

SIU-Carbondale Head Start

2026-2027



Parent Handbook

"Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities."

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SIU-C Head Start Quick Reference Sheet



Center: _____

Classroom: _____

Teacher: _____

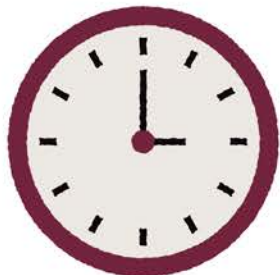


Community Worker: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Center Director: _____

Cell Phone: _____



School Start Time: _____

School End Time: _____



Post this page where it will regularly be seen in your home. We recommend the front of your refrigerator, back of your home's entry door, or even your bathroom mirror!



SIU Carbondale Head Start 2026 - 2027 Calendar

Aug. 26, 2026	First Day of School
Sept. 7, 2026	No School - <i>Labor Day</i>
Oct. 9 & 12, 2026	No School - <i>Staff Training</i>
Nov. 11, 2026	No School - <i>Veteran's Day</i>
Nov. 25, 2026	No School - <i>Staff Training</i>
Nov. 26 & 27, 2026	No School - <i>Thanksgiving Break</i>
Dec. 21 - Jan. 1, 2027	No School - <i>Winter Break</i>
Jan. 4, 2027	<i>No School - Staff Training</i>
Jan. 5, 2027	Return from Winter Break
Jan. 18, 2027	No School - <i>MLK Jr. Holiday</i>
Feb. 15, 2027	No School - <i>Staff Training</i>
Mar. 8-12, 2027	No School - <i>Spring Break</i>
Mar. 26 & 29, 2027	No School - <i>Home Visits</i>
May 13, 2027	Last Day of School



Daily Schedules

Below are typical daily schedules by class type. These schedules are subject to change based on classroom need. Classrooms have their individual schedules posted on their parent board.

Full-Day Session

8:00 - 8:00	Arrival/Handwashing
8:15 - 8:45	Breakfast
8:45 - 9:00	Toothbrushing/Restroom/Handwashing
9:00 - 9:10	Large Group
9:10 - 9:40	Gross Motor
9:40 - 9:50	Restroom/Handwashing
9:50 - 10:50	Self-Selection
10:50 - 11:00	Restroom/Handwashing
11:00 - 11:30	Lunch
11:30 - 11:45	Toothbrushing/Restroom/Handwashing
11:45 - 1:15	Nap (restroom as needed)
1:15 - 1:45	Gross Motor
1:45 - 2:00	Restroom/Handwashing
2:00 - 2:30	Snack/Swish
2:30 - 2:50	Read Aloud/Small Groups
2:50 - 3:00	Departure

Half-Day, AM Session

8:00 - 8:15	Arrival/Handwashing
8:15 - 8:45	Breakfast
8:45 - 8:55	Toothbrushing/Restroom/Handwashing
8:55 - 9:10	Large Group/Read Aloud
9:10 - 10:40	Self-Selection/Gross Motor
10:40 - 10:50	Restroom/Handwashing
10:50 - 11:10	Lunch
11:10 - 11:20	Restroom/Swish/Handwashing
11:20 - 11:30	Departure

Half-Day, PM Session

11:30 - 11:45	Arrival/Handwashing
11:45 - 12:15	Lunch
12:15 - 12:25	Toothbrushing/Restroom/Handwashing
12:25 - 12:40	Large Group/Read Aloud
12:40 - 2:10	Self-Selection/Gross Motor
2:10 - 2:20	Restroom/Handwashing
2:20 - 2:40	Snack
2:40 - 2:50	Restroom/Swish/Handwashing
2:50 - 3:00	Departure

Program Information

Welcome to SIUC Head Start!

We are very excited you have chosen to enroll your child with our program. We are honored to have you as a part of our learning community and look forward to partnering with you.

Head Start, a federally-funded pre-k program serving children ages three to five, has helped over 25 million low-income preschool children and their families nation-wide since its inception in 1965. Head Start's experienced and credentialed teaching staff provides high-quality care for enrolled children. Children and families receive comprehensive services intended to increase the well-being and success of the entire family. These include:

Family Supports: Collaboration with families to provide support through goal setting, education, and leadership opportunities.

Family Engagement: Building positive, goal-oriented relationships between families and Head Start staff through a holistic, two-generation approach, accounting for the needs of both children and their families.

Health Services: Screenings, education, and direct services in the areas of dental, physical, nutritional, and mental health which support the overall health of children and families.

School Readiness: Preparing children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

It is our mission to create a nurturing, safe, and inclusive community where every individual feels welcome. We are committed to fostering supportive and stimulating environments where children, families, and staff can thrive. We believe in the role of parents/guardians as their child's first and most important teachers and understand that the involvement of parents, volunteers, and community is a significant factor in the success of Head Start.

With these core tenets in mind we say again, WELCOME! We look forward to a year filled with joy, curiosity, partnership, and growth.

Centers & Session Options

Carbondale Center: 1900 N. Illinois Ave, Carbondale IL 62901

Phone: 618-453-2440 Fax: 618-453-5399

John A. Logan Center: 700 Logan College Drive, D270, Carterville IL 62918

Phone: 618-985-2828 x.8241 Fax: N/A

Marion Center: 907 N. Vicksburg Street, Marion IL 62959

Phone: 618-967-2072 Fax: 618-997-8144

Murphysboro Center: 223 S. 13th Street, Murphysboro IL 62966

Phone: 618-967-2118 Fax: N/A

Administration: 1906 N. Illinois Ave, Carbondale IL 62901

Phone: 618-453-6448 Fax: 618-453-3888

Session Options	Half-Day, Morning	Half-Day, Afternoon	Full Day
	8:00am - 11:30am (C'dale, Murphy only)	11:30am - 3:00pm (C'dale, Murphy only)	8:00am - 3:00pm (all locations)



Child & Family Records & Documentation

Head Start defines a parent as a child's biological mother or father, other family member acting as a primary caregiver, foster parent, guardian, or person with whom the child has been placed for purposes of adoption pending a final adoption decree. All references to "parent" fall under this definition.

Certified Birth Certificate

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers requires a certified birth certificate to be provided within 30 days of enrollment into a licensed childcare facility. Other forms of acceptable identification include a passport or visa along with an affidavit or notarized letter explaining why a certified birth certificate cannot be produced.

Per Illinois law, notification must be made to the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if proof of identity is not submitted within the 30-day time frame. Parents will be notified in writing when Illinois State Police or local authorities have been contacted and will be advised that they have an additional 10 days to comply by submitting the required documentation. Parents who need a certified birth certificate should contact the County Clerk's Vital Records Department in the county in which the child was born.

Vital Records Departments



Jackson County

618-687-7360

Williamson County

618-997-1301

Confidentiality

All family and child information is kept strictly confidential. Only authorized Head Start personnel have access to files. Head Start will obtain written consent from parents before sharing information with any other person or agency.

Change in Information

Whenever there is a change in family and/or child information (emergency contacts, health providers, health conditions, work/school schedule, family situation, etc.), it is necessary that this information be shared as soon as possible. **It is essential that contact can be made with parents or another designated adult in case of an emergency.**

Changes in address and/or phone numbers must be shared no later than the first time a child arrives at school after the change has occurred.

All changes must be submitted in writing via the Emergency Data Update Form.

Court Orders & Custody

State law maintains that parents have access to their child unless there are legal documents which define the restrictions. In situations involving child custody disputes or restraining orders, a copy of the court order **MUST** be in the child's file. The program cannot legally prohibit contact with either biological parent without current court orders.



