*Based on suggestions by the parent of a Head Start child*

*Since* children’s learning at Head Start depends on a close, personal relationship between children and teachers, I will support the teaching staff’s management of the classroom.

*Since* Head Start’s success depends on the involvement of parents, I will speak up when I see problems. If misunderstandings arise between myself and a member of the Head Start staff that we can not resolve together, I will try to resolve the issue by talking to the staff member’s supervisor. I will always feel free to contact a manager by calling 1-800-762-8432 or emailing [HeadStart@svpda.org](mailto:HeadStart@svpda.org).

*Since* the Head Start staff uses positive directions to guide children’s behaviors, I will not spank my child or use other physical punishment at Head Start. Instead, I will guide or redirect my child to use appropriate behavior.

*Since* Head Start children are taught to respect each other, I will not use obscene language or gestures at Head Start.

*Since* the abuse of alcoholic beverages and the taking of illegal drugs are harmful to children, I will not bring alcohol or drugs to Head Start activities nor use them before or during Head Start activities.

*Since* protecting the health of all Head Start children is so important, I will follow all rules of the State of Tennessee’s Department of Health and Environment, including:

- ***observing*** limits on access to areas where food is prepared;
- ***not smoking*** in the Head Start building, in sight of children or near entryways; and
- ***following regulations*** requiring proof of training and good health in order to volunteer in some capacities.



**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE / SUGGESTIONS

Head Start has a Grievance Procedure which serves as a way for Head Start families to state their problems or concerns about the program in a formal way. Anyone in the community can make suggestions or request a copy either at the center or by calling the Head Start office at (423) 837-6724 or 1-800-762-8432 or emailing us at [HeadStart@spvda.org](mailto:HeadStart@spvda.org). We also have a suggestion box at each center.

### HOME VISITS

Home visits are important because they help us get to know you and your child. Home visits are used exclusively to conduct Head Start business. They give your child's teacher a chance to see your child in his or her most comfortable place. Your child will be happier at the center when they first see you and their



teacher together. Your Family Partnership Assistant also needs to visit in order to develop a Family Partnership Agreement. Home visits are **not** an inspection nor should they be considered an invasion of privacy. Our regulations/rules require visits, unless you wish to prohibit them, and we want to visit all of our families.

### SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT



Since Head Start is funded from a grant through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, smoking is prohibited in all Head Start centers and offices. We must also ask that you refrain from smoking when staff make home visits. No smoking is allowed in view of Head Start children, including while on field trips. Please ask if there is a designated smoking area outside at your child's center. If so, a sign will describe where smoking is allowed.

Smoking is *never* allowed within 20 feet of the center's main entrance or in view of children.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## VOLUNTEERING IN YOUR CHILD'S HEAD START CENTER

**Many types of volunteer opportunities await you, both at your child's center and at home.** Participating as a volunteer may ease your concerns while giving you the opportunity to see that many children adjust better after a simple "good-bye." Getting involved and getting to know the teachers and the daily Head Start routines will give you the information you need to help ease any concerns your child — or you — may be experiencing. Talk to your child about the new friends they will meet, about the Head Start staff members — and talk to other family members about the child's experiences at Head Start. When you volunteer at your child's school, you are showing your child that you value what he or she is doing.

### REGULAR ATTENDANCE



The importance of *regular attendance* cannot be stressed too much, as lifelong habits are being formed. Your child's attendance is *critical* to the progress that he or she can be expected to make at Head Start. As a group, our children **always** make significantly more progress during the year than other pre-schoolers anywhere in America. Children who do not attend regularly, however, fall far behind their classmates. In order to help your child

adjust to being at the Head Start Center, your child must *never be asked* if he or she wants to go. Instead, use statements such as "When you get to the Center, you will get to play outside or be with your friends." Such positive statements about school will help guide the development of your child's opinions about school, making his or her adjustment much easier.

To insure the health of our children at Head Start, the state requires that volunteers who work at the center over 30 days secure a TB (tuberculosis) screening. This screening is usually available at the local health department and is done at no cost to the volunteer when we make the appointment. Our insurance company has requested that we secure a volunteer release of liability form and post information of a contact person in the event of an emergency involving a volunteer while he or she is serving with Head Start. Worker's compensation insurance does *not* include volunteers who serve "at their own risk."

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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We value and encourage volunteers, and children are especially delighted when a family member — either male or female — participates in the program. Adult males are especially welcomed, as our children respond very positively to interactions with Dads and other father figures. However, volunteers are not allowed “privacy” with any child, and do not “supervise”. Regular volunteers may also need a criminal background check that includes fingerprinting. Volunteers under the age of 18 years must have the permission of their parents as well as management approval.



All centers have posted rules for volunteers. So we can list you as a “trained volunteer,” please ask for information about “exposure control” (how to avoid contact with blood and other body fluids); about emergency plans (fire drills, severe weather); and about evacuation procedures. Also, a handout of our “Volunteer Rules” is included with your Parent Packet, and it includes a place for your signature. Your child’s teacher will be happy to go over these simple guidelines with you.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Pursuant to our policy of non-discrimination, the Sequatchie Valley Planning and Development Agency Head Start Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service in its policies, or in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, services or activities.

Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmation Action and American with Disability Act inquiries or complaints should be directed to: Head Start Office, EEO/AA-ADA Coordinator, P.O. Box 769, 170 Smith Lane, South Pittsburg, TN 37380, (423)837-6724 or 1-800-762-8432. The coordinator is Crystal Samples. Other managers may be contacted for assistance in filing complaints.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR CHILD’S ADJUSTMENT – NEW ROUTINE**

Children need time to get used to change and need **constant positive reinforcement** (praise, encouragement, etc.) to help them adjust and succeed. The more you know about your Head Start Center, the more support you can give to your child. Most children have some “separation” symptoms and should be given **at least three weeks** to settle into a comfortable routine. Separation symptoms may also occur after schedule changes, and especially after Christmas or spring break (sometimes even after illnesses). Head Start staff will work with you to help your child again feel comfortable at the Center. You will receive a small brochure called “Changes” and the advice may help you and your child adjust.

**PROGRAM / SCHEDULE**

Most of our classes meet four days a week, Monday through Thursday, or Tuesday through Friday. You will be notified in advance of a change in schedule for any class. Look for a monthly calendar of class days and a Parent Newsletter for information regarding the schedule. When public school officials announce that schools are closed due to snowy weather, our centers will be closed while roads near the center are dangerous. You will be contacted if we re-open the center before public school re-opens.

All classes include units of study that emphasize small and large muscle development, social and emotional development, math skills, literacy skills, science knowledge, health and nutrition basics, transportation and personal safety education, life skills, and the creative arts.



Our curriculum meets or exceeds all state standards as well as the more stringent Head Start standards. In addition, a “Parent Input/Curriculum” form gives parents an opportunity to make suggestions for activities your child will enjoy as well as an opportunity for parents to share special cultural knowledge. Remember that young children enjoy visiting farm animals, hearing “live” music, or having a special food prepared at the preschool site. We also provide books, dolls, toys, dress-up props, photos, pictures, and music that

children are not likely to see elsewhere. All children in class for six or more hours must have a nap or time of rest. New research shows that such rest times help children remember newly-learned material as well as help them grow and develop normally.

Each Center has daily schedules and lesson plans posted. Copies are available. The daily schedule includes breakfast, small and large group activities (including time in “learning centers” and outdoors, unless raining), lunch, and a snack. Your child will also participate in routine fire, tornado, and bus evacuation drills. Teachers will help your child brush his/her teeth using a pea-sized drop of toothpaste on a toothbrush.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## CLOTHING / SHOES / BACKPACKS

Please send your child in sturdy play clothes. Learning at Head Start can be active and messy, and we want your child to be able to participate fully. Washable clothes and clothes that the child can handle independently at toileting are best. Shoes must be worn at all times. Tennis shoes are an excellent choice, as the non-skid soles will help prevent accidents as well as protect feet and toes from injury. Please do not send children in sandals, boots or flip-flops. It is very important that children wear clothes appropriate for the weather. This may include a coat, hat, and mittens in the winter. Children play outside *every day* unless it is storming, or unless the wind chill is below 32 degrees or the heat index above 95.



Please leave backpacks and toys at home. Most centers have limited storage space, and loose items must be secured on the bus. During a sudden stop, a backpack could land on a child.

Some children need their own personal change of clothes at the center, and we try to keep a supply of extras on hand. If your child or other family members need help in securing clothing, let the staff know. We also appreciate donations of children's clothing that can be kept on hand as extras.

### EARLY ARRIVALS and LATE PICK-UPS

Children should not arrive before their class begins. Centers with more than one class have separate schedules, so it is important for your child to arrive at the assigned time. Rarely, we work with a parent to offer extended hours, but this must not be a "last minute" request. If you pick up your child, please be on time, and use the required center sign-in and sign-out form. **Please avoid last minute calls to send your child to other locations or requests to keep your child at the center.**

### PARENT SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

Parents who transport their children to the center **must** accompany their child into the building and **sign in**. Parents who pick up their child from the center must be at the center at class closing time. If you are unable to pick up your child for some reason, you must make alternate plans and alert the center.

### PHONE CALLS

Answering machines are often used to cut down on interruptions of the important time teachers spend with your child. Please leave a message, as we monitor the machines frequently and will call back as soon as possible. **Some phone lines have call waiting, so do not be alarmed if no one answers the phone immediately. Please just try to call back a minute or two later.** Contact our office at 1-800-762-8432 if you have problems contacting the center.



PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## ATTENDANCE – CHILD PICK-UP

Unless your child is ill, ***please make every effort*** to have your child attend each scheduled class day on a regular basis. Children need schedules and routines. The importance of your child’s regular attendance can not be over emphasized. Your child can benefit from Head Start only with regular attendance. **Children who attend regularly make a lot more progress.** Letting your child decide whether or not to come to class will cause problems later.

