

# Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Handbook 2024 – 2025



Broward County Public Schools  
Early Childhood Education Department

**The School Board of Broward County, Florida**  
**The Nation's Largest Fully Accredited School System**



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**DISTRICT POLICIES**

**Accidents:**

In the event of an accident or illness of a child while in our care, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. Please keep emergency contact information current. A *Student & Visitor Injury/Illness Worksheet* will be completed and faxed to the District's Safety Department and the Risk Management Department if an accident were to happen.

**After School Programs:**

Please contact your assigned elementary school to obtain information related to the After School Care Program services. Not all elementary schools offer services for preschool students.

**Boundaries:**

There are no requirements for children enrolled in Head Start (HS)/Early Head Start (EHS) to attend a school within their boundary (home school). However, it is recommended that your child attend a school that is closest to where you live or work because the program does not offer transportation services. Once children enter Kindergarten, they must attend their boundary school, which is determined by the home address.

EHS is located at 5 sites within the County: Bethune Elementary in Hollywood, Peters Elementary in Plantation, Charles Drew Family Resource Center in Pompano Beach, Westwood Heights in Fort Lauderdale, and Gulfstream Early Learning Center in Hallandale.

**Cost:**

There is no cost for the program. HS/EHS serves families meeting the federal poverty guidelines.

**Mandatory Reporting:**

The HS/EHS Program adheres to the School Board of Broward County Policy (SBBC) 5.3 - Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and/or Child Neglect.

**HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM**

**History:**

The District's Head Start Program began as an eight-week summer program in 1965. Although the program was being offered in the elementary public schools, the Economic Opportunity Coordinating Group, a local community action agency was the selected grantee overseeing the program. In October of 1976, The School Board of Broward County, FL became the Head Start grantee offering services to 375 families. Over the years, the program has expanded to currently serve 2,040 Head Start and 80 Early Head Start students and their families.

**Purpose:**

The Early Childhood Education Department administers the District's HS/EHS Program. The direct connection between the HS/EHS Program and the District streamlines the coordination of services and referrals required to meet the needs of HS/EHS children and families enrolled in the program.

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Services such as speech/language evaluation, psychological referrals, and counseling are coordinated among programs to ensure families receive referrals and services in a timely manner.

**Head Start (HS):**

Head Start multi-ethnic classes are held at 50 elementary school sites. These sites are selected based on the free/reduced lunch program data and the results of the HS/EHS Community Assessment Report. HS classes follow the 180-day school calendar. The program's hours of operation adhere to each elementary school's hours.

**Early Head Start (EHS):**

EHS is a program for families serving pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers up to the age of three. The program is a center-based program made up of 10 classrooms located in five Broward County schools. The program is designed to improve the overall developmental progress of children, with an emphasis on increasing families' knowledge of parenting practices and strengthening the family unit. The program's objectives are accomplished through services that include developmentally appropriate infant-toddler activities, comprehensive health care, nutrition, and social services for the children and their families. EHS center-based services are provided during the school year following the School Board of Broward County approved calendar, with children and families receiving services throughout the summer months.

When a child is in EHS they are eligible to go into a Head Start 3 classroom, following the criteria below:

- The child must be 36 months (3 years old) or older
- The child must be developmentally ready
- There must be an open seat available at the school of the parent's choice

When a child turns 30 months, the assigned Parent Educator will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian to begin transition process. The transition process includes a review of data, input from the Child Development Associate (CDA) and decision made by the committee, which includes: the parent, CDA, Parent Educator, EHS Social Worker, and EHS Teacher Specialist. When the child turns 3 years **and** there is an open seat available, the committee determines if the child is developmentally ready to transition. When it is determined the child is ready to transition, the committee develops a transition plan. If a parent declines the transition, the Parent Educator will assist the parent in finding a preschool placement outside of Head Start. Please note, if a seat is unavailable in a Head Start 3 classroom, your child can remain in EHS.

Communication between parents and/or guardians with the school will be handled through the designated process as identified by the Head Start department.