Child & Family Records & Documentation

Review or Copy of Child Records

Parents and legal guardians who wish to review or obtain copies of their child's file should contact the Center Director to make the request and complete necessary paperwork. Requests to review the child's file will be processed within 45 days. If a parent requests copies of their child's file, a copy will be provided within two (2) weeks of the date the file was provided for review.

Amendment of Child Records

If a parent believes that information contained in their child's file is incorrect or misleading, an amendment of the child's record may be requested. All requests must be made in writing. Head Start will consider the request for amendment and render a decision based on those considerations. If the request is denied, the parent will be notified in writing.

Transfer of Records

Applicable portions of a child's records will be provided to parents of all enrolled children as they transition out of Head Start and into kindergarten. At application, parents sign a release giving the program permission to share information/records with their corresponding school districts. The terms of this release may be terminated by written notification. If parents would like records shared with additional schools or educational agencies, they must update the existing release.

Registered Sex Offenders

Under (720 ILCS 5/11-9.3) it is unlawful for registered sex offenders to be present in any SIUC Head Start school building. If the registered sex offender is a parent/guardian of an enrolled child, they may only enter the school, with permission from the Center Director to conduct business related to the education of their child and are not permitted into any classrooms where children are present.

Children will not be released to any person listed as a registered sex offender, other than to parents/guardians with legal custody. All persons listed on the Emergency Data Form must be cleared through the National Sex Offender Registry.



DID YOU KNOW...

Your Community Worker can help with the process of gathering paperwork required in your child's file. If you need support in acquiring needed medical records, documentation of benefits, or vital records, please contact your Community worker.

AND...

When your child prepares to move on to kindergarten, your Community Worker will provide a file containing copies of records you'll need to register your child at their new school.

Attendance

Daily Attendance, Absenteeism, & Follow-Up

Classes are held five (5) days a week, Monday through Friday. It is expected that children will be in attendance each day the center is open.

If a child will be absent for any reason, parents must call, text, or message through ClassDojo within one (1) hour of the beginning of class to inform staff of the reason for the child's absence. Staff will record the specific reason for the child's absence (fever, ear infection, family illness, etc.).

In rare occasions, situations arise in which a child must be out of school for an extended period. If this situation occurs, details of the situation must be discussed with center staff so they may appropriately document the reasons for absence per Head Start requirements.

If a child is absent and the center has not been notified the following will occur:

Notification not received within 1 hr

Staff will contact parents via phone, text, and/or ClassDojo

No contact for 3 consecutive days

Community Workers will complete a home visit to check on the well-being of the child and family.

Contact not made at home visit attempt

Letter will be mailed re: child's participation in the program.

Contact not made after 2 weeks

Child may be unenrolled and placed back on the waitlist. Re-enrollment *may* be possible once contact is re-established.

Children in full-day classes who fall below 65% attendance may be transitioned to a half-day session if attendance does not improve after completion of an Attendance Success Plan (see below for details).

Attendance Success Plan

Parents with children identified as "chronic absentees" or have repeated late drop-offs/pick-ups are required to establish an Attendance Success Plan with your Community Worker. The purpose of this plan is to assist with improving children's attendance percentage and on-time arrival to school.

Head Start Definition of Chronic Absenteeism

- Child misses 10% or more school days. This equates to 2 or more
- days a month or 16 days throughout the school year.

DID YOU KNOW...

Showing up on time every day, from preschool forward, is important to your child's success and learning. Missing 10% of school (1-3 days per month) can make it harder to:

- Gain early reading & math skills
- Build relationships
- Stay on track with learning & school readiness skills



Establishing a solid morning routine can help improve attendance. Talk to your child's teacher or your Community Worker if you would like support creating a routine which works for your family!

Drop-off and Pick-Up

Arrival Times & Policies

Arrival times for each session option are as follows:

Arrival Times	Full Day	Half-Day, Morning	Half-Day, Afternoon
	8:00 - 8:15am	8:00 - 8:15am	11:30 - 11:45am

Arrival will be denied after 8:30am and 12:00pm, respectively, except when prior approval is granted by the Center Director.

Children *may not arrive earlier than 8:00am* as teachers use this pre-session time to prepare the classroom for the day.

Every child must be signed in *daily* upon arrival. If arriving after the allotted 15 minutes window as detailed above, parents will be required to sign-in at the Center Director's office.

Sign-Out & Authorized Pick-Up Persons

Children must be signed out *daily* upon departure. Only persons listed on the child's Emergency Data Form will be authorized to sign the child out of the center.

All individuals listed on the Emergency Data Form (EDF) must:

- 🐾 Be at least 16 years of age
- 🐾 Be cleared under review of the National Sex Offender Registry
- 🐾 Have a valid form of identification

Accepted forms of ID include:

- 🐾 State-issued Driver's License
- 🐾 State-issued ID
- 🐾 Military ID
- 🐾 Passport
- 🐾 School/University-issued ID

It is imperative that EDFs be kept up to date as **children will not be released to any individual who is not the biological parent/legal guardian or listed on the EDF.** *Changes to a child's EDF must be made in writing via the the Emergency Data Update Form.*



When dropping off or picking up your child at Head Start, never leave a sibling or other child in a car without an adult. Leaving children unattended is a significant safety risk and will be addressed by the Center Director.

Impaired Person Policy

Head Start staff will not release a child to anyone who appears to be impaired due to alcohol, drugs, medications, or unknown reasons. If a parent or authorized adult appears to be impaired when picking up a Head Start child, staff will request that person contact someone to come to the center to drive both the impaired person and the child home. If the individual demands to leave with the child, law enforcement will be notified immediately.



Drop-off and Pick-Up

Late Pick-Up Policy

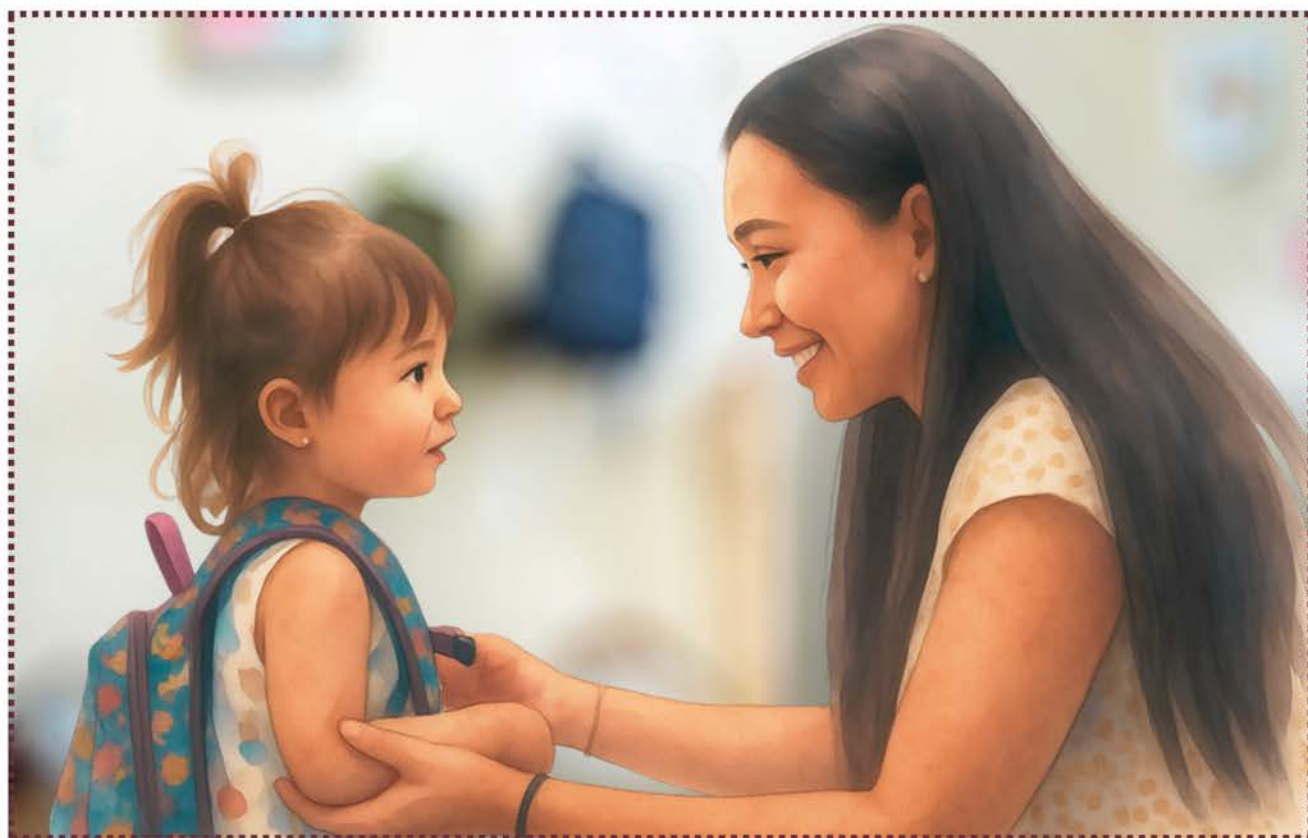
Children are expected to be picked up from the center per program scheduling. If a parent is running late to pick up their child, they should notify their child's center by phone. This does not excuse the late pick-up and the late pick-up policy will still be in effect. Excessive late pick-ups may require parents to complete an Attendance Success Plan with center staff.