If your child misses three consecutive days, you will be called or visited unless we know why your child is absent. We must serve another child if your child cannot attend regularly. **Excessive absences may result in a child being dropped from the program.** If circumstances change, we would want to re-enroll your child, so please stay in touch.

**If you change your address or phone number, please let a center staff member know your new address and/or phone number** as soon as possible, as we must be able to contact you in the event of an emergency. If you would like to change any other information (such as authorized persons to pick up your child), let your child’s teacher or the Family Partnership Assistant know as soon as possible. Please tell us about such changes in person or in writing, as texting by cellphone is not a reliable way to pass on vital information.

If you move away from the area, and then return, please call about possibly re-enrolling your child. You may be able to easily transfer your child to a Head Start center we operate in another county since we operate centers in five counties. We may also be able to help you apply at another Head Start program, but unfortunately you would not be automatically eligible to attend outside of our area.

### RELEASE of CHILDREN

1. We maintain a file of those individuals to whom your child may be released from the center or from the bus. For your child’s safety, release of the child must be restricted to documented people on file.
2. Staff may ask for photo identification of people with whom they are not familiar.
3. If a parent is restricted from picking up a child, court documents must be on file at the center. If there are custody problems, we are legally bound to honor the wishes of the parent who has legal custody. If no legal documents are on file, Tennessee law requires that we consider *both* parents as having equal right of access to the child.
4. If a parent or other authorized person arrives to pick up the child and is acting in a manner that may place the child at immediate risk of harm, expect the staff to question the suitability of releasing the child. The staff may hold the child until more suitable transportation can be arranged. For example, staff will not release a child to someone who they believe is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## IN-KIND

Involvement in a child's education by a person significant to the child has a very positive impact on the way a child views school. Children who see that school is important to Mom or Dad will come to believe it is important to them as well. This is one of the reasons *in-kind contributions* are so important to Head Start.

An *in-kind contribution* - usually just called "in-kind" - is a donation of time, materials, or other services. (In-kind also helps Head Start receive its federal operating money.) In-kind can include your time working on specific projects at home, such as making items for the center. Making telephone reminder calls can also count, and even the time spent on some activities organized by parents can count!

**Since staff members cannot accept valuable gifts or favors,** the best gift you can give is your time and/or small items the teachers can use in the classroom. Please let us know any other ideas you have on how to obtain in-kind and community support and volunteers.

## PARENT CENTER COMMITTEE / POLICY COUNCIL

Policy Council is made up of interested parents and others who serve as a link to the community. Policy Council is a very important part of the Head Start program since it involves improving the program, personnel decisions, and approving plans for new centers. Each center's committee elects at least one parent to be its own local member, and most centers elect a "community representative." No Policy Council member or alternate member may be related to a Head Start staff member. A videotape and training series, "Linking our Voices," further explains the activities and purpose of the Policy Council. If you are interested in serving, we can even show you a videotape before the first parent meeting!



A list of the program's Policy Council members is posted on the parent bulletin board, and elected members attend meetings which usually take place monthly in Dunlap. Minutes from the meetings and more information are available at your center. Some member expenses, including child care costs, will be paid, and transportation with staff is available; or, mileage can be paid.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## PARENT ACTIVITIES

This Head Start program belongs to its parents and families! We need you to help our Head Start program be at its best. Head Start is a comprehensive program that includes the family as well as the child. Parents serve as volunteers in many areas, and there are many opportunities for parents (or guardians) to become involved in the program. Parents should note on our volunteer calendar when we can count on you. Please let your family and friends know that we need them to volunteer too! You can help in many ways, such as:

1. Assisting in the classroom or center.
2. Transporting your child to and from the Center.
3. Reporting for or developing the Head Start newsletter.
4. Teaching a craft, doing yard work, helping with "Clean-up Day."
5. Volunteering at home; i.e., cutting out arts and crafts materials.
6. Participating in Center Committees.
7. Participating in Policy Council.
8. Completing "at home" work projects and Book-A-Night assignments.
9. Sharing a special talent or skill, such as being a firefighter or EMT



Sequatchie Valley Head Start Policy Council Meeting

These are just a few ideas on how you can help your child and the Head Start program to grow. Let your Center staff or the Family Partnership Assistant know how you wish to participate. We have fun and informative parent meetings once a month. Parent trainings usually include child development, health education, nutrition, and first aid. The topics parents select are emphasized. Some parents enjoy helping plan the program through advisory committees and informal meetings with staff.

The Health Advisory Committee, which includes parents and community health or health related providers, meets at least twice a year. The purpose of the committee is to review the program's health services and offer suggestions or recommendations for better health services. If you are interested in being on the committee, please let your child's teacher or Family Partnership Assistant (FPA) know. The Family Partnership Manager or the Head Start Director can also provide information.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Since we do not have a state permit for “fundraising,” we must limit activities that are planned by staff, use our “Head Start” or Agency name, or use our building or materials. The only events we can officially sponsor must be Agency-wide and require the approval of the Agency’s chief operating officer. Occasionally, individual parents have gotten together to provide items or even funds to buy items for the center or all the children at a center. Our policy is not designed to discourage parents from making contributions, but usually parents may wish to approach other groups about sponsoring events for our program. Parents and staff may want to work together with other groups – like Rotary clubs – on projects. Ask your Family Partnership Assistant for more information.

**PARENT ACTIVITY FUNDS**

Our program has limited federal funds available for activities that parent center committees plan, and for which they have approval. Special training events and Parent-Child days and/or parent field trips may qualify for this funding. Your Family Partnership Assistant will include information about this funding at your parent meetings.

**FAMILY LITERACY**

We have information about adult education classes and other training programs. We want to know about our parents’ participation so we can plan better services. Many Head Start parents are interested in seeking GEDs or enrolling in the other classes. Even if you have a GED or high school diploma, the Adult Basic Education program may have learning opportunities for you, including computer training.



You are your child’s best teacher, and your child learns when he or she observes you learning a new skill. Please spend **at least** fifteen minutes each day looking at books or magazines together, and be sure your family has a library card and visits the public library with you often! Spending time in the library can increase your child’s future reading ability. Research indicates that television viewing and some electronic games also encourage aggressive behavior — not to mention increasing the desire for expensive toys! Make sure your child is signed up for the Imagination Library, which provides free books each month through age five.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NIGHTLY FOLDER / BOOK-A-NIGHT**



Reading books is one of the most important ways to help your child experience success in school — both now and in the future. To promote reading, all our classrooms send home a folder each night. The folder will often contain important papers and messages to parents, but it also includes a book your child has selected from our libraries. *Please* read the book to your child or have another adult or sibling read to your child. Mark the time spent reading on the sheet included in the folder. Of course, library books or other books in your home may be counted in the time spent reading to your child. Record that time on our form, too. This is a great way to help your child toward school success. ***Please be sure your child returns the book in the folder each morning so that he/she may select a new book.*** Please

return the first book before asking for another. We always welcome donations of books for children.

**FATHERHOOD**

We encourage active fathering because solid research for the past 50 years has shown that children who have an involved father (or father figure like a grandfather, uncle, or older brother) are more curious and confident; are better able to wait patiently for their teacher; and can maintain interest in their own work. This higher level of self-control is associated with improved life skills, greater self-esteem, and an increased ability to relate well to other people.

**Fathers Play Differently**

While mothers and fathers are both physical with their children, fathers are typically physical in different ways. Fathers tend to play with their children, and mothers tend to care for them. Generally speaking, fathers tickle more, they wrestle, and they chase their children, sometimes as playful, scary “monsters.” Fathers are louder at play, while mothers are quieter. Mothers cuddle babies, and fathers bounce them. Fathers roughhouse, while mothers are gentle. Fathers encourage competition; mothers encourage cooperation. Fathers encourage independence while mothers encourage security. Children who roughhouse with their fathers learn that biting, kicking, and other forms of physical violence are not acceptable. They learn self-control by being told when “enough is enough” and when to “settle down.” Fathers help girls and boys learn a healthy balance between being timid and being aggressive. Children need mom’s softness, as well as dad’s roughhousing. Both provide security and confidence in their own ways by communicating love and physical intimacy.

**Fathers Build Confidence**

Go to any playground and listen to the parents there. Who is often encouraging kids to swing or climb just a little higher, ride their bike just a little faster, or throw just a little harder? Who is encouraging kids to be careful? Mothers tend toward caution while fathers often encourage kids to push the limits. Either of these parenting styles by themselves can be unhealthy. One style tends toward encouraging risk without consideration of consequences. The other tends to avoid risk, which can fail to build independence, confidence, and progress. Joined together, they keep each other in balance and help children remain safe while expanding their experiences and their confidence.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fathers Provide a Look at the World of Men**

Men and women are different. They eat differently. They dress differently. They smell differently. They cope with life differently. Usually, fathers are thought of as doing “man things” while mothers do “woman things.”

Girls with involved fathers are more likely to have healthier, more confident relationships with boys in adolescence and men in adulthood. This is because girls have a greater opportunity to learn from their fathers how men should act toward women. They understand from experience which behaviors are inappropriate. Girls raised by involved fathers also have a healthy familiarity with the world of men. They don’t wonder how a man’s facial stubble feels or what it’s like to be hugged by strong arms. This knowledge builds emotional security and safety from males who would do them harm.

Boys who grow up with dads are less likely to be violent. They have their masculinity affirmed and can learn from their fathers how to channel that masculinity and strength in positive ways. Fathers can help boys understand appropriate male sexuality, hygiene, and age-appropriate behavior.