**Community Partnerships:**

Volunteers and community organizations play a significant role in the successful implementation of the HS/EHS Program. Volunteers assist with classroom activities, parent education, and recruitment of other volunteers. Donations of goods, services, and time count toward the 20% non-federal share required in the HS/EHS budget. Businesspeople, high school, college students, **parents of HS/EHS**



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**children**, retired senior citizens, professionals, and members of service clubs and organizations are welcomed and needed in the program. Whether in the classroom or behind the scenes, volunteers and community organizations are a vital part of the program success and to the children and families they serve.

### **Disabilities:**

A child's experiences, from the moment of birth, if not before, affect how the brain develops and their later outlook on the world, ability to learn, form healthy relationships and shape behavior. All program classrooms are fully inclusive learning environments and support the unique school readiness needs and abilities of all enrolled children and families. When a child qualifies for or has an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), they are placed in classrooms based on the individual needs of the child.

### **Policy Council:**

The Policy Council and their committees shall: encourage participation in the program; serve as a link to enhance communication among all components of Head Start; facilitate parents' understanding of options, rights, responsibilities, and opportunities within the Head Start Program; help to plan, coordinate, and organize program activities for parents in conjunction with the staff; ensure the Parent Activity Funds are used to support parent activities; recruit volunteer parents, community residents, and organizations to assist with Head Start needs; assist with the mobilization of community resources; assist in resolving program complaints; work in concert with key management and the governing body to develop, review, and approve or disapprove the following policies and procedures:

- ✓ All funding applications and amendments,
- ✓ Procedures describing the implementation of shared decision-making,
- ✓ Procedures for program planning, philosophy, long and short-range goals and objectives of the program
- ✓ The composition of the Policy Council and the procedures by which members are chosen
- ✓ Criteria for defining recruitment selection, and enrollment priorities
- ✓ The annual self-assessment of programs including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit or findings from the Federal monitoring review,
- ✓ Program personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies, including standards of conduct of program staff, consultants, and volunteers
- ✓ Written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures
- ✓ Participate in the recruitment, screening, and decisions to hire or terminate the Head Start/Early Head Start Director and Head Start/Early Head Start Specialist and any person who works primarily for the Head Start program

### **Parent Committees:**

The Parent Committee is required by the Federal government for all Head Start/Early Head Start Programs. All parents are automatically members of the Parent Committee. Parents are chosen to serve on the Policy Council from the Parent Committee(s). Parents from Head Start and Early Head Start should participate in the Parent Committee. There is a Parent Committee Cohort in eight geographical areas around the county. The Parent Committee is organized and run by parents. The

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Parent Committee must be comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled at the school site. Parent Educators will work together in their cohorts to assist parents with meetings.

Parent Committee Meetings are scheduled by the parents and held regularly at one of the cohort schools and/or virtually. Parents are expected to sign-in when attending all meetings. The meetings are to be conducted by the parents.

A parent can volunteer, report areas of improvement and success to representatives, and assist with planning activities.

The issues discussed could be center-based or program related. Parents are responsible for recording, collecting, and submitting Parent Committee Meeting Minutes to the Cohort Parent Educator.

### **Transportation:**

Transportation is not provided for students in the HS or in the EHS Center-Based Program, as stated on the recruitment information and during the application process. Parents/guardians must plan to bring their child to school and pick them up on a timely basis. To facilitate transportation to the school sites, parents may select the closest site to home, work, or any other site convenient to the parents.

## **ASSESSMENTS AND SCREENINGS**

Screenings/Assessments used to support the HS/EHS Program are:

- BRIGANCE Preschool Screening (HS/EHS) – Developmental Screening
- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (HS/EHS) – Social Emotional Assessment
- Family Assessment (HS/EHS) – Identify and address family needs

Ongoing Assessments used to support the HS/EHS Program are:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD (HS/EHS) – On-going Assessment in Social/Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, Language, and Literacy Development
- Letters/Sounds and Concepts of Print Assessments (HS) – Early Literacy Skills
- Phonological Awareness (HS) – Early Literacy Skills

The HS/EHS Program works collaboratively with parents to identify children's health and developmental progress. The HS/EHS Performance Standards require that children participating in the program be screened to monitor progress in the areas of development, social-emotional, hearing, vision, speech, language, height/weight, and dental. These screenings, except for the dental screening, shall occur within the first 45 days upon entering the HS/EHS Program.