In the event a child is not picked up by the end of their scheduled session, the following measures will be taken:

1. Head Start staff will call all parent phone numbers on file in an attempt to reach someone.
2. If a parent cannot be reached after 10 minutes, emergency contacts listed on the child's EDF will be called.
3. If the parent or emergency contacts cannot be reached after 60 minutes, SIUC Head Start staff will contact the local police to discuss the situation and next steps. *This is policy as set forth by DCFS licensing standards.*

The protection and wellbeing of the child remains the responsibility of SIUC Head Start until the parent, designated emergency contact, or police arrive. SIUC Head Start will never hold the child responsible for the situation. All discussions of late pick-up will be with the parent and never with the child. **In the event of late pick-up, parents may be charged a childcare rate of \$1.00 per minute per child.**

As a condition of enrollment, parents are required to sign an acknowledgement of Late Pick-Up Policy.



Family Services & Engagement

Family Support Services

The primary role of SIUC Head Start's Family & Community Partnership staff is to support families in their growth and development. Each center has dedicated Community Workers serving in this role.

Every Head Start family will be assigned a Community Worker who will:

- 🐾 Help families meet the child's health and dental requirements
- 🐾 Act as the family's advocate
- 🐾 Help the family set and reach goals
- 🐾 Help the family identify and overcome challenges
- 🐾 Connect families to agencies and resources in the community
- 🐾 Encourage families to volunteer at Head Start
- 🐾 Drive children and/or parents to scheduled appointments when needed
- 🐾 Help families in crisis or emergency situations
- 🐾 Inform families of opportunities to be involved at Head Start
- 🐾 Follow-up with parents when the child is absent from school
- 🐾 Assist the family to improve attendance when needed
- 🐾 Provide education to families about Head Start services, including: nutrition, physical, dental, and mental health, childhood development, and more

Family Goal Setting & Documentation

It is a requirement of every Head Start program to assess family needs, assist in the development of family goals, and document goal progress over the course of the school year. Below are the steps in the Family Partnership process.

1. Each family participates in the Family Needs Assessment process with their assigned Community Worker within 90 days of child enrollment. The assessment is typically completed during the Community Worker's first visit to the family's home.
2. Based on the results of the Family Needs Assessment, each Community Worker will work with the family to establish at least one goal to work towards throughout the school year. These goals could be personal, family, or child focused. Some examples include:
 - 🐾 Further a parent's education 🐾 Learning English as a Second Language (ESL)
 - 🐾 Obtaining employment 🐾 Completing health requirements
3. After developing goals, Community Workers will follow-up with families at least once monthly to discuss progress towards goals either by phone or in person. These contacts serve as opportunity to partner in building upon the family's strength as well as identify areas for support and growth.
4. A follow-up assessment will be conducted at the end of the year to determine and document family growth.

Family Services & Engagement

Parent Curriculum

Head Start offers opportunities for parents to participate in research-based parenting curriculum. This curriculum is designed to build on parents' knowledge by offering parents the opportunity to practice skills which promote children's learning and development. The curriculum used at SIUC Head Start is Positive Solutions for Families. This curriculum promotes the social and emotional wellbeing and resilience of families and children.

Engagement Opportunities

Head Start is family-centered and encourages parents to become actively involved in their child's education. This includes informal engagement activities and formal leadership opportunities within the program. Family participation and education opportunities, events, and activities for parents are held throughout the year. Information on these opportunities will be shared via newsletters, flyers, and ClassDojo. Some ways parents may become involved with the program are:

- 🐾 Participating in parent contacts, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences
- 🐾 Participating in Self-Assessment and Community Assessment
- 🐾 Volunteering in the classroom, office, or kitchen
- 🐾 Planning, developing, and attending parent activities
- 🐾 Attending and supporting parent meetings
- 🐾 Serving as elected member of the Policy Council
- 🐾 Serving on the Health Services Advisory Committee
- 🐾 Serving on the Pyramid Model Leadership Team
- 🐾 Attending Parent Education opportunities

Additional details on the various committees and councils will be shared at individual center's parent meetings in September.

In-Kind

The program is required to generate 20% of its annual funding from volunteer hours and donations, which is called in-kind. We rely on parents to help us meet this federal grant requirement. A parent who completes any of the tasks described above contributes \$36.79 per hour towards the program's in-kind requirement. When parents participate or make donations to the program, an in-kind sheet must be signed to document the services provided.

Employment Opportunities

When qualified, parents may be considered for employment in positions in the Head Start program. Former and current parents are encouraged to apply for vacant positions and will be given consideration when positions are being filled. All employees must abide by the Standards of Conduct detailed in the program's personnel policies. These policies clearly guide the expectations for working with children in a manner that always protects their safety.



Family Services & Engagement

Siblings

Due to state regulations, only enrolled children may be present in the classroom. Siblings over two-years old may be allowed to accompany parents when volunteering in the class with prior consent from the Center Director. If approved, the sibling may be present for no more than one hour and must be supervised by their parent at all times.

Standards of Conduct

All adults in a child's life serve as role models of appropriate behavior. While on school property or when attending a school function, parents are held to the program's expectations and required to:

- Use only positive and developmentally appropriate methods of child guidance
- Report any Standards of Conduct violations
- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child, family, and staff
- Maintain confidentiality of all information related to children, families, and staff
- Supervise every child in their care at all times
- Not engage in any behaviors that may maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children

Three tenets make up SIUC Head Start's School Expectations. We strive to be safe, be kind, and be ready to learn. Some examples of what these expectations look like for parents are below.