**Fathers Teach Respect for the Other Sex**

Married fathers are less likely to abuse their wives or children than other men. This means that boys and girls with married fathers in the home are more likely to learn by observation how men should treat women. Girls with involved fathers, therefore, are more likely to select good boyfriends and husbands because they have had a good model by which to judge all candidates. Fathers also help weed out bad candidates. Boys raised with fathers are more likely to be good husbands because they can learn their fathers’ strengths — and learn *from* their shortcomings. The federal government has a major “marriage initiative” that seeks to encourage healthy marriages. Ask your Family Partnership Assistant about local marriage enrichment resources.

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY / ANTI-BIAS**

The cultural, racial, and ethnic composition of our Head Start program is becoming more diverse as Head Start reflects the changes in America. We teach that everyone’s unique differences should be shared and appreciated. Learning about our southern culture, along with the cultures of others in our country and the world, will help children grow up strong and knowledgeable, ready to fully participate in a diverse and changing society. America was built on diversity, and that will continue to be our strength. We also hope that boys and girls grow up knowing they can pursue any career or hobby that interests them. Girls make great electricians, and boys can be caring nurses. We especially encourage families that speak a language other than English at home to enroll their children in Head Start. Children who are dual language learners grow and thrive in our program. We also provide translation services when necessary.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE

One of the Head Start goals is to make sure that all Head Start children have a medical provider (doctor) for ongoing medical care. To assure that this source of health care is available, Head Start determines if each child has a “medical home” so they can receive regular care and physical exams to keep them healthy. If you do not have a medical doctor for your child, your FPA will assist you in finding one. Most children qualify for CoverTN, as do many businesses and self-employed persons. If your child does not have medical insurance that will pay for a physical exam, Head Start will cover the cost at some providers. However, you must let your FPA know **before** the appointment of your need for financial help so arrangements can be made with the doctor’s office.



We all know that it is very important that a child receive medical care when sickness occurs. But it is also very important that a child receive preventive or well child care in addition to medical care when sick. Receiving preventive or well child care means that a child receives regular physical examinations or check-ups (when the child is well – not sick). At that time certain important health screenings such as simple blood tests for anemia and lead poisoning, height and weight, and blood pressure are done. **The purpose of preventive or well child care is to help prevent sickness and to detect illness early.** Head Start guidelines require that Head Start children be “up-to-date” on preventive or well child care. EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment) guidelines recommend that children – aged three, four, and five should have a yearly physical examination. If your child has had a well-child physical exam within the past year, he/she may not need another exam right now. The physical exam form needs to be completed by the doctor’s office, and must be on file at the Head Start center before your child begins class. Future physical exams will be due **yearly**. If your child has not had a physical exam within the last year, please make an appointment to have it completed before he/she begins attending Head Start. TennCare does pay for preventive or well child care as part of the EPSDT screening process. Your local public health department may do well child exams. Ask your FPA

## OBESITY and OTHER HEALTH ISSUES

The well child physical exam usually includes a height and weight measurement. If one is not included in the exam form, we will do a measurement in the classroom, then plot them on a growth chart to show your child’s BMI (body mass index) for age. This is currently the most accurate way to determine if a child is underweight, at risk for being overweight, or overweight.



Obesity continues to be a serious health problem for our children. In response, we began the “I Am Moving, I Am Learning” program so our children engage in an hour of continuous, vigorous physical activity, along with an additional hour of physical activity in

shorter time chunks. To monitor progress, we measure and weigh children at high risk three times a year and provide you with confidential results.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

If weight problems are an issue in your family, a good motto is: **“Eat less, move more.”** Avoiding television is also a good idea. You will be receiving lots of nutrition education. Our agency’s registered dietitian will be glad to discuss with you any weight concerns you may have about your child and other family members. Three key factors in maintaining a healthy weight are a healthy, nutritious diet that includes an abundance of vegetables, fruits, and plenty of physical activity. Soda and juice drinks (even real juice) may be high in sugar, and should be limited or avoided. Some doctors believe diet sodas increase the craving for sweets. All sodas are damaging to teeth.



- EPSDT guidelines require a blood **lead screening** on each child at ages 12 and 24 months. If your child has never had a lead screening done, please ask your child’s doctor to perform the screening. Lead poisoning is a common environmental disease of young children, especially those living in older houses or close to roads or farm equipment using lead gas. Lead poisoning can cause permanent stunting of growth, anemia, nutrient losses, decreased ability to fight diseases, decreased ability to learn and develop. Even mental retardation, convulsion, coma, and death can result. This screening is done by taking a small blood sample, usually by finger stick, from your child.
- Iron deficiency **anemia** is common in children due to lack of iron rich foods in the diet. Iced tea contains a substance that prevents iron from being absorbed by the body; so limiting tea can be helpful. We recommend a yearly hemoglobin or hematocrit screening to check for anemia by your child’s doctor. This screening is also done by obtaining a small blood sample (usually by a finger stick) from your child.
- Tuberculin skin tests for **tuberculosis** are required for all children who are born outside the United States. We also recommend discussing the need for a skin test with your child’s doctor if your child is in any of these categories:
  1. children in contact with confirmed or suspicious infectious tuberculosis;
  2. children in contact with family members or others in jail or prison during the last five (5) years;
  3. children with recent travel to countries in Asia, Middle East, Africa or Latin America;
  4. children exposed to the following persons: HIV infected, homeless, residents of nursing homes, institutionalized adolescents or adults, users of illicit drugs, and migrant farm workers.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Your child must have an up-to-date Tennessee Department of Health Certificate of Immunization on file at the Head Start center prior to attending. Your child should have the following immunizations before attending.

- **one** Hepatitis A
- **four** DTP (diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus) vaccines,
- **three** OPV (polio) vaccines,
- **three or four** HIB - Haemophilus influenza type B vaccines (the number received depends on the type of vaccine given),
- **one** MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine,
- **three** Hepatitis B vaccines and a chicken pox (varicella) vaccine (unless your child has had the disease),
- **Four** PCV (pneumococcal) vaccines

**If your child does not have all of the needed vaccines** for his/her age, he/she will still be able to attend the center *if you have documentation of a scheduled appointment to obtain the needed vaccine(s) for your child, the appointments for the vaccines are kept, and documentation of the vaccines (an updated immunization record) is provided to the Head Start Center.* If the appointment is missed, your child may be excluded from the center. Day Care licensing regulations require that each child have a shot record recorded on a “Tennessee Child Health Record” form. **Please provide this form to the Head Start center since it must be on file at the center prior to the child’s attendance.**

When your child turns four years old, he will need some more immunizations, another DTP, another polio, and another MMR. Please provide the Head Start center a copy of the updated shot record when your child gets these shots. Immunizations are available at your child’s medical doctor and / or the public health department (at no charge or a minimal charge based on your income.) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services believes it is critical that children are immunized as early as possible in order to protect them from the childhood illnesses that can have very serious consequences.

## DENTAL PROGRAM

One of the health requirements for Head Start is to make sure that all Head Start children have a dentist for ongoing oral health care. If your child does not have such a



“dental home,” your FPA will assist you in finding one. Another health requirement is to see that each child has a dental exam within the first ninety days of enrollment, unless he/she has had an exam within the last year. Dental exams are required for each child each year. We are very grateful to Dr. William Peck, a dentist with the Regional Health Department. He provides a dentist to visit all our centers to do on-site exams. If the

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

dental exam reveals a need for dental treatment, the child will be referred to another dentist, who will want to do his/her own exam and cleaning. If the dental exam by Dr. Peck reveals no cavities or other dental treatment needs, your child will be complete at that time. Your written consent and a health history is needed prior to the dental exam. You will be notified of the date Dr. Peck will be doing exams in your child's center, and you are welcome to attend. Even if your child is not referred for treatment, we urge you to connect with a local dentist to have his/her teeth cleaned, and to establish a dental home. If your child sees a dentist on a regular basis (every six months to one year), it will not be necessary for your child to be examined by Dr. Peck. With your written consent, Head Start will obtain documentation from your child's dentist of his/her most recent exam, cleaning and treatment.



**Please make every effort to have your child attend on dental exam day, so that exam can be done in a timely manner.** However, if your child is absent on the dental exam day, an alternate plan will be made. This could include transporting the child to a nearby Head Start center when Dr. Peck is scheduled to be there, or scheduling an appointment in a dentist's office. If your child enrolls after Dr. Peck's center visit

and needs a dental exam, your Family Partnership Assistant will offer to schedule an appointment with a dentist for the exam. Some centers may have a dental hygienist present on screening day to look in your child's mouth for obvious cavities. If your child has obvious dental needs, we will work with you to schedule an appointment. Cavities can be painful and cause infections in the mouth. Prompt treatment is important. Recently, some children have died from inadequate dental care. Fluoride is also important (see next page). Cavities are increasing because children are given drinks with sugar (like apple juice) and bottled water with no fluoride.

**CHILDREN NEEDING DENTAL TREATMENT**

If your child is identified as needing dental treatment, your Family Partnership Assistant will need to contact you. Please try to make your own arrangements but the Family Partnership Assistant will help make an appointment for you, if needed. Head Start may provide payment if no other payment source is available, such as TennCare or private dental insurance. During summer months, some communities have free dental clinics for children and adults under 21.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

We strongly encourage you to accompany your child to the dentist. Exceptions may be made for treatment visits if you are unable to get off work. In that instance, with your written permission, a Head Start staff member may take the child to the routine appointment. (If your child requires sedation, other than nitrous oxide, you or another responsible adult family member **must** accompany the child.) The Family Partnership Assistant will work with you to find a means of transportation if no reliable transportation is available to you. TennCare provides help with transportation, if you meet certain criteria.