The following tools have been selected to ensure compliance with the performance standards screening requirements:

### **Developmental Screening**

The *BRIGANCE* screening measures a child's progress over time according to the HS Child Development and Early Childhood Framework. The results enable teachers to plan

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developmentally appropriate lessons and individualize instruction to improve educational outcomes.

**Social-Emotional Assessment**

The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) is designed to measure the frequency of target behaviors and to help children develop healthy emotional and social skills. Teachers and parents DECA scores are compared to create a comprehensive social emotional picture of the child. If concerns are identified, teachers and parents collaborate to encourage further development of social and emotional strengths.

**Hearing Screening**

Hearing is screened using either the traditional pure tone audiometer method or the Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) Screener. During the OAE screening, a small microphone is placed in the child's ear. This microphone makes a series of clicks or tones. A microcomputer then measures how well the inner ear is working. This technique represents an opportunity to screen children in a more effective and reliable manner.

**Vision Screening**

Vision is screened using the Spot Vision Screening Tool. The Spot Vision Screening Tool is a child friendly, objective, accurate vision test that ensures reliability and early detection of refractive errors.

**Height/Weight Screening**

The weight and height of children are measured to calculate the body mass index.

**Speech/Language Screening**

Speech is measured to identify any speech or language concerns. Currently the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Fourth Edition (DIAL-4) is being utilized.

**Dental Screening**

A dental exam is required upon entry and every 6 months to the program. Parents are referred to the Florida Department of Health for dental services as needed.

**REGISTRATION**

Families are given 14 calendar days upon acceptance into the HS/EHS program to obtain the required medicals, complete registration, and have their child sit in the school classroom.

Failure to obtain the required documents, register your child, and have your child start within the 14-day period can result in your child being waitlisted or withdrawn from the HS/EHS program.

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**ATTENDANCE**

**HS/EHS Performance Standard for Attendance:**

Children are required to be in school every day, to arrive at school on time, and to be picked up promptly at dismissal. When a child is not going to be in attendance the **parent must contact the school and report the child's absence.**

The HS/EHS Program requires that students' Average Daily Attendance (ADA) below 85% be reported to the federal government monthly. Federal regulations and School Board's Attendance Policy 5.5, govern the HS/EHS Program's attendance requirements. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, the child's seat will be considered a vacancy.

- The teacher will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) about the child's attendance
- The teacher will inform the PE during the weekly contact about the child's attendance
- Parent Educators (PEs) will follow-up with families after 3 consecutive excused absences (unless a doctor's note prescribes a specific timeline), a regular pattern of absence, 2 consecutive unexpected absences or frequent non-consecutive absences, unless they are the result of a well-documented illness
  - Parent Educators will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the terms of The Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Certification and Attendance Guidelines to review and discuss the parents' role, responsibilities, and the need for compliance to allow the child to continue in the program
  - If the PE is unable to reach parent via phone and email, alternate contacts should be attempted. If above contact attempts are unsuccessful after three documented attempts), the PE should enter a referral in ChildPlus to the assigned Social Worker
  - Head Start staff will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the terms of The Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Certification and Involvement Agreement and to review and discuss the parents' role, responsibilities, and the need for compliance to allow the child to continue in the program and create an action plan timeline for improvement.
- The Social Worker, School Administrator or designee, Family Services Supervisor, and Parent Educator meet with the parent to create an Action Plan in an attempt to improve attendance. The Action Plan will include an appropriate timeline for attendance to improve based on the family's needs. The details of the action plan must be documented in ChildPlus as a Parent Contact in the Family Services/Event tab
- If the timeline outlined in the Action Plan is not followed, the teacher and Family Services staff will conduct a second meeting with the parent/guardian and a school administrator or designee. At that time the parent/guardian will receive absenteeism letter #1 and a referral for counseling or referral to childcare agencies if needed.
- Absenteeism Letter #1 - If the timeline outlined in the Action Plan is not followed, the teacher and Family Services staff will conduct a second meeting with the parent/guardian and a school administrator or designee. At that time, the parent/guardian will receive absenteeism letter #1 and a referral for counseling or referral to childcare agencies if needed.
  - The goal is to reinforce the previous steps, revise a plan of action and/or interventions, if needed, and set time limit for compliance. These efforts must be documented again in ChildPlus in Family Service Events as a Parent Contact