Behave in an orderly manner
Model safe actions
Follow confidentiality policies
Supervise child(ren) in your care
Use positive child guidance methods
Keep contact info up-to-date



Speak in a respectful manner
Respect the rights of others
Address concerns reasonably and respectfully



Turn cell phones to silent or off
Actively participate in school activities
Adhere to all attendance policies

Family Services & Engagement

Standards of Conduct (continued)

SIU Carbondale will not tolerate behavior by parents/guardians, visitors, or any other adult persons involved with the program that violate the Standards of Conduct. Examples of violations include, but are not limited to the following:

- 🐾 Using threatening, hostile, intimidating, bullying, harassing, or coercive language or behavior toward other parents, employees, volunteers, or children
- 🐾 Harassing or discriminating against any person based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, or disability
Note: This includes online harassment
- 🐾 Physical or verbally aggressive punishment of a child
- 🐾 Using profanity and foul language
- 🐾 Arguing, verbal fighting, loud shouting, and displays of anger
- 🐾 Engaging in physical violence
- 🐾 Sharing confidential program information regarding parents, children, or staff with others, including use of photo or video without permission
- 🐾 Wearing clothing with discriminatory, offensive, or inappropriate statements or designs
- 🐾 Bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons onto school grounds
- 🐾 Using profanity and foul language
- 🐾 Smoking or vaping on school grounds

Should violations of the Standards of Conduct occur:

1. The Center Director will speak directly with the parent or volunteer in private when possible and safety is not an issue.
2. When safety is threatened, staff will call the police.
3. Staff will promptly report violations to the Executive Director. In the event of the Executive Director's absence, the Child Development Coordinator will be notified.
4. The Executive Director will determine the program's response to the violation and will notify the person(s) involved.

If a parent violates the Standards of Conduct, SIU Carbondale Head Start reserves the right to:

1. Restrict access to program activities, classrooms, and children
2. Remove their child's name from the Waiting List for enrollment
3. Contact the Department of Children and Family Services
4. Contact the police if safety or the children families, and/or staff is threatened
5. Take civil or criminal action

Family Services & Engagement

Volunteering

Volunteers are very important at SIU Carbondale Head Start! A variety of volunteer opportunities are available, such as helping in the classroom, attending field trips, participating in mealtimes, assisting during outside play, and reading with the children. Volunteers are also needed to assist teachers and other staff at the centers, participate in parent meetings and special events, support recruitment efforts, and assist with office duties as needed



Volunteer Requirements

Volunteers at SIUC Head Start must:

- 🐾 Show emotional maturity when volunteering
- 🐾 Demonstrate respect for children and adults
- 🐾 Commit to following the program's Standards of Conduct
- 🐾 Complete a volunteer orientation

Regular* volunteers must:

- 🐾 Provide a physical examination signed by a medical professional as required by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) that includes TB clearance and immunizations. DCFS physical forms are available through the Center Director.
- 🐾 Submit to a DCFS background check and fingerprinting.

*As defined by DCFS Licensing Standard 407.180

Classroom Information & Expectations

The Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to meet each child's individual and school readiness needs. Each classroom has a maximum of 18 enrolled children, though some may have fewer. Each child, regardless of cultural background, gender, or ability, is offered a variety of learning experiences. These experiences are designed to promote development in the following areas:

- 🐾 Physical & Health
- 🐾 Social/Emotional
- 🐾 Language
- 🐾 Cognitive
- 🐾 Academic Content Skills
- 🐾 Adaptive



School Readiness Goals

The development of SIUC Head Start's 14 school readiness goals is supported by implementation of developmentally appropriate and individualized activities.

The program's school readiness goals state children will...

1. recognize and regulate their emotions and behaviors.
2. develop and sustain positive relationships with peers and adults.
3. participate cooperatively and constructively in group situations.
4. demonstrate fine motor strength and coordination.
5. listen to and understand increasingly complex language.
6. use language to express their thoughts and needs and engage in conversations.
7. demonstrate letter knowledge.
8. demonstrate phonological awareness.
9. demonstrate knowledge of print and its uses.
10. demonstrate writing skills.
11. demonstrate engagement, motivation, and persistence in learning.
12. use number concepts and operations.
13. demonstrate knowledge of shapes, and spatial relationships.
14. demonstrate various uses of mathematical operations (measurement, patterns).

Assessment

Teachers assess children's progress in various ways throughout the school year. These assessments are used to create child portfolios which are shared with families. Children are assessed three (3) times a year to determine progress towards meeting the school readiness goals. These assessments guide the planning of future classroom activities as well as informing individualized planning for each child based on strengths, needs, and interests.

Classroom Information & Expectations

Curriculum

SIU Carbondale Head Start implements The Creative Curriculum, a research-based approach which offers project-based investigations and emphasizes developmentally appropriate, play-based learning experiences. In its holistic approach, The Creative Curriculum fosters children's social/emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development.

As a part of this approach, children have the opportunity to choose from a variety of interest areas in their classroom. Interest areas are equipped with materials that support teacher-child interactions and intentionally chosen to aide in meeting learning objectives, develop children's skills, and promote school readiness. Interest areas in each classroom include:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Blocks |  Science |
|  Dramatic Play |  Sand & Water |
|  Math & Manipulatives |  Technology |
|  Library/Writing |  Music & Movement |
|  Gross Motor |  Art |

Home Visits & Parent Teacher Conferences

Enrolled families participate in two (2) home visits and two (2) parent-teacher conferences with teaching staff during the year. Home visits and parent-teacher conferences are an in-depth opportunity for parents and teachers to:

-  Develop and share individualized learning goals for each child
-  Share observations about the child's strengths, needs, and interests
-  Hear about the classroom schedule and current activities
-  Encourage parents to participate in upcoming events
-  Discuss screening and assessment results
-  Enhance knowledge and understanding of child's development
-  Provide feedback to teachers regarding curriculum ideas and instructional materials

These shared times allow teachers and parents to work in partnership and enhance learning, both at school and in the home. Parents, as well as teachers, are encouraged to keep scheduled appointments so all home visits and conferences are completed in a timely manner.

Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled multiple times throughout the year. They are designed to enhance curriculum studies, spark children's interests, and provide opportunity for children to practice social skills in a variety of settings.

Written permission MUST be obtained from a parent or guardian for each trip. Parents are notified in advance of each scheduled trip and are encouraged to attend with their child. To keep adult-to-child ratio low and ensure safety, field trips require a minimum of four (4) adults per classroom. All parents attending field trips must complete the program's field trip procedure training and adhere to the Standards of Conduct.

Classroom Information & Expectations

What to Bring and What Not to Bring to School

Head Start provides all necessary classroom supplies. Your child will require the following individual items:

To Keep at School



One extra set of clothing

Set should include shirt, bottoms, underwear, socks, shoes *

- Will be used in the event of a bathroom accident, spill, etc.
- Replacement clothing should be sent if a child has worn an article home

To Have Daily

School-friendly attire

Characteristic of "school-friendly" attire include:

- Shoes which are protective of toes, heels, and soles.
Note: *No flip-flops or heeled shoes*
- Easily washable
- No complicated fasteners
- Simple for a child to maneuver through bathroom routines independently

Weather-appropriate Outerwear

Includes jacket/coat, hat, gloves *

Note: **SCARVES ARE PROHIBITED** by DCFS as they are considered a strangulation hazard.

If your child arrives to school with a scarf, you will be asked to take it home with you in order for the center to comply with DCFS regulations.

Backpack/bag

- Must close securely to safely transport belongings between school/home
- No wheeled bags as they may not fit in classroom cubbies

*** PLEASE LABEL EACH OF THESE ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME**

What NOT to Bring to School



X Toys from home

X Snack or other food items unless prior approval is given by Center Director

X Clothing which is not school-friendly

- Clothing difficult for the child to put on/take off during bathroom routines
- Expensive clothing/jewelry

Note: Head Start staff will do their best to ensure appropriate action is taken to protect clothing during meals and messy activities. This includes the use of smocks, rolling up sleeves, offering hand-over-hand supports, and guiding children in appropriate use of messy materials. However, accidents happen, especially as children are developing self-help skills and independence. We appreciate your understanding and support of these efforts!