Many parents ask why children need dental care by a dentist at such a young age since the baby teeth fall out and are replaced by permanent teeth. Baby teeth are very important because they help children chew food, speak clearly, and retain space for the permanent teeth that start to erupt at around five to six years of age. It's important to get children into the habit of good dental care at an early age since children can develop toothaches and infections. **Cavities hurt!** Children who begin to take care of their teeth at a young age may be more likely to have good dental habits as adults. Children should receive regular dental checkups (every six to twelve months) beginning when the first tooth erupts. Regular dental checkups, a balanced diet, fluoride, injury prevention, and brushing are all important for healthy teeth.

#### **FLUORIDE SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

Fluoride is a mineral that is very important to the prevention of cavities. Our Head Start program offers a fluoride supplement program for eligible children. If your drinking water comes from a water system that has fluoride added (which most do), your child does not need extra fluoride and is not eligible. To be tested for eligibility, your child must live in a home where the drinking water comes from a well, a spring, bottled water that does not contain fluoride, or city water systems without added fluoride added. If laboratory tests show fluoride levels are below the recommended levels, your child's doctor may provide a prescription, or you may agree to have your child receive daily fluoride tablets at the Head Start center. (Your child would only receive fluoride on the days he or she is present at the center.) If you think your child is eligible, please discuss it with your Family Partnership Assistant.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

In Head Start **family partnerships**, families are primarily responsible for achieving goals they have set as part of the "Family Partnership Agreement" process. Each family has strengths and needs. Family Partnership Assistants (FPAs) help families in thinking about these needs and translating them into goals to deal with family issues. FPAs can also provide referrals to other agencies and have lots of information on programs and support groups. Sequatchie Valley Head Start currently has a Family Partnership Assistant at each center who is supervised by the Family and Community Partnerships Manager in the South Pittsburg office. They attempt to meet the needs of the families as well as the needs of the program.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Head Start families should think of their FPA as a trusted family **friend**. FPAs:

**F**ind emergency assistance and help out in crises, including access to shelters and foodbanks and providing information about available community resources, applying for child care assistance, immunizing siblings, and getting Social Security and child support payments.

**R**ecruit and enroll children and families who really need help. FPAs are also ready to listen, providing a place for parents to talk about their difficulties and problems and lay the plans for success in the future.

**I**nvolve themselves in the family in helpful ways such as providing parent training, arranging parent meetings and parent activities; and, at your child's Center, working as a substitute, classroom aide (sometimes even a bus driver) when other staff are not available.

**E**ngage your family in goal setting that forms the basis of the Family Partnership Agreement ... and then helping your family achieve the goals that they have set for themselves.

**N**urture partnerships with families with active involvement and direct services such as assistance in making appointments for medical services or providing transportation when no other means is available to get the services your family needs.

**D**iscover the strengths of families by helping them to understand their needs and how to meet them. While each family chooses whether they want to set goals, every family is encouraged to work on something that is meaningful for them.

Head Start also fosters **community partnerships** through which families and the Head Start program work as a team to help improve the larger community. This sometimes means that Head Start staff will meet with other agencies to come up with ideas to improve community services. Head Start families are needed to participate in these activities, and their help is welcomed.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT REPORTING

Reports of child abuse and neglect are higher in Tennessee than other states. We have training information available on indicators of child abuse and our personal safety curriculum material (which is based on the guide provided by the State of Tennessee) aims to help keep your child safe. Very little verified child abuse takes place in child care programs, and we hope you know your child is in a safe place at your Head Start center. Statewide, most child abuse reports are actually concerned with physical neglect or lack of parent supervision. In Tennessee, all persons (including doctors, police, teachers, mental health professionals, child care providers, dentists, family members and friends) **must** report child abuse. To report child abuse or neglect, you need to call

**1-877-542-2873**

Your call is confidential and may even be anonymous. If you would like a copy of any of our child abuse and neglect reporting procedures, or if you need more information, please call our Head Start Office or let the center staff know your interest.

### What is Abuse and Neglect?

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Public Law 93-247, defines child abuse and neglect as: “The physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by a person who is responsible for the child’s welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or threatened thereby.”

There are many forms of child abuse and neglect. The most common are **physical abuse**, including acts such as beatings or excessive punishment; **neglect**, which means a lack of action such as failure to provide food, emotional care, or supervision; and **sexual abuse** which ranges from fondling (touching the genital area), exposure, to intercourse, including incest and rape.

### How Parents Can Recognize Abuse and Neglect

It is not uncommon for three and four year olds to have cuts and bruises; this is expected when children play actively! However, there are indicators that should serve as “red flags” to caretakers that a child may have been abused. Bruises, welts, and cuts on the head, back, arms, stomach, and thighs are considered high risk by the state Department of Children’s Services (DCS) and should be carefully studied. Injuries on the upper body are *less* likely to be accidental.

Neglect can take many forms. Physical neglect covers both a lack of food, clothing, and proper hygiene (bathing, etc.). The key question is always whether a lack of attention is affecting health. Remember that dental neglect is also considered medical neglect. Hopefully, all families will take the opportunity to use Head Start’s excellent dental program and thus avoid any child suffering with tooth pain. Medical care, even without insurance, can be located. Having head lice is not neglect, and we have separate information and policies about it since it is a common problem in public schools.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual abuse can be very difficult to identify. Many times the child tends to regress as evidenced by wetting his/her pants, sucking his/her thumb, and being very clingy. The child may appear fearful of the parent but oftentimes the child may appear more attached to the parent than before. Does the child appear to have an infection in the genital area? Is he touching his private areas more than usual? Has she complained of pain in the genital area? These are symptoms that **could be** attributed to sexual abuse. Keeping a close eye on children is always very important. Do not count on children to look after each other. This is unsafe, and it is more likely that an adult or another youngster may make improper sexual advances when the parent is not actively looking after the child.



**How to Help**

Head Start can be a very useful resource for the family with abuse/neglect issues. FPAs and teachers can provide support for the family and hopefully help lead them to other resource agencies. The role of the state Department of Children’s Services is not to take children from the home but to help the family resolve the problems that have resulted in the abuse/neglect.



Because Head Start actively involves parents in the program, parents have the opportunity to learn how to discipline their children **appropriately**, how to determine if a behavior is typical for the age, and a how to best meet the needs of their children.

**FIRE SAFETY in the HOME**

Sadly, in years passed, our agency has had some of its children die in homes that were unprotected by smoke alarms and a fire escape plan. Don’t let it happen to you. Install detectors and make a fire escape plan. If you need help, ask your family worker. She will be glad to help you and can give you our “home safety” checklist which you can use to make your home safer. When you’re done, we hope you can circle both the “Happy Faces” below.

  Smoke detectors are operating in every bedroom and on each floor.

Circle One

  A fire escape plan for the entire family is in place, including two exits from each room, and a place to meet outside. Everyone in the home understands the plan.

Circle One

**OTHER EMERGENCIES**

Every directly operated center has a written emergency disaster plan that details the procedures necessary to return your child to you, or to protect your child at the center when necessary. In the event of an emergency that requires an evacuation of the center — or a lock-down *inside* the center — you will be contacted by telephone. Each center has a specified secondary location for emergency evacuation (as in the case of a fire), and every center has a space for lockdown in the event of an emergency that prevents children and staff from leaving the building.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **GETTING BIRTH CERTIFICATES**

Birth certificate copies can be obtained for \$8.00 from your local county health department for any live Tennessee birth since 1949. We have information about other states also. A birth certificate, proof of a physical exam, and an immunization record will be needed to attend public school. Our Family Partnership Assistants can help with other information as well.

### **GETTING A SOCIAL SECURITY CARD AND INFORMATION**

Social Security cards are important and can be obtained by completing an application form which can be mailed or taken to your local Social Security office. A person is required to have evidence of age and citizenship as well as evidence of identity to get a card. Contact your Family Partnership Assistant if you would like an application form. We also have applications available related to Social Security benefits. If you think you or a family member may qualify for Social Security or SSI (low income children and adults with disabilities may qualify for SSI), apply immediately as the date on the signed application would be the start date for benefits if the claim is approved.

### **CHILD CARE REFERRALS**

Family Partnership Assistants are interested in your child care needs, especially if your are working or in school. Child care needs may change, so keep your Family Partnership Assistants up to date on your family's child care needs. Some child care providers have agreements to jointly enroll Head Start children.

Material about selecting quality child care is available at our centers or by calling toll free 1-800-462-8261. This referral service can also mail you a list of licensed and registered child care providers and accepts consumer complaints. Financial help may be available if you qualify for the state's child care assistance certificate program. There may be a waiting list for help, but you automatically qualify if you recently received family assistance and now work. Call your local office of the Department of Human Services for more information about this service. Your Head Start Family Partnership Assistant can help you by providing more information about this and other social service programs.

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**EXCELLENCE  
in EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION**

Accredited by NAEYC's  
National Academy  
of Early Childhood  
Programs



All classroom centers directly operated by  
Sequatchie Valley Head Start  
are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children's  
National Academy of Early Childhood Programs  
**and**  
have achieved the state of Tennessee's highest  
level of excellence, a "Three-Star" quality rating.

*Sequatchie Valley Head Start is  
the highest-rated Head Start program in Tennessee.*

**EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Classes are small, generally 15 to 17 children, and are under the supervision of two teaching staff. Classroom staff includes a degreed teacher and an assistant teacher with at least a CDA. The materials and equipment used are chosen to meet the needs of children and to help them learn and progress at their own pace. Children can learn to focus when working alone. They learn best in a loving environment with caring adults. All centers are licensed by the *Tennessee Department of Human Services* and have current restaurant permits. A complete copy of our education plan is available. The plan meets the Head Start National Performance Standards, the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, as well as the State of Tennessee's Early Learning Development Standards.