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- o If chronic absenteeism persists the Parent Educator refers the family to the task-assigned Social Worker for more intensive follow-up
- o Parent Educators and Social Workers must document all efforts in ChildPlus to reengage the family to resume attendance.
- The goal is to reinforce the previous steps, revise a plan of action and/or interventions, if needed, and set time limit for compliance. These efforts must be documented again in ChildPlus in Family Service Events as a Parent Contact
- Follow-up is conducted and the Action Plan is reviewed based on the individual situations of families. For families in crisis, the program will continue intensive case management as needed
- If extenuating circumstances are not applicable, intensive case management is documented, and parent still does not comply with the Action Plan, appropriate action will be taken, which will include the issuance of:
  - o Absenteeism Letter #2 – after a 3-day period is reviewed and the child continues to be absent without extenuating circumstances documented
  - o Absenteeism Letter #3 – after a 7-day period is reviewed and the child continues to be absent without extenuating circumstances documented
  - o After the 3<sup>rd</sup> absenteeism letter, the child’s seat will be considered a vacancy, and a Declaration of Vacancy (DOV) will be entered to withdraw the child from the Head Start/Early Head Start program
- If the child does not resume, the child’s slot must be considered an enrollment vacancy, as agreed to in the Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Certification

**The same process will take place for late pick-ups and tardiness.**

**Early Sign-Outs:**

When children are signed out early by their parents/guardians consistently, their educational progress may be negatively impacted. The HS/EHS Program strongly encourages parents to ensure their student is in school for the full day.

The HS/EHS Program will follow the established procedures for early release for children enrolled in elementary schools, which ensure all students are treated consistently. Children shall not be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines that it is an emergency, or the child has a medical/dental appointment that cannot be scheduled at another time.

**Excused Absences:**

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below (F.S. ss. 1003.24(4), 1003.26).

1. Illness of student, which may be related to physical or mental health.

A student’s physical and mental health are factors that parents will consider to determine if their child must stay home from school.

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**Physical Health:** Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) recommends keeping a child home if they have:

- a. A fever of 100.4 degrees F or higher,
- b. Sore throat, coughs, chills, and/or body aches,
- c. Rashes, yellow eye drainage, greenish-yellow phlegm from a cough or cold, vomiting, or diarrhea.

**Mental Health:** BCPS considers mental health to be a part of a person's overall health and wellness. A student's successful participation in school activities may be severely affected by the social/emotional well-being of the student (e.g., excessive stress or anxiety, depression, grief/bereavement).

**PHYSICIAN'S NOTE:** If a student is continually sick and/or repeatedly absent from school, the student must be under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner, or if the absence is related to the student having autism spectrum disorder, receiving services from a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to F.S. s. 393.17, in order to receive an excuse from attendance (F.S. s. 1003.24(4)).

2. Illness of an immediate family member.
3. Death in the family.
4. Religious holidays of the student's own faith.
5. Required court appearance or subpoena.
6. Special event. Examples of special events include important public functions, educational enrichment activities, conferences, state/national competitions, college/university campus tour/visit, as well as exceptional cases of family need. A special event must be approved by the principal, or the principal's designee, prior to the absence. In cases where prior approval was not possible, the principal may excuse the absence.
7. Scheduled medical or dental appointment. This may include "an appointment to receive therapy service provided by a licensed health care practitioner or behavior analyst certified pursuant to F.S. s. 393.17 for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder, including but not limited to, applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy" (F.S. s. 1003.21(2)(b)(2)).