Communication

Information is shared between school and home in a multitude of ways. Communication options and opportunities are detailed below.

Newsletters & Classroom Calendars



Parents will receive monthly agency newsletters throughout the school year. The agency newsletter contains Head Start news, resources, and program-wide announcements, activities, and important dates. Reading the newsletter allows families to be informed of center, classroom, and program updates. Newsletters will be sent out via ClassDojo and posted on centers' Parent Boards. Classroom calendars share class-specific information related to curriculum, field trips, and other special events.

Class DoJo

Parents are expected to set up an account with ClassDojo at the initial home visit. This app is how reminders and resources are shared throughout the year. It can also be used for communicating with staff about children's attendance, individual family needs, etc. Instructions for setting up an account will be provided.

Community Workers and Teachers are available to help those needing additional assistance.



Phone Calls & Text Messages



Center Directors and Community Workers have program-issued cell phones families may call or text.

Please note, if attempts are made to contact those numbers outside of regular business hours (8:00am-4:00pm) an immediate response may not be received.

Child's Backpack

Children are required to bring a backpack to and from school each day. Information is often sent home in children's backpacks by teachers and other center staff. **Parents must check their child's backpack each day after school.**



Communication Practices

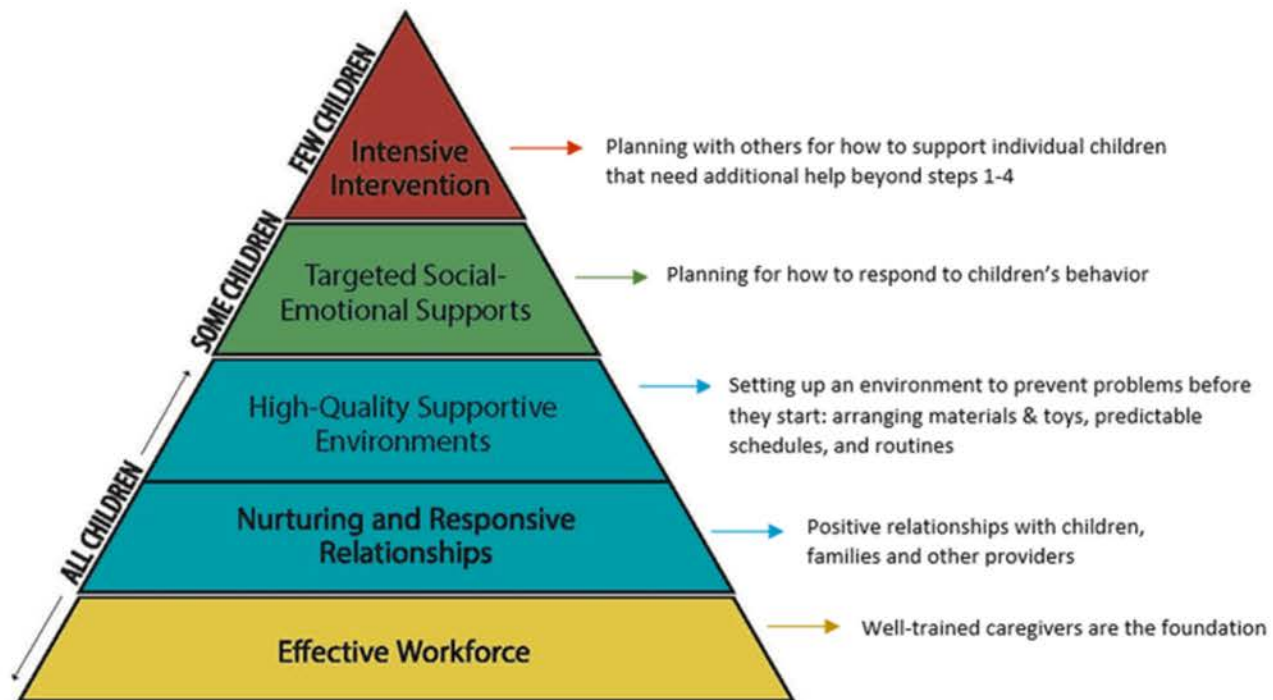


Parents must refrain from using abusive, threatening, and disrespectful language towards program staff and should expect the same respect from Head Start staff. Per program policy, staff will not continue to engage in conversation with parents who violate this expectation. If violations occur, contact will end and the parent will be asked to call back or return to the center when ready to communicate appropriately.

Mental Health & Disabilities Services

Social-Emotional Developmental Framework

The Pyramid Model is a framework that has been designed to support the social and emotional development of children, families, and staff in our program. Young children who have a strong foundation in social-emotional skills are more likely to experience later academic success and positive post-school outcomes. The graphic below details the Pyramid Model Approach.



Child Guidance Policy

SIU Carbondale Head Start promotes the development of social-emotional skills as the key factor in preparing for future school success. The program's philosophy is guided by the following beliefs:

- 🐾 The role of the adult is to model and teach children appropriate social-emotional skills.
- 🐾 Relationships between adults and children guide and regulate behaviors.
- 🐾 Behavior is communication and serves a function.
- 🐾 Each child is a unique individual and should be supported as such.
- 🐾 Implicit bias affects decision making about appropriate behavior.

The program believes parents are a child's first and most important teacher. We will work closely with each child's family to assess current beliefs and practices at home, discuss age-appropriate behavior and social-emotional skills, provide resources to all families regarding our approach to child guidance, and how to work together for the success of each child.

As a condition of enrollment, parents are required to sign acknowledgement of the program's child guidance policy.

Mental Health & Disabilities Services

Child Guidance Policy (cont'd)

The program implements a variety of guidance strategies to support each child's needs and works toward meeting those needs so challenging behaviors are reduced or eliminated.

Strategies Implemented:

- 🐾 Provide specific, developmentally appropriate, positively stated expectations that are posted, reviewed, and reinforced throughout the day
- 🐾 Provide specific praise and encouragement
- 🐾 Model appropriate pro-social behaviors
- 🐾 Develop warm and welcoming relationships with both adults and peers.
- 🐾 Design learning environments to develop and support social-emotions skills
- 🐾 Deliver intentional instruction on social-emotional skill development
- 🐾 Support the child to identify and solve problems/conflicts
- 🐾 Provide the child with natural, logical, and developmentally appropriate consequences for their behavior

Prohibited Practices:

- 🐾 Removal from the classroom/peers for an extended amount of time
- 🐾 Punishment related to toileting accidents
- 🐾 Corporal punishment intended to induce fear or physical pain (e.g., hitting, restraint)
- 🐾 Threat or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or access to the bathroom
- 🐾 Any form of emotional abuse (e.g., humiliation, threats, shaming)



Behavior Incident Reports

A Behavior Incident Report (BIR) form is used by teachers to record serious behavior incidents (aggression, elopement, and/or self-injurious behaviors) and gathers critical information related to the incident. The BIR Form is submitted to a designated staff member who enters the data into the BIR Data System. Collecting and reviewing BIR data allows for:

- 🐾 The Pyramid Model Leadership Team to improve the quality of data-based decision making and action planning
- 🐾 The Pyramid Model Leadership Team to assist in identifying potential issues of disproportionality and determine individual children's incident patterns
- 🐾 Behavioral patterns being defined in greater detail and used to improve child and teacher interactions

Persistent Challenging Behavior

If a child exhibits persistent challenging behaviors, ongoing support will be provided to both staff and child in efforts to lessen the occurrence of those behaviors. If those support are unsuccessful in addressing the child's behaviors, a team comprised of the parent, classroom teachers, consultants, and other appropriate adults will meet to discuss the behavior, factors impacting the behavior, purpose of the behavior, new social-emotional skills that need to be taught, and individualized interventions. The program defines a "persistent challenging behavior" as:

- 🐾 Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in prosocial interactions
- 🐾 Behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures

Notes from the meeting will be taken and shared with all team members for consistency of implementation. The team will meet periodically to discuss status of interventions and adjust as needed. If necessary, a referral for mental health support or for further developmental evaluation may be completed.