**CURRICULUM**

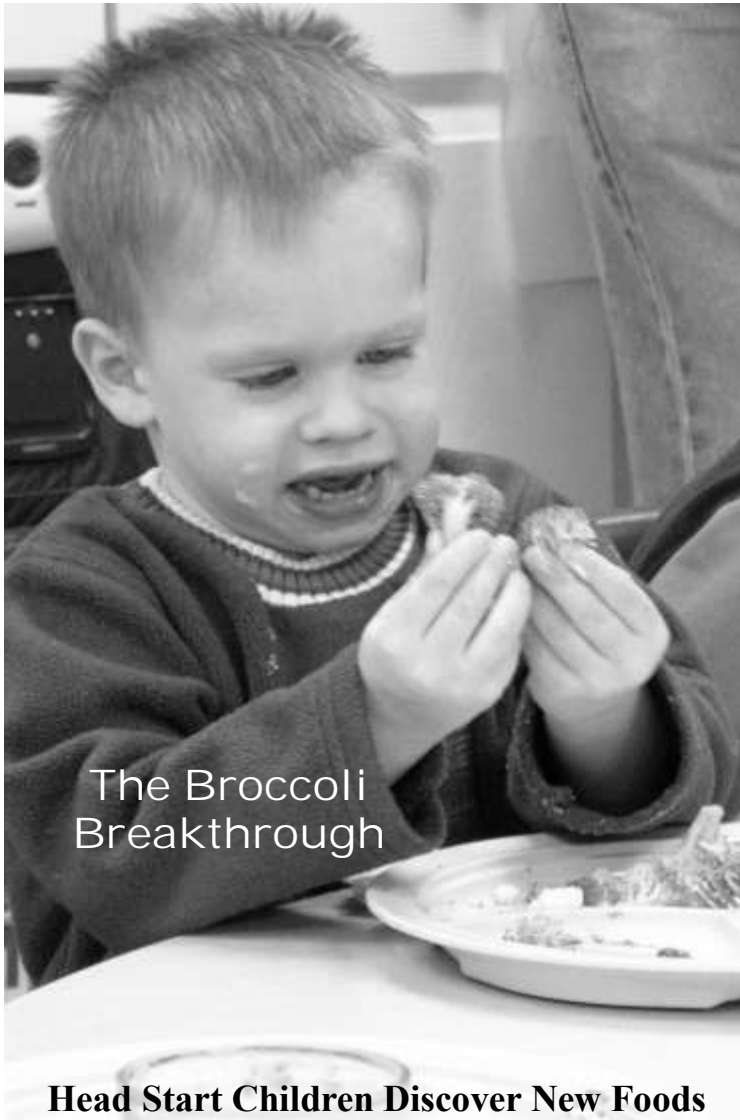
Our curriculum is built around the idea that children learn best when the learning is engaging and active. Of course, teachers are active in the classroom, teaching some things directly, and serving as a resource for children as they move forward in their knowledge of the world. Our environment and activities are carefully planned to reflect each individual child's needs, as well as on-going educational goals. We focus on the whole child and include areas such as safety, self-help, social and emotional growth, health habits and the physical development of a child's large and small muscles. Our curriculum is founded on research-based materials, and the main resource, the DLM Express, is approved by the state's Department of Education. integrated and connected to a theme or unit of study such as *All About Me*. We hope you will offer your own suggestions for your child's learning experiences and activities on the *Parent Input/ Curriculum Form*. Language and literacy, as well as alphabet knowledge, print awareness, phonemic awareness, including a variety of books, are strongly emphasized

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

because we know this emphasis enhances a child’s ability to learn to read. We stress math and science concepts as well as the child’s home and school community. We include music and dance and believe play is an active learning tool enhancing both cognitive, language, and social growth. We also use an approved “I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL)” curriculum which enhances learning and vigorous growth. Tennessee State Standards are utilized as teaching goals. Children are allowed choices during the day, and it is our belief that competency fosters a child’s self esteem. We believe that parents are the most important teacher of their child. Since we offer a program with activities developed for small groups or individual children, each class really benefits when a volunteer is present.

*We ask that you share your unique gifts and talents in your child’s classroom or our program. Your child will benefit from your interest and attendance at the center more than you can imagine! We have a great need for adults to work with children or read to children during our active center times. Please know that you are always welcome.*



The Broccoli Breakthrough

**Head Start Children Discover New Foods**

### **NUTRITION**

Your child will be offered a light breakfast each morning shortly after arrival. If your child always eats breakfast before arriving, and you are encouraging him to “eat less,” let us know. Our lunch is almost always a hot meal, which includes two vegetables or a vegetable and fruit, a meat or meat substitute, and a bread product. End-of-the-meal “desserts” are not served at the center. A snack is also included near the end of the day. We have a Registered Dietitian on staff who prepares center menus, visits locations and is available for parent conferences and telephone calls. She would be happy to speak to you. Contact the Head Start Office or your center to make arrangements to speak with her.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

A well-balanced diet increases your child’s development in all areas. Young children accept new foods quicker in a relaxed family style setting with adults eating with them. We explore different ways of preparing food from all cultures. We teach the need for variety in textures, color, flavors, as well as hot and cold. A good source of Vitamin C is served daily, and a good source of Vitamin A (dark green and yellow vegetables or fruits) is served at least three times a week. Excessive salt and sugar, and high fat foods, are all avoided. Food is never given or withheld as a means of reward or punishment.

We are required to serve foods according to USDA meal patterns. For breakfast, we serve non-fat milk (6 oz.), fruit (1/2 cup), and a bread (1/2 slice) or cereal (1/3 cup cold or 1/4 cup hot). Lunch consists of milk (6 oz.), meat (1.5 oz.), or a meat alternate (such as 1 egg, or 1.5 oz. Cheese or 3/8 cup of cooked dried beans or peas), vegetables and/or fruit (2 or more totaling 1/2 cup), and enriched bread. A copy of the current week’s menu will be posted on the parent bulletin board. New foods may have to be offered up to ten (10) times before some children discover they like it. At least five servings of fruits and vegetables are needed each day, and all meals are served “family style.” Class-time includes many good nutrition topics, so don’t be surprised to learn about the “Choosey Club.”

### Typical Meals at Head Start

Meal	Food Served	Serving Size
<u>Breakfast</u>	Milk Fruit/Vegetable Bread / Cereal	3/4 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 slice, 1/3 cup cold or 1/4 cup hot
<u>Lunch</u>	Milk Meat / Alternate Vegetable & Fruit Grains/ Breads	3/4 cup 1-1/2 oz 1/2 cup 1/2 slice
<u>Snack</u> choose 2 of these 4	Milk Fruit or Vegetable Meat / Alternate Grains / Breads	1/2 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 oz 1/2 slice

We are especially sensitive to the dangers of children choking on food, so we always have an adult at the table while children are eating. Extra food, utensils, napkins, etc. are made available on carts or caddies so the supervising adult does not need to leave the table. In addition, all food is prepared to minimize the danger of choking. For example, individual grapes are cut into halves or quarters; celery and carrot sticks are cut into 1/4- X 4-inch strips; chunks of meat and cheese are cut into thumb-sized pieces.

Volunteers are offered the same food the children eat. If you volunteer for at least one hour, you are welcome to eat a free lunch with your child on that day. Please advise the staff of your plans to volunteer, so that enough food can be purchased and prepared for those who volunteer. All parents are invited to eat with their child on special days during the year, and you will receive a special written invitation. *Parents should not bring any food treats or candy to the center, as we can not accept them. We are not allowed to serve home prepared food, due to insurance and restaurant inspection regulations.* Items for special occasions, such as books, crayons, stickers, and pencils are always enjoyed. (Please do not bring balloons, as they present a choking hazard.) If your child has special diet needs, please let your child’s teacher know.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## TRANSITIONS

### Helping Your Child Adjust to Head Start ... and Beyond

Young children need the support of their parents when going to new places or when having new experiences. As a parent, you can be a great help to your child by helping him adjust to the new experience of Head Start. For example, you can talk positively about school; visit the Center with your child; look at the classrooms, the playground — even meet some teachers.

**Remember, too, that your child’s teacher will visit you in your home before school starts, and you and your child will come to screening day at the Center.** Long



before that, however, you can check out books from the library about preschool; talk about the new things your child will be doing; new toys, new paints, new play dough, new blocks to build with, new books to read — and **that’s just inside!** Outside there will be tricycles to ride, slides and climbing bars to play on, sand and **water to play in ...** Head Start classrooms are very rich in things to do. You can also talk to your child about the food that will be

cooked especially for her, and that she will sit at a table with her friends and her **teachers as they all eat together.** **At the same time, it’s important to listen to any worries your child may have, and to reassure them.**

You can be *sure* our staff will support your child in a loving way, helping them to adjust to new experiences as they move through the day from one activity to the next. Feeling confident about your decision to give your child a Head Start will help your child feel the same way. Most children make the transition to Head Start smoothly, but we always give extra care and support to children who may take up to several weeks to be entirely comfortable.

A second transition takes place when children move from Head Start to kindergarten. Our goal is to make sure each of our children has the academic, physical, social, and emotional skills so they fit right into a kindergarten classroom — so they are ready for school. We want you to be prepared too, so one of our parent meetings will focus on what you can do to help your child be really ready. We can provide you with **much of the information you’ll need to make a successful transition.** **At your request, we can also furnish information to the child’s kindergarten about your child’s specific experiences at Head Start.** We will also be available for assistance all the way through third grade, so feel free to contact us, especially the FPA.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Leaving Your Child at Head Start

Whenever possible, follow the same routines each day. Your child depends on the little rituals of everyday life to keep him grounded in the midst of bigger, overall changes. Walk into the classroom each day with your child. Or, if she takes a bus, wait until the bus drives off, waving goodbye. When she comes home in the afternoon, be there waiting with a wave, a smile, and a hug. Any repeated routines help a child feel secure and confident about themselves.