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8. Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (F.S. s. 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo, and scabies. Students are allowed a maximum of five excused days absence for each infestation of head lice.

Policy 5.5 – Attendance can be found at

[https://schoolinfo.browardschools.com/bcpsweb/displaypdf.html?filename=Policy\\_5.5](https://schoolinfo.browardschools.com/bcpsweb/displaypdf.html?filename=Policy_5.5)

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**Late Pick-Up:**

It is important that the child be picked up promptly at the school's dismissal time. Young children may become anxious if their routine is disrupted. In the event of an emergency, the parent should notify the school as soon as possible. If parent/guardian is unable to pick up their child at the time of dismissal, after school care should be arranged.

**Tardiness:**

In accordance with the SBBC Attendance Policy 5.5, the HS/EHS Program will follow each school's established procedures for admitting children who have been tardy. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and can have a negative impact on student achievement.

Child tardiness is considered excused if parents call the school, if they or an appropriate adult accompanies their child to school, or if they provide a note to the school. All other tardiness is considered unexcused unless the principal determines that there are extenuating circumstances. Excessive tardiness will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Parents of EHS Center-based students who drop off their child late will need photo identification and a Head Start staff member will escort the child to class.

If a student tardiness is excessive and the problem could not be resolved after the teacher and/or PE talk with the family the following steps need to be taken:

- Tardiness Letter #1 (Meeting held with PE and teacher/CDA with a copy of the letter going to school-based admin so they are aware.)
- Tardiness Letter #2
- Tardiness Letter #3
- After the 3rd Tardiness letter possible removal of the child from the Head Start Program.

**Unexcused Absences:**

If absences are not excused, as defined in the previous section, the absences are considered unexcused. Children without a completed Certificate of Immunization indicating compliance with the current required schedule of immunizations will not be allowed to attend class until this document is provided or a waiver is obtained. Children who receive the first shot in a series of immunizations, but who are late obtaining subsequent shots, will be given a three-day grace period after which they will be excluded from school and resulting absences will be considered unexcused.

When parents have difficulty meeting the terms of the Preschool Family Agreement Form and/or the SBBC Attendance Policy (i.e., unexcused absences, tardiness, failure to pick up child promptly after school), the program will try to support the parents to allow the child to continue in the program. The process outlined below will be followed:

The teacher will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) about the child's unexcused absences.

The teacher will inform the Parent Educator about the child's attendance after completion of Step 1.

The HS/EHS Parent Educator will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the terms of *The Preschool Family Agreement* and review and discuss the parents' role, responsibilities, and the need

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for compliance to allow the child to continue in the program. If the absences result from temporary family problems that affect a child's regular attendance, the program must initiate appropriate family support procedures for all children with four or more consecutive unexcused absences. These procedures must include home visits or other direct contact with the child's parents. Contacts with the family must emphasize the benefits of regular attendance, while at the same time remaining sensitive to any special family circumstances influencing attendance patterns. All contacts with the child's family, as well as special family support service activities provided by program staff, must be documented. A plan of action and intervention is developed and documented on the *Prekindergarten Conference Form* (teacher) and in the family folder (Parent Educator).

If the problem is not resolved, the teacher and HS/EHS Family Services Staff will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and a school administrator. The goal is to reinforce the performance standard, revise plan of action and/or interventions, if needed, and set a timeline for compliance. These efforts must be documented on a *Prekindergarten Conference Form* and in the family folder.

If a parent does not comply with the agreed upon timeline, appropriate action will be taken. These actions may include referral for counseling, referral to childcare agencies, and/or removal of the child from the HS/EHS Program.