If a child is exhibiting persistent challenging behaviors, the implementation behavior plan is not successful, and there continues to be a severe safety concern, the team may need to take steps toward a transfer to a more appropriate placement (classroom or session) or program.

Developmental Screenings

Head Start is mandated to complete developmental screenings to all newly enrolled children within our program. Screenings take place within 45 days of the first day of enrollment. Children receive screenings relating to speech and language, cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, social-emotional development, and hearing and vision. Results of your child's screenings are discussed with you during parent contacts, but otherwise kept confidential.

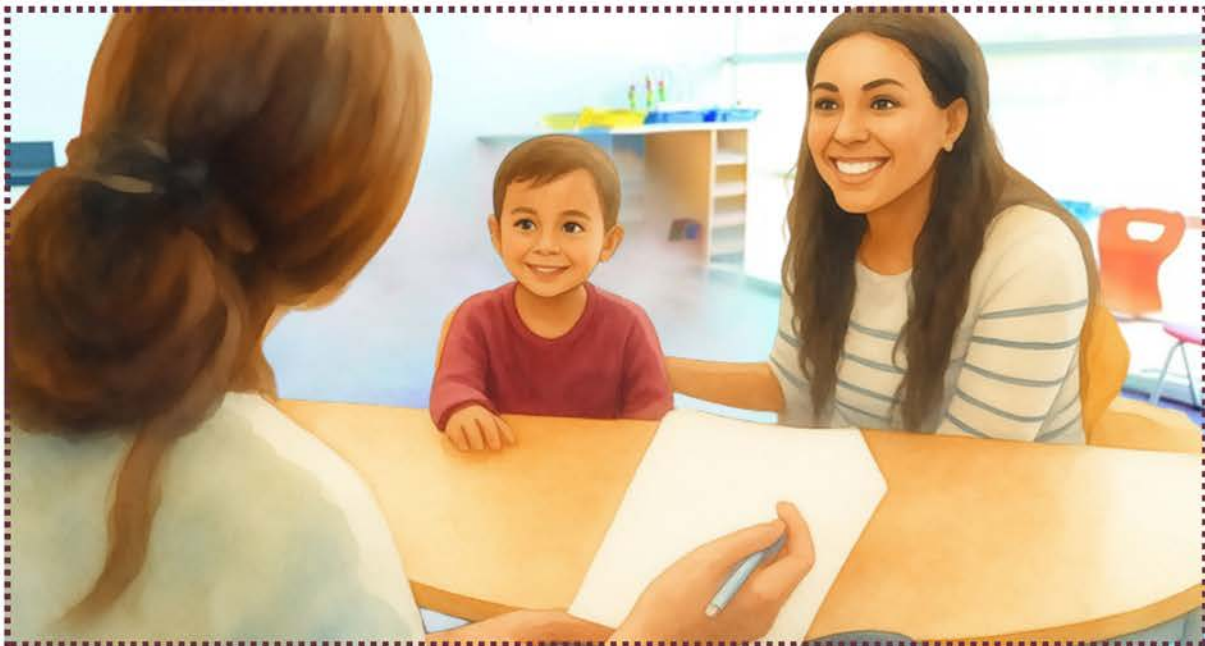


Mental Health & Disabilities Services

Disabilities

The program is mandated to identify, refer, and coordinate services for children who may be or are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Supports provided include:

- 🐾 Complete developmental screenings to identify possible delays
- 🐾 Implement individualized supports based on screening results
- 🐾 Work with families to initiate referrals to the local special education agency on their child's disability, referral process, and rights and responsibilities
- 🐾 Attend IEP meetings with parents and advocate for the child's best interests
- 🐾 Implement goals and accommodations of IEP while at Head Start
- 🐾 Collaborate with local school districts & special education agencies to provide services
- 🐾 Educate parents on their child's disability, referral process, & rights and responsibilities



Mental Health

The program employs mental health consultants to assist with family support issues, such as substance abuse, domestic violence, challenging behaviors, or stress-related issues. Supports include phone conferences, home visits, and referrals to community agencies. If a parent or child needs support, they should contact their Community Worker, teacher, or Center Director. The primary roles of the Head Start Mental Health service area are:

- 🐾 Support social-emotional development in children at school and home
- 🐾 Support adult resiliency through ongoing consultations, training, and coaching
- 🐾 Connect families with needed resources related to mental health support
- 🐾 Screen child social-emotional development at school and home
- 🐾 Develop individualized supports to prepare children for public school

Health Requirements

A child's health impacts their total development and can have significant impact on outcomes, both in and out of school. The program's goal is to promote each child's optimal health, including preventative health measures and follow-up treatment.

To accomplish this goal, the program requires each child to have the following:

PRIOR TO CHILD ATTENDING:



PHYSICAL EXAM

All children *are required* to have a physical exam on file. The exam must:

- Include immunization history
- Not be more than six (6) months old prior to the date of enrollment *unless* directly transferring from a DCFS-licensed or ISBE-approved center. In such case, the date of exam may not exceed one (1) year prior to the date of enrollment.

BLOOD LEAD TEST WITH RESULTS

Must have been completed at or after 24 months of age

TB TEST WITH RESULTS *or* TB RISK ASSESSMENT

HEMOGLOBIN OR HEMATOCRIT BLOOD TEST WITH RESULTS

WITHIN 45 DAYS OF ENROLLMENT



HEIGHT & WEIGHT ASSESSMENT

Will be completed by Head Start staff and results shared with parents.

VISION & HEARING TESTING

Will be completed by Head Start staff and results shared with parents.

- Health Specialist will follow-up with families regarding areas of concern

WITHIN 90 DAYS OF ENROLLMENT



DENTAL EXAM

All children *are required* to have dental exam. This can be done through the family's dentist or by scheduling an appointment with the SIU Dental Clinic.

- Health Specialist/Community Worker will assist in scheduling and transporting families to appointments as needed.

ANNUALLY AFTER ENROLLMENT



UPDATED PHYSICAL EXAM

UPDATED DENTAL EXAM

Follow-up of identified health concerns or treatment needs is *critical* in supporting healthy development of a child. This includes dental treatment, hearing assessments, etc. The Health Specialist will work directly with parents to ensure follow-up care is completed.

Medication at School

Every effort should be made by parents to administer prescribed medication to their child before and/or after school hours.

Head Start *must* be notified if a child is receiving any type of medication at home. This allows for staff to be aware and watch for adverse signs or allergic reactions.

Prescribed medications **must be in their original container with the full pharmacy label attached**. When necessary, prescribed medications may be given at Head Start *with a written statement from the physician* and medication request form from the parent.

Note: Over-the-counter medication will not be administered to children at Head Start.

Medical Conditions

Some children may require special attention due to medical or physical conditions. Children with restrictions, medications, or special conditions must have written documentation from a physician. This written documentation must be completed on the SIUC Head Start Physician's Statement for Medical Condition and Limitations form. If the limitation or treatment is discontinued, parents should again provide written documentation from the child's physician stating the limitations/treatment needs were lifted. *Treatment will continue until documentation is received ordering it to stop.*



Due to requirements outlined in the State of Illinois DCFS Licensing Standards, children requiring rescue medication (i.e. Albuterol inhaler, epi-pen, etc.) will not be able to attend until all forms and medication are received. Head Start will maintain documentation of when and who administered medication to your child.