The first few times you leave your child at the Head Start center may be difficult for you both. Crying, whining, and clinging to Mom or Dad are common reactions which are best handled with firmness and a smile. Never leave without a hug, a kiss, or a wave – or all three. Always remember to tell you child when you will return – and be specific, in terms that a child can understand. “Mommy will be back after snack time” is a time children can understand and remember. Check your center’s schedule of activities in advance so you know when you’ll be back.



Always say goodbye. Whether your child has just turned three or she’s about to turn six, she still needs your reassurance. That last hug, kiss, or wave is part of your promise to return. Do not just slip out or disappear. Children who are unsure of their parents’ leaving will be unsure about their return. The best goodbyes are quick, loving, and firm. Prolonging or repeating a goodbye only prolongs or repeats the distress that both the child (and you) feel. If you are having difficulty, your child’s teacher can help by offering comforting words and an interesting activity.

After you leave, if you find yourself distressed, ask the teacher how the child adapted when you were gone. Nearly always, the child’s dismay at your departure goes away quickly, usually within a few minutes after you are gone. You are welcome to call the center to check on your child at any time. The teacher may not be available, but someone will let you know how things are going.

When picking up your child, try to arrive at the same time each day. If you must be late, be sure to call ahead. Children learn very quickly the order in which they go home. If your child goes home before Mary (but Mary’s Mom has come and gone) your child may feel abandoned.

### PHOTOS

Informal “snapshot” photos are taken at the Head Start center, and we want your picture, too! Our pictures and any you give to the center help children feel at home. Head Start parents have the opportunity to disapprove the taking of any photos, including publicity pictures which may be used to promote Head Start, by indicating this on the general permission form. Professional photographs or school pictures are usually not practical to offer, as they must be scheduled only in the late afternoon.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**“LAP – D” ASSESSMENT**  
**Learning Accomplishment Profile— Diagnostic Edition**

The LAP-D assessment is the main tool our program uses to assess your child’s learning progress and educational needs. The *Report to Parents of Child’s Development* is a summary of the *skills* that your child has successfully mastered. Your child’s teacher will, with this information, assist you in planning home activities to promote your child’s continued growth. We also use this tool to help us meet each child’s individual needs and plan individual classroom activities. No assessment tool measures all that your child can do or all that we hope for them to accomplish, but our assessment tool (LAP-D) helps us to work together to recognize and set goals for your child. Your child’s teacher will further explain the LAP-D report, and your child’s progress, at parent conferences and home visits. We also use the results to look at child “outcomes” in a group.

**OUR OUTCOMES**  
**Compared to National Averages**

While the LAP-D is the major assessment we use to tell how our children are doing, we also do a number of other educational assessments as well, including three in the areas of literacy. Nothing, however, gives us the kind of assurance of the LAP-D, an assessment which is “nationally normed.” That means we can use it to see how our children are doing compared with other pre-schoolers.

We are glad to say we are doing unusually well, a fact that we attribute to the children, of course, but to their parents, as well, most of whom are deeply involved in the lives of their children. We know that counts for more than anything. But we also attribute our children’s success to our dedicated staff, who labor daily to understand where each child is, and then push them forward.

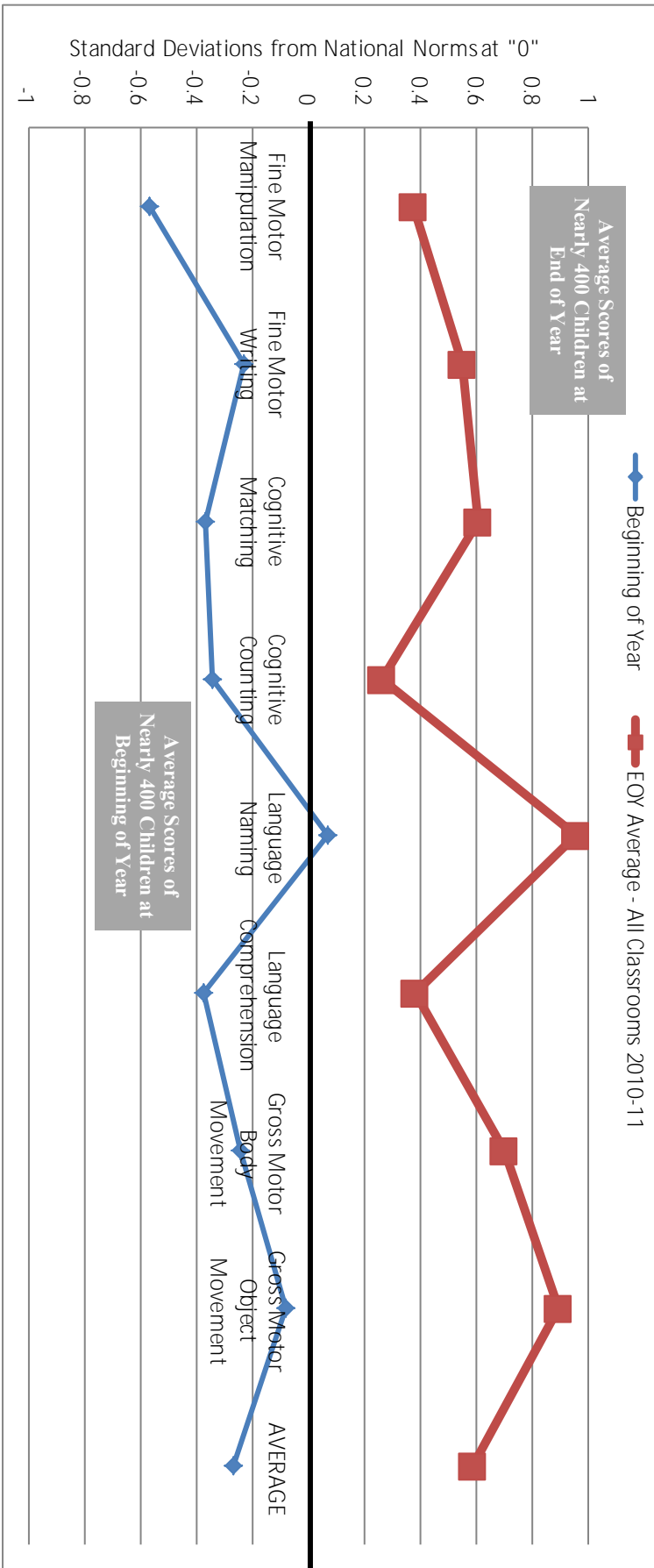
The graph at right indicates the phenomenal progress our children made last year, a typical year at Head Start. The “0” line across the middle of the graph lets us compare our children to typical pre-schoolers all across America. As you can see, our children (even though they began the year well below the national average) make significantly more progress than the typical American pre-schooler. On average, over a span of years, our children make more progress than two-thirds of the pre-schoolers in America.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Sequatchie Valley Head Start 35

## Progress from Beginning to End of Year Sequatchie Valley Head Start 2010-11



A good pre-school educational program should effectively individualize instruction for each child so that all children can make progress in all areas of learning — not just one or two. In Head Start, we work with children however they come to us, building their skills and knowledge step by step. When this happens properly, progress is evident across all the areas of learning.

That's just what has happened here. This chart shows the progress our children made (as a group) during the year. The bottom line and dots indicate where the children started the 2010-11 year in each area of learning, while the top line and dots indicate where they were at the end of the year. The straight line across the middle of the chart indicates the national norm, at zero, against which our children's achievements can be compared.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

ILLNESS – COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Child has a fever\*

Vomiting within 24 hours

Diarrhea\*\* within 24 hours


Contagious illness (pink eye, strep throat, chicken pox, Scabies)

Head lice\*\*\*

You feel child should not go out to play

Symptoms (ear ache, bad cough, wheezing)

## Should my child go



## to Head Start today?

**Feeling Well Today**

**Been Feeling Well For 24 Hours**

\*101.0 F when measured in the mouth, 99.5 under the arm

\*\*loose and watery bowel movements

\*\*\*If your child has head lice, he/she must be treated, with all nits removed. Your child's head will be rechecked by a staff member before coming back to the classroom. Anyone can get head lice, and we can offer more help and information about how to get rid of them.

Please use these guidelines to help you know when to keep your child home:

If your child develops a possible contagious illness/condition, the center staff will notify you so that you can pick up your child, or make arrangements to have him/her picked up. Your promptness will be greatly appreciated.

**MEDICATION POLICY**

If your child is on medication, we ask that you talk with your pharmacist or physician about scheduling the medicine to be given before or after Head Start class, if at all

possible. We know there will be some instances in which medication will have to be given during class hours. In order for Head Start staff to be able to give medication at the Head Start center, we need your help.

**ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES**

1. A Medication Permission form must be filled out by the doctor and the parent for any medication, prescription or non-prescription, to be given at the center. A blank Medication Permission form has been placed in this Parent Packet for you and your FPA to fill out. Extra copies are available from the Head Start staff.
2. Medication to be given to the child at school must not be transported to or from school in the hands of the child. The child's parent or other responsible adult must give the medication to a Head Start staff member (a Teacher or a Family Partnership Assistant).

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **For prescription medicines:** Only one day's dose(s) of medicine is to be sent to the center at a time. The Head Start staff will return the medication bottle to you at the end of the day. The medicine must be in the ORIGINAL PHARMACY LABELED CONTAINER. Your pharmacist should provide you with an extra bottle and label (with instructions) at your request.

4. **For over the counter or non-prescription medicines:** A medication permission completed by a doctor and the parent is required. These medicines should be labeled with the child's name and in the original container. It is not necessary to send "only one day's dosage" for non-prescription medicines. Non-

prescription medicines, preferably, should be left at the center until the child no longer needs it, rather than sending it back and forth everyday. At that time you, the parent, should pick it up from the center and take it home.