### **CURRICULUM**

All children enrolled in the HS/EHS Program are provided with a learning environment encompassing varied complexities of experiences to help them develop socially, cognitively, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age, individual interest, temperament, language, cultural background, and stage of development.

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards provide the HS teachers, and EHS teacher assistants, with knowledge of what preschool children are expected to know and be able to do in the domains of Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge, and Physical Health and Development.

The curricula used in the HS Program to teach these skills include:

- *The Creative Curriculum System for Preschool*
- Conscious Discipline
- Feeling Buddies Self-Regulation Toolkit: Conscious Discipline
- Heggerty Phonological and Phonemic Awareness for Preschool

The curricula used in the EHS Program to teach these skills include:

- *Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos*
- Conscious Discipline
- Partners for Healthy Baby (home-based summer curriculum)



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**Conferences and Home Visits:**

Parents are encouraged to stay involved in their child’s learning. Teachers are required to complete two face-to-face home visits for each child and parents are required to participate. It is especially important and highly recommended that parents support the home visit. The purpose of the home visit is to enhance the knowledge and understanding of both staff and parents of the child’s education and developmental progress and activities in the program.

Teachers are also required to conduct two parent conferences annually. One prior to the end of the second semester, December, and the other prior to the end of the school year, May. The purpose of the conferences is to enhance the knowledge and understanding of both staff and parents of the child’s education and developmental progress and activities in the program. The information shared must be different than the information shared during the home visit.

**Daily Classroom Components:**

**HS Daily Schedule Sample**

- Breakfast
- Group Meeting (Planning; Math, Science, & Literacy Content; Conscious Discipline activities)
- Interest Areas
- Read-aloud
- Lunch
- Outdoor Activities
- Read-aloud
- Rest time
- Snack
- Toothbrushing
- Group Meeting (Shared Writing, Music and Movement, Review of the Day)
- Interest Areas/Departures
- Small Group (implemented throughout the day)
- \*Times and order may vary at each school. Please contact your child’s teacher to obtain a copy of the daily schedule with times.*

**EHS Daily Schedule Sample**

- Arrival/Toileting
- Breakfast
- Tooth brushing
- Circle/Story Time/Toileting
- Outdoor Activities
- Wash-up/Snack
- Centers/Small Group/Toileting
- Lunch/Wash-up
- Rest Time
- Snack/Review/Toileting
- Dismissal

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*\*Times and order may vary at each school. Please contact your child's teacher to obtain a copy of the daily schedule with times.*

**Rest Time:**

A maximum of 1 hour is allocated for rest time for all Head Start classrooms. Rest/sleep time for infants and toddlers in Early Head Start is individualized according to each child's needs. Alternative activities are provided for children who wake up early and for those who choose not to nap.

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

**Family Engagement:**

The HS/EHS Program acknowledges that the parent is the most important influence in a child's development. Therefore, the program gears its services to support families in nurturing the development of their children, to enhance their capacity to achieve their own goals and aspirations, and to influence the quality of life in their communities.

**Family Assessment:**

Family Service staff does a Family Assessment (FA) each year to assess a family's needs and determine how the program can best support the attainment of each family's goals. A mid-year contact will also be made to assess if family needs have changed, or additional services are required. In addition, quarterly parent group trainings are scheduled to assist parents in supporting their child's school readiness goals related to literacy, math, and social-emotional development. Staff are available to help families throughout the year and will conduct additional family assessments if necessary. **(Family Assessments can be done virtually, by phone, or in person)**

**Parent Committee:**

All HS/EHS Parents are members of the Parent Committee established at one of the cohort schools. The Parent Committee, in conjunction with the Teacher, and Family Services Staff, helps determine what activities will be offered at the school throughout the year. Parents are also encouraged to participate in their child's school Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

**(Parent Committee meetings will be held at a school location and offered virtually.)**

**Parent Participation:**

Parents are encouraged to participate in the classroom and events organized by the HS/EHS Program. In addition, parents are invited to participate in the HS/EHS Parent Committee at each site. At the quarterly committee meetings parents receive program updates and provide input on program services and activities.