Rescue meds must be on-hand EVERY DAY for your child to attend.

Illness

Children should not attend school when sick. Parents must notify the center when their child is absent due to illness. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately. In some instances, the center may require a note from a physician stating when the child may return to school. A child should be kept home and may be sent home for any of the following symptoms:

- 🐾 Lethargy
- 🐾 Fever
- 🐾 Vomiting
- 🐾 Diarrhea
- 🐾 Scabies
- 🐾 Live head lice
- 🐾 Rash combined with fever
- 🐾 Breathing difficulties
- 🐾 Signs of communicable disease
- 🐾 Open, oozing, or bleeding sores and/or mouth sores with inability to control saliva

Communicable Diseases

Children's immunity begins to become fully established around age six. Childhood illnesses during these early years provide a means for their bodies to recognize and fight infections as they grow. During a school year, it is to be expected that children enrolled in childcare settings may be exposed to common communicable diseases.

When determining illness exclusion and attendance policies for children that are exhibiting symptoms of any communicable disease, SIUC Head Start follows guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments. Parents will be contacted regarding any health concerns and/or requests that their child see a physician for diagnosis and treatment.

Parents will be notified when there are outbreaks of communicable diseases in the classroom or center. This includes but is not limited to:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 🐾 Chicken pox | 🐾 Impetigo |
| 🐾 Flu | 🐾 Hand, Foot, and Mouth disease |
| 🐾 COVID | 🐾 Pin worms |
| 🐾 Ring worm | 🐾 Fifth's Disease |

Notification will be made via ClassDojo, as well as notices posted in the classroom.

If a child has a communicable disease, the Center Director at their respective center must be notified immediately.

Dental Partnership & Exams

SIUC Head Start partners with SIU Community Dental Clinic to provide free dental exams. Exams are performed by a licensed dentist and completed at the annual health intake day in August. Parents are notified of this day once a child has been accepted into the program.

Head Start standards require that all children have an established dental home where they receive ongoing, routine preventive care and, if needed, restorative treatment. If a child has an established dental provider, parents should inform Head Start staff so the provider may be contacted for dental records. If a child *does not* have an established dental provider, parents should inform their community worker and they will work with the parent to get a dental provider established.



Health & Nutrition

Daily Meals & Snacks

Head Start's nutrition program is designed to help meet each child's daily nutritional needs. Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which requires children in half-day programs to receive at least one-third of their recommended daily nutritional allowances and children enrolled in full-day programs to receive one-half to two-thirds of their recommended daily nutritional allowances.

Below are the meals children enrolled in the various sessions will receive.

Full-Day Breakfast, Lunch, Afternoon Snack

Half-Day, AM Breakfast, Lunch

Half-Day, PM Lunch, Afternoon Snack



Each meal is served family-style. This is in accordance with requirements set forth by the CACFP, Head Start Program Performance Standard, and DCFS. These requirements determine the types of foods served, amounts served, and style in which meals and snacks are presented to children.

Special dietary needs and feeding accommodations will be given individual attention.

Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)

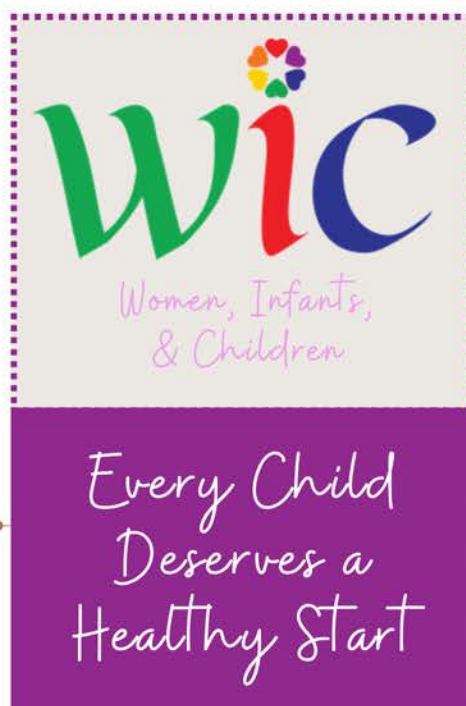
WIC is a food assistance program for pregnant women, breastfeeding & postpartum women, and infants & children up to 5 years of age (including foster children). It supports pregnant women, new mothers, and young children in eating well and staying healthy.

If interested in WIC services, parents may contact the health department in the county in which they reside.

**County Health
Department
Phone Numbers**

Jackson County
618-684-3143

Williamson County
618-993-8111



Treat & Snack Approvals

A child's birthday is a wonderful reason to celebrate! The program encourages and invites families to celebrate special events with their child's teachers and peers. It is important to note both that Head Start values the importance of healthy eating and DCFS regulations require limited sugar to be served at centers.

Many traditional celebration foods are high in fat and sugar content. When these are served during classroom celebrations, it sends a mixed message to the children. Instead of bringing treats, parents are encouraged to celebrate their child's birthday by volunteering in their child's classroom and/or contributing party plates, napkins, cups for use during snack.

Families may also celebrate the occasion with things other than food items. Some examples are stickers, temporary tattoos, fidget toys, etc.

Parents wishing to send food to school for other occasions must receive prior approval by completing the treat and snack form and follow these general guidelines:



- Parents must select *nutritious* foods. Some suggestions of food items are:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 🐾 Low-sugar Muffins | 🐾 Sliced Veggies |
| 🐾 Dried Fruits | 🐾 Graham Crackers |
| 🐾 Snack Crackers | 🐾 Pretzels |
| 🐾 Fruit Kebobs | 🐾 Low-sugar Yogurt |

- Nut-free (this includes both peanuts and tree nuts)
- Pork-free (including gelatin)
- Must adhere to health restrictions of all children in the classroom
- Store-bought, pre-packaged, and unopened in the original container

Parents must complete a Treat & Snack Approval Form and provide it to the center director three (3) days in advance stating the food item they would like to bring and the date they plan to bring it.

A copy of the Treat & Snack Approval Form can be found on page 31.



Safety & Facilities

Drug-Free Environment

SIU Carbondale Head Start centers operate an environment that is free from alcohol, illicit drugs, and smoke. State law prohibits use of these substances on University property. State laws and University policies regarding these items are strictly enforced. Smoking on school property, field trips, or during Head Start activities is prohibited.

Weapons

Weapons are not permitted in or on school property at any time. University police will be contacted if a weapon is brought onto school property.

Child Abuse & Neglect

In the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, Illinois state law mandates that any school/day care employee who suspects child abuse or neglect must make a report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services child abuse hotline. Head Start staff receive regular training to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect.

If a parent suspects that their child or any child in the care of Head Start is being verbally, emotionally, or physically abused by an employee, volunteer, or contractor, they should contact the Center Director or Executive Director to discuss any concerns.

Parents may also complete a Parent Concerns Form. In response to submitted concerns, an internal investigation will be conducted. As a result of the investigation, progressive discipline may be initiated for staff, contractors may be released from their contracts, and volunteers may be excluded from further volunteer opportunities.

A copy of the Parent Concerns Form can be found on page 32.

Accidents & Injuries

Staff members are trained in first aid to handle injuries. Minor injuries (bumps, scrapes, bruises) are reported to parents through use of the program's Injury Report that will be sent home with your child on the day of the injury. Should a child receive an injury that requires more intensive medical care, Head Start provides the parents with an SIUC Accident/Medical Claim Form. If the child is taken for medical care, the parent must notify the Center Director. The Center Director will provide guidance as to next steps in meeting SIU requirements for reporting injury. If a child is involved in a medical or dental emergency, staff are trained to follow the steps in the program's emergency plan. The Center Director and administrative staff will determine if the accident or illness requires ambulance transportation for the child or if parents or staff are able to transport the child. Parents are contacted immediately in case of an emergency. If a parent cannot be reached, center staff will call person(s) designated on the Emergency Data Form.