5. The medication will be locked at the Head Start center (and on the bus while being transported, if the child rides the bus) and refrigerated at the center if required.

6. The Head Start teaching staff will regularly review with you the administration of the medicine and the log showing when it is given, reporting any concerns.

7. **Changes in the dosage of the medication to be given at the Head Start center** require a new medication permission form to be completed by the parent and the doctor/health care provider.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

The overall goal of Head Start is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in our children. The mental health area of our program focuses on the promotion of positive self worth, respect for individual differences, and the ability to develop appropriate social skills. Accomplishments in these areas will affect a child's ability to play, live, learn, and work within the home, school, and other environments. These skills fit together to form the foundation for a mentally healthy individual.

The Head Start staff work toward the goal of social competence in the following ways:

1. planning activities that are matched to children's needs and abilities
2. assisting all children in the program with emotional, cognitive, and social development
3. providing services to maximize the full potential of children with disabilities
4. providing an environment of acceptance for all children
5. showing respect for all children's feelings
6. giving children the opportunity to develop social skills
7. providing help for individual children to manage stressful situations and events
8. reinforcing children's development of age appropriate self control skills

If you need mental health information, please call Carolyn Cole at 1-800-762-8432 or 423-837-6724 or let your FPA know. Mental health resources are in your Resource Guide. Each center also has a list of additional support groups and other resources available. A mental health professional visits our centers to provide consultation.

**The Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)** is a behavior rating scale used to identify strengths and needs of children. The teacher and parent will complete a scale on each child. The information gathered will be used to help plan classroom programs that will support, reinforce, and build on the children's strengths to facilitate the healthy social and emotional growth of all children.

One part of our curriculum, **Second Step**, is a violence prevention program. It is designed to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children, teach social skills, and build self esteem. Empathy, impulse control, problem solving and anger are topics included in puppet activities and stories. We also use a state-approved personal safety curriculum. Additional information about it is distributed prior to the first lesson.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## HEAD START: A SPECIAL PLACE FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN

In Head Start, all children are special, including those with disabilities. Head Start serves children with disabilities by providing an appropriate environment and adult guidance for the participation of children with special needs. All staff are trained to work with special needs children. Head Start considers each child a



unique person with individual strengths and needs and provides an individualized program for the child and family. Since 1972, Head Start has been mandated to actively recruit and serve children with disabilities. Local school systems are required to serve children with

disabilities who need special assistance and provide special services including speech, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. These services only begin after a referral, an evaluation, and an IEP Team meeting. The parent is a valuable partner in this process and should attend all meetings. We are partners in providing services and offer the complete range of regular Head Start services to all enrolled children and their parents.

**We encourage volunteers in our classroom and will provide training as needed for working with our special needs children.** If you wish to volunteer and have questions about working with children in our center, please check with your child's teacher.

Parents are actively encouraged to volunteer in our centers. When you volunteer in the classroom, your child sees — first-hand — that you value preschool and want to support learning. We hope that many parents will feel welcome and comfortable volunteering in the preschool setting and that they continue to volunteer throughout their child's school years.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

## HEAD START HEALTH SCREENINGS

A screening day will be held in your child's center in July or August, before class begins. You will be scheduled a time to come to the center with your child. During the appointment time, your child will be given several screenings and you will get to talk to the center employees and other managers about health and educational topics. Examples of screenings that may be done include hearing, vision, height and weight, dental, speech and language and other developmental screenings. ***It is very important that you attend with your child.*** We will try to have the screenings completed in 30-45 minutes. There are several reasons why we do the screenings.

The hearing and vision screenings spot difficulties that might affect a child's ability to participate. Children who do not pass the hearing or vision screenings will be re-screened or referred for further evaluation and treatment if needed.

Speech and language screenings are completed for each child entering Head Start. This screening checks speech sounds, words and how they use words. This is a short, two-page screen. The purpose of checking these two areas is to obtain therapy if needed. If your child's test indicates a need for additional testing, with your permission we will refer them to the school system. Children needing these services will typically receive the therapy at the Head Start center. The therapy is usually provided by a speech therapist from your local school system.

A developmental screening, the Brigance, is done in order to find out if children are functioning at their age levels in areas of thinking, large and small muscle use, language, social and emotional skills, and self-help skills (what the children can do for themselves). Children who are found to be behind in the developmental areas may need further evaluation and require special services. When a concern is identified, evaluation, as well as treatment and therapy, can be started in a timely manner. Early identification of each child's needs will help teachers plan the daily activities in the Head Start centers.

***If your child enrolls after the screening day is held,*** the screenings will be done during class time in your child's center by trained Head Start employees. Screening results will be provided to you.

Hearing and vision screenings may be done at other times during the school year at your request or the request of a teacher, if concerns come up.

***All Head Start employees are careful to keep all information about your child confidential.***

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

## HELPFUL HINTS TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR HEALTH SCREENINGS

To help prepare your child for the screenings, the most important thing that you can do is to have a positive attitude. Please do not say anything that would frighten your child. None of the screenings “hurt,” so please do not say anything to your child that might scare him or her.

We currently have two ways to do the vision screening. Most often we use the photoscreening camera that involves simply taking two pictures of your child’s eyes. It is as simple as just getting his or her picture taken! The pictures are checked for abnormalities that can indicate possible vision problems. We also have a traditional vision chart that involves the child looking at a chart and identifying the pictures from 10 feet away.



We also have several different methods available to do the hearing screening. One tool we use is called the AuDx hearing test system. This is the same type system used in hospitals to screen hearing in newborns. This screening is very simple to do. It involves placing a soft ear tip in your child’s external ear canal. Your child will hear some sounds while the machine does the testing. No response is needed by your child, and the results are usually available in about 10 seconds. This screening is very useful for younger children. We have an audiometer which is used typically with our

four year old and older children. This screening test involves your child wearing earphones and responding to the sound by raising their hand. Another screening tool that we use is a hand held device that looks a lot like an ear thermometer. The ear tip is placed up to the ear’s external canal and makes a pleasant sound. It gives a reading indicating if there is the likelihood that your child has middle ear fluid or infection.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

Height and weight measurements will be done on your child if his or her physical form does not have the measurement noted. We will take your child's height and weight and plot it on a growth chart. The growth charts show, by percentile, how your child compares to other children of his or her age according to body mass index (BMI) for age. We will also give you a helpful letter.

The developmental and speech/language screenings will require your child to respond to instructions given by an adult. You can help prepare your child for these by playing simple games with him or her. Examples of games are *Follow the Leader*, *Mother May I?*, and *I Spy*. Naming familiar objects in your home will also help your child to become more comfortable interacting with adults. Playing concentration games with pictures is a good way to work on your child's attention span.

Our Head Start program promotes the development of the *whole* child, not just the development of reading and writing skills.



**WHAT TO DO  
IF YOUR CHILD IS REFERRED  
FOR FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION**

If there are concerns about the results of one of your child's screenings and/or assessments, he or she may be referred to another agency or medical provider for evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if your child has special needs which might require treatment or special services.

**Example one:** If your child does not pass the hearing screening, he or she may be referred to the doctor to find out if there is a medical problem with his or her ears such as an ear infection or ear wax build-up that might need

medical intervention. **Avoid** cotton swabs to probe in the ears, since they can damage the ear drum. Your child might also be referred to a speech and hearing clinic for a complete evaluation of the hearing.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Example two:** If your child does not pass the vision screening, he or she will be referred to an eye doctor (either an optometrist or ophthalmologist) for a complete vision examination.

**Example three:** If your child has problems with the speech and language screening, he or she will be referred to your local school system’s speech therapist who will typically come to the Head Start center and do a more detailed speech and/or language evaluation.

**Example four:** If your child has problems observed during the dental screening, he or she will be referred to a dentist for possible treatment. The “baby” teeth are important!

Your center’s Family Partnership Assistant will assist you, as needed, in setting up appointments for follow-up after screenings. Please don’t hesitate to ask for assistance. She will help you find a provider (doctor, dentist, etc.), make an appointment, arrange transportation, and/or help on payment plans if you have no insurance.

**PAYMENT for SERVICES for HEALTH NEEDS**

If your child is referred for follow-up evaluation and/or treatment for a failed screening, Head Start will help you find financial resources to pay for these services. If your child has medical or dental insurance that will cover the services or you can afford to pay for fees, then that will be used for payment. If the medical or dental insurance does not cover the evaluation, we will work with you to find other resources to provide payment such as Children’s Special Services through the local health department, or the local Lion’s Club that pays for vision exams and eyeglasses for qualified people. Head Start may provide payment for limited qualified services only if no other source of payment can be found.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

### TRANSPORTATION – BUS RULES

Limited bus transportation is provided at most centers but may be suspended due to weather, maintenance, or illness of our limited pool of bus drivers. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide bus service for many families, and we hope your family will not need it. Generally, children enjoy riding the bus, and we offer field trips later in the school year, so your child may get to ride a bus even if you generally provide transportation.



1. Parents / guardians must accompany their child(ren) **onto** the bus each morning, and are encouraged to seat and buckle their own child in before departing the bus. Exceptions will be made for parents with physical disabilities that keep them from entering the bus. These exceptions will be handled on a case by case basis. Parents / guardians must be present to meet the bus when the child gets off the bus in the afternoon. **Do not allow** your child to get off the bus without help. We will not allow your child to walk to or from our bus without supervision. Holding hands is recommended.