**HEALTH, SAFETY, AND NUTRITION**

**Dress Code:**

According to SBBC Policy 5090, students have a right to wear stylish clothes of their choice if those clothes are appropriate for school, are not dangerous to health and safety, and do not create a substantial and material disruption to the school.

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For your child's safety, the following items are not permitted in the Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms:

- Backless, sling back, or open-toed footwear (i.e. Crocks, sandals, flip-flops, etc.) are not permitted. Closed toe shoes must be worn at all times.

For children participating in Early Head Start (infant and toddler classrooms) the following items are not permitted:

- Hair beads, barrettes, bows, hair ties of any size/kind, or with objects on them
- Small hair accessories, such as barrettes, beads, bows, etc., pose a danger to a child's health and safety where a child can choke, or the item can be lodged in a child's ear or nose.
- Any jewelry, except for earrings with a screw back [or locking mechanism](#)

*Please see Appendix A for more information on Choking Hazards and young children.*

### **Emergency Procedures:**

The Broward County School Board Emergency Preparedness Manual contains a plan of action for all emergencies. Please visit the website for further information at <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/38637>. Policies for health emergencies can be accessed at <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/34825>.

### **Family Health Insurance:**

If your child needs health insurance, please contact the Florida KidCare program, which provides eligible uninsured children under age 19 a full array of comprehensive health benefits. You can contact them by calling 954-467-8737 or online at <https://www.floridakidcare.org/>. If you have adults in your household who need health insurance, please call 1-800-318-2596 or online at <https://www.healthcare.gov/>.

### **Food Allergies:**

As per Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards, all individual child food allergies must be posted prominently where staff can view wherever food is served. Parent/Guardian permission will be obtained before posting. Children with food allergies **MUST** provide a note from their health care provider and the following forms if applicable:

- Form – Medical Statement to Request Special Needs and/or Accommodations
- Head Start/Early Head Start Medical Statement for Food Substitution
- Head Start/Early Head Start Parent/Guardian Permission for Dietary Needs

Appropriate substitutions will be made to the menu to accommodate children with special dietary needs.

### **Healthy and Nutritional Meals/Snacks:**

Head Start Performance Standard 1302.44 requires that toddlers and preschool children share the same menu. Infants' diets and mealtimes are individualized according to each child's needs. The HS/EHS Program adheres to the nutritional service guidelines followed by the School Board of Broward County in accordance with the National School Lunch Act. All meals meet the USDA meal patterns and serving size requirements. Portion sizes are measured to comply with the USDA

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requirements based on the age of the child. All children receive a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack. **Food from home is not permitted. This includes items in recognition of any celebrations (i.e., cake, cupcakes, cookies, juices, chips, etc.).**

**Medication:**

If your child is taking medication during school hours, your doctor must complete and sign the *Broward County Public Schools Authorization for Medication Form*. This includes over-the-counter medications. The parent/guardian must bring the medication to the school. The medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, and amount to be given. For more information, please refer to SBBC Policy 6305.

**Mental Health Supports:**

Head Start School Social Workers are here to enrich the caregivers' capacities to promote children's social-emotional development and the mental well-being of their families. Head Start School Social Workers:

- Help school staff and parents identify needs that may interfere with the child's learning, behavior, and social-emotional needs
- Implement strategies to support children with mental health and social-emotional concerns, including internalization challenges such as appearing withdrawn, and externalization challenges such as undesirable classroom and home behaviors
- Help parents and staff gain a better understanding of mental health indicators and social-emotional behaviors by providing access to interventions, if needed
- Share mental health materials and resources to teachers, families, and staff as needed.
- Lead and assist with parent workshops, parent committee meetings, and support groups
- Conduct and assist with in-person and virtual parent conferences and home visits
- Can assist the Family Services staff in supporting regular child attendance
- Refer families to community agencies for socio-economic needs, mental health, and behavioral health, as needed.

It is the hope that these resources, information, and referrals will enhance the quality of life for our Head Start families.