Safety & Facilities

Emergency Closing/Crisis Situations

In the event of an emergency, Head Start's Executive Director is responsible for deciding if classes will be canceled, postponed, or shortened. Examples of situations which may require canceling or postponing classes are:

- 🐾 Inclement Weather
- 🐾 Natural Disaster
- 🐾 Damage to Center Buildings
- 🐾 Extreme illness in centers/classrooms



All emergency cancellations or changes to the school day will first be communicated through ClassDoJo. Staff will then follow-up with call/text. In the event of early dismissal or cancellation of classes, parents are responsible for picking up their child in the allotted time frame.

In the event of a crisis such as tornado, fire, earthquake, or civil disturbance:

- 🐾 No child is dismissed from school unless a parent/guardian (or individual designated on the Emergency Data Form) comes to pick him/her up and has proper identification.
- 🐾 All parents/guardians or designated individuals who come to pick up children must sign them out in the classroom or at a temporary release station. Signs are posted indicating where the temporary release station is located.
- 🐾 Head Start is prepared to care for all children in times of critical situations. Staff is trained in first aid and works with local emergency services on emergency preparedness procedures.

Buzzer System

Head Start facilities utilize a buzzer system and real-time video surveillance to control access to the centers. Doors remain locked during the school day and visitors, including parents, must be permitted entry through the buzzer system. This is to enhance the safety and security of the centers.



Video Surveillance

Head Start facilities use video camera surveillance to aid in assuring the safety of all children, families, and staff. Areas of surveillance may include main entries, hallways, parking lots, buses and playgrounds. Video may be used to investigate incidents such as child, parent, or staff conduct and traffic incidents. Parents do not have direct access to video but may request video be reviewed as part of an investigation or complaint.

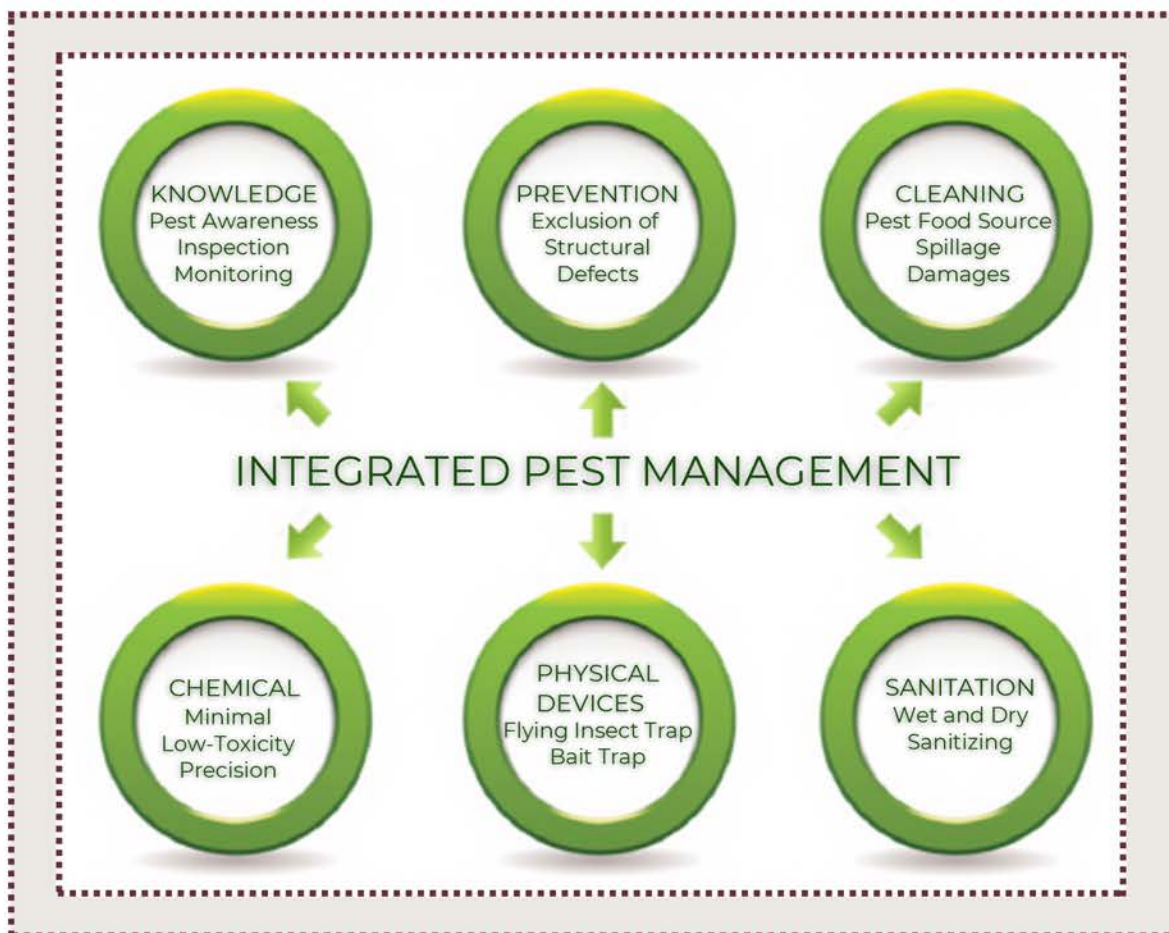
Safety & Facilities

Pest Management

Public Act 93-381 Integrated Pest Management in Licensed Day Care Centers (effective July 1, 2004) requires licensed childcare facilities to implement an integrated pest management plan. The plan involves the use of pesticide applications involving antimicrobial agents and baits. Anti-microbial agents such as disinfectants, sanitizers, deodorizers, insecticide baits, and rodenticide baits are NOT SUBJECT to notification requirements.



It is recognized that pests can best be controlled through an integrated pest management program that combines preventative techniques, nonchemical pest control methods and appropriate use of pesticides with preference for products that are the least harmful to human health and environment. If a different pesticide application approach is determined necessary, written notification will be provided to enrolled children's parents and staff at least two business days before application along with contact information for the center.



Treat & Snack Approval Form

Any person bringing treats or snacks into any Head Start classroom must obtain prior approval for the food item they wish to bring.

In order to obtain approval, the following steps/guidelines must be followed:

Parents must send a note with their child to the center director three (3) days in advance stating what food item they would like to bring *and* the date they would like to bring it.

If approved, the center director will send a note home with the child giving consent to send the food item(s).

All food brought in must be:

- Nut-free (this includes both peanuts and tree nuts)
- Pork-free (including gelatin)
- Must adhere to health restrictions of all children in the classroom
- Store-bought, pre-packaged, and unopened in the original container

Parents are encouraged to select *nutritious* foods. Some suggestions are:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
|  Sliced Veggies |  Snack Crackers |  Pretzels |  Low-sugar Muffins |
|  Graham Crackers |  Fruit Kebobs |  Dried Fruits |  Low-sugar Yogurt |

Families may also celebrate the occasion with things other than food items. Some examples are stickers, temporary tattoos, fidget toys, etc.



Child's Name: _____ Classroom: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Treat that will be served: _____

Date & time treat will be served: _____

Date request received by Center Director: _____

Center Director's Action (circle one): ☐ APPROVED ☐ DENIED

Comments:



Center Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Health/Nutrition Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____



