



**SIU  
CARBONDALE  
HEAD START**

**2022-2023**

**PARENT  
HANDBOOK**

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# **WELCOME...**

**... to SIU Carbondale Head Start. I am pleased and excited about having your family in our program!** This Parent Handbook has been designed to provide Head Start families with information about the program's services, policies, and procedures. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the program and use this booklet as an easy reference throughout the year.

SIU Carbondale Head Start is operated by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale through a federal grant. The program serves 337 children three to five years of age throughout Jackson and Williamson Counties. Head Start provides a comprehensive program that offers children and families activities and services that help them grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically as they prepare for kindergarten and beyond. Head Start takes a developmental approach to early childhood education in an environment which allows children to explore, discover, and play.

School readiness is a primary focus of the Head Start program. Head Start works with parents, staff, and local public schools to determine school readiness tasks for children to work on while enrolled at Head Start. This prepares children to make a successful transition to kindergarten and for later learning. The classroom curriculum is designed to support the program's school readiness goals.

Throughout this resource when we refer to "parents," this means biological parents, legal guardians, grandparents raising children, and other adults who are important in raising and caring for Head Start children. Research shows that children are more likely to succeed in school and life when parents are involved in their education. As parents, you are the first and most important teachers of your children. I encourage you to participate fully in our program. There are many opportunities for you to become involved in classroom activities, participate in center programs, as well as to become involved in the decision making of program planning and operations. I am hopeful that your experiences in Head Start will assist you in meeting the needs of your child and strengthening your family. The Head Start staff looks forward to working with you and your child throughout the year!



Dr. Lea Maue  
SIU Carbondale Head Start Program Director