**Required Health Documents:**

1. Original Comprehensive Medical Examination (DH Form 3040) with lead testing and including the following results within the last 12 months:

- Unclothed Physical Examination
- Hearing Screening
- Height and Weight
- Anemia Blood Testing (Hct or Hgb) with results
- Blood Pressure
- Health & Developmental History
- Vision Screening
- Developmental Assessment

2. Original up-to-date Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH Form 680)

3. Varicella Vaccine required or documentation of disease (chicken pox)

4. MMR #2 must be given prior to the child entering kindergarten.

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5. One HIB required if the child is less than 4 years or 11 months of age.
6. Child's Medicaid Card, if applicable

Additional Registration Requirements:

- Proof of Residence (2 required)
- Emergency Contact Phone Numbers (2 required)
- Proof of Dental Exam

**Sick Children:**

Sick children may not come to school. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be called to pick up their child immediately. The child will be isolated until the parent arrives to pick him/her up. This is for the protection of the child as well as the protection of other children and teachers. Upon recommendation of the Committee on the Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should not be brought to school when any of the following exists:

- Fever (100.5 degrees and above within the last 24 hours)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Any symptoms of childhood disease, such as scarlet fever, Measles, Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, Flu, Hand/Foot and Mouth or any infectious and contagious diseases
- Sore Throat
- Croup
- Cloudy or green runny noses, persistent cough
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection, boils, ringworms, or impetigo
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or other eye infections (all eye infections are contagious; your child must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
  - Symptoms can include any or all of the following: redness, watery eyes, itchy eyes, burning, eye discharge, and swollen eyelid
- Head lice

Please inform the school if your child has any health conditions such as:

- Allergic reaction (food, insect bites, etc.,)
- Asthma
- Seizures
- Sickle Cell anemia
- Any other health conditions

**Toilet Training:**

Children who are enrolled in the HS/EHS Program are not required to be toilet trained to participate in the program.

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**Who to Contact**

Main Number (754) 321-1961

For questions/concerns not listed please contact Broward County Schools Head Start Department at the number listed above.

Head Start Family Services	Cherelda Branch-McKenzie
Head Start Curriculum	TBA
Early Head Start Services	Liz Glaid
Health and Nutrition	Rosana Moreira De Galeano
Enrollment	Jennifer Amador
Compliance	Melissa Miner

Appendix A



# EARLY HEAD START

## Parent Information to Prevent Choking in Infants and Toddlers

Putting things in their mouth is one of the ways that babies and children under 3 years old explore their worlds. Choking is usually caused by food, toys and other small objects that can easily get stuck in a child's windpipe.

By knowing the dangers, you can keep your child(ren) safe and prevent choking.

### TOYS AND OTHER SMALL OBJECTS THAT ARE CHOKING HAZARDS

- Hair accessories
- Jewelry
- Balloons
- Toys with small parts
- Doll accessories
- Coins
- Paperclips
- Safety pins, push pins
- Marbles and small balls
- Water beads
- Nails, bolts and screws
- Broken crayons
- Small bottle caps
- All small objects that can lodge in the windpipe

### FOODS THAT ARE CHOKING HAZARDS

Hard, smooth foods can block the windpipe:

- Nuts
- Sunflower seeds
- Watermelon with seeds
- Cherries with pits
- Raw carrots, peas, and celery
- Popcorn
- Hard candy
- Raw apples and pears

Soft food should be cut into small pieces, peeled if they have skin, or avoided:

- Cheese
- Hot dogs and sausages (cut into half moon or triangle shape, not round)
- Grapes
- Caramels



### HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD AVOID CHOKING

- Encourage children to sit while playing and eating
- Teach children to chew and swallow their food before talking
- Don't allow your child to run when playing with toys or eating
- Supervise older children so they don't give your child anything that can pose as a choking hazard
- Check toys for small or broken pieces
- Avoid using hair accessories and allowing children to wear jewelry
- Make sure choking hazards are out of reach to young children