- 2. Please do not let your child take toys, gum, food, or backpacks on the bus.
- 3. When riding the bus to assist the aide or as a guest, parents should assist the monitor / aide to maintain order and keep the children buckled up. Make certain you are comfortable in this important role. The aide will sit in the rear of the bus, or in the seat behind the last child. So if you are helping ask where you should sit.
- 4. Do not ask that your child be taken to a place other than the usual address unless there is an extreme emergency. Changes to our route cause delays. We have strict time limits.
- 5. Notify the bus driver and teacher when your child cannot attend, so we can move on quickly.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. We make every effort to pick-up and deliver your child on time. However, please **do not panic if we are delayed.** We do ask that your child be ready and waiting for the arrival of the bus. **We cannot wait for children or parents.** If your child is not ready when the bus makes the pick-up stop, the bus will have to continue to the next scheduled stop. **Please note: the parent / guardian will be responsible for transporting the child to the center; our buses do not double back for a second pick-up.** If we are late, it may be due to traffic, vehicle problems, the weather, or staff/volunteer aide problems.
7. The driver / aide may determine that a child is ill at the time he/she boards the bus. Please do not ask the bus driver to transport an ill child to the center.
8. Parents who transport their child(ren) to the center **must** accompany the child into the building and sign in. Occasionally, parents may enter the center with their child up to 15 minutes early, but the parent should remain in “charge” of their child until class begins or the teacher advises the parent that they may leave. Parents who pick up their child(ren) from the center must be at the center when class ends. If you are unable to pick up your child for some reason, you must make alternate plans and alert the Head Start staff. Other transportation and/or pick up plans will be required if children are left after class time.
9. A copy of the child release-to information will be kept on board the bus for each child. Release of the child will be restricted to documented people on file. Changes must be in writing. If the driver is unfamiliar with the person, they may ask for photo identification.
10. **Children may not ride buses or any vehicle without seat belts or safety seats.** Tennessee Child Passenger Law requires that infants under one year of age and weighing less than 20 pounds ride in a rear-facing car seat. If the car seat has a rear-facing weight limit over 20 pounds, the infant may remain rear-facing beyond one year and 20 pounds. *Children under age 4 must ride in a car seat. Tennessee requires that all car seats be federally approved and used according to manufacturer's instructions. Children ages 4 through 8 and less than 4'9" in height must use a booster seat.* Children through age 12 who are greater than 4'9" are required to use a vehicle seatbelt, and the rear seat is recommended for these children. Tennessee requires that all children under age 16 who are not in a car seat or booster use a vehicle seat belt.
11. **Head Start staff may transport children in personal vehicles.** This may be necessary in an emergency situation. However, another adult must be present, and appropriate restraint devices must be used.
12. **A child may ride the bus no more than 45 minutes,** unless a waiver is granted from the State Department of Human Services program evaluator for licensing.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR STAFF

## Pledge

### **WE PLEDGE TO:**

- Greet all who enter our Center workplace in a friendly manner - and with a smile
- Respect all children and families
- Provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all children
- Be a positive influence for children and families
- Promote the individuality of each child and family

## Practices

### **WE ARE CAREFUL TO:**

- Keep ALL information confidential
- Communicate openly, directly, and clearly
- Pay attention to the details, from which excellence arises
- Provide opportunities for continuing progress and achievement by our children, their families, our staff, and volunteers



## CENTER LOCATIONS AND PHONE NUMBERS

**HEMLOCK HEAD START**  
(South Pittsburg at Housing Authority)  
907 Hemlock Circle, P.O. Box 769  
South Pittsburg, TN 37380  
Phone: (423) 837-1101

**JASPER HEAD START**  
P.O. Box 2432  
3706 Main Street  
Jasper, TN 37347  
Phone: (423) 942-9451

**GRIFFITH CREEK HEAD START**  
6395 Highway 109  
Whitwell, TN 37397  
Phone: (423) 658-9457 or 888-658-9457

**WHITWELL HEAD START**  
11057 Highway 28  
Whitwell, TN 37397  
Phone: (423) 658-7544

**DAYTON HEAD START**  
1655 Blythes Ferry Road  
Dayton, TN 37321  
Phone: (423) 775-7723

**SPRING CITY HEAD START**  
241 Hinch Street  
Spring City, TN 37381  
Phone: (423) 365-7031

**DUNLAP HEAD START**  
P.O. Box 1226 (196 Frontage Road)  
Dunlap, TN 37327  
Phone: (423) 949-5015

**LONE OAK HEAD START**  
37 Heritage Road (Taft Hwy.)  
Signal Mtn., TN 37377  
Phone: (423) 886-6232

**PIKEVILLE HEAD START**  
112 College Street, P.O. Box 426  
Pikeville, TN 37367  
Phone: (423) 447-2459

**RIGSBY PARTNERSHIP CLASS**  
Rigsby Elementary School  
8231 New Harmony Road  
Pikeville, TN 37367  
Phone: (423) 447-6720

**NORTH GRUNDY HEAD START**  
67 Community Center Road  
Coalmont, TN 37313  
Phone: (931) 692-3079

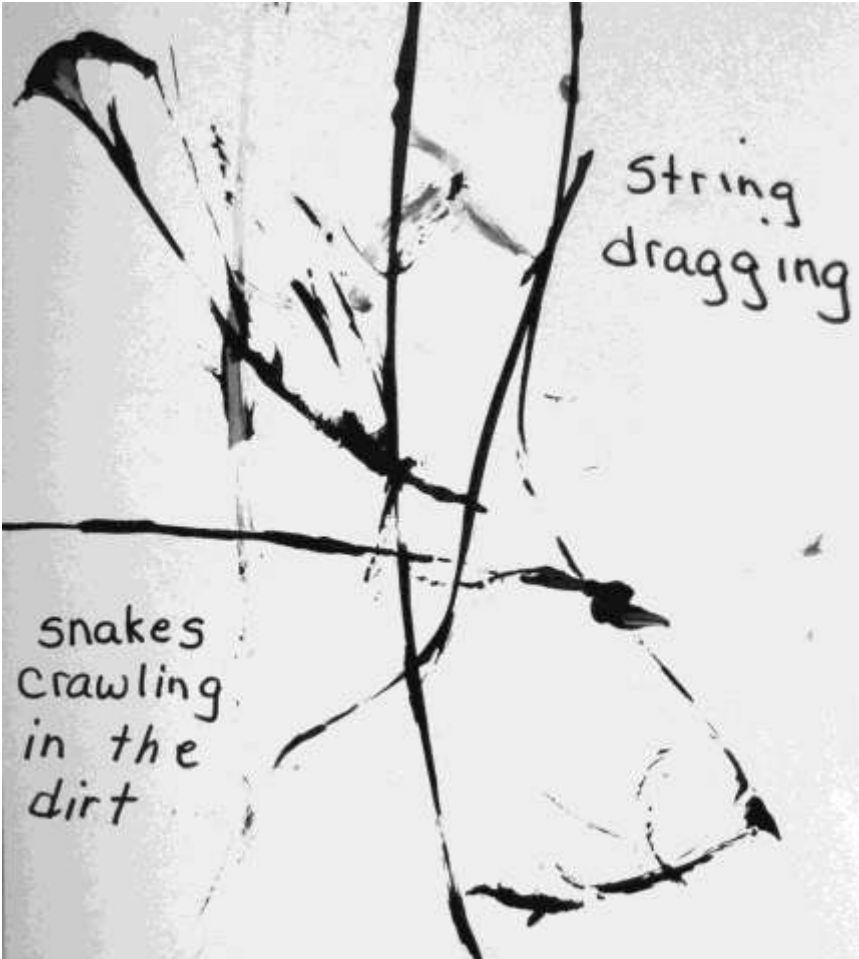
**TRACY CITY HEAD START**  
Highway 41 North, 1356-A  
Tracy City, TN 37387  
Phone: (931) 592-2311

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Sequatchie Valley Head Start ...

... serves more than 400 children and their families from across five counties covering 1,867 square miles at the southern end of the Appalachian mountains. From its management headquarters in South Pittsburg in Marion County, the agency operates 23 classrooms, including seven classrooms in Marion County, four in Grundy, three in



Sequatchie, three in Bledsoe, and six in Rhea. The agency employs more than 100 people, including a staff of more than 60 teachers.

Sequatchie Valley Head Start provides the **region's** premiere pre-school experience, laying the foundations for academic *and* social success in kindergarten. In addition, this Head Start program channels resources from across the state and nation to **support our families'** efforts to make their lives better. Nationally standardized assessments demonstrate that, as a group, Sequatchie Valley Head Start children always significantly outperform other pre-

school children across the nation — **testimony to this agency's successful operations.** All classrooms directly operated by our agency are nationally accredited by NAEYC and all hold the state's highest quality rating. In addition, our agency has been recognized for having the highest average cumulative score on the state's "report card" for child care programs (ECERS) for eight years in a row. In addition, we operate the center that has the highest cumulative ECERS average in Tennessee.

Created in 1965, Head Start is the most successful, longest-running, national school readiness program in the United States. The program has benefited more than 25 million pre-school aged children during the years since it was begun. Sequatchie Valley Planning and Development Agency has provided Head Start services in the region since 1985. The program provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to high-risk children or those with special needs and their families.

PARENT INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes

# Sequatchie Valley Head Start

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**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the Parent Handbook with one or more Head Start staff members and agree to abide to the best of my ability by all information contained herein. If I have questions about any materials in this resource, I will contact my Head Start Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

**Names of other staff orienting parent to Head Start:**

**Did the parent have any questions about our program that need follow-up?**

**Did you arrange for the parent to visit the center before class attendance?**

**Did you leave a copy of the state requirements for child care?**

**Did you complete a tracking form for any needs?**

Note to Staff: This form should be torn from the book and returned to the Head Start Office with enrollment forms. No copy needed in center record.

**PARENT INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STAFF INITIALS:** \_\_\_\_\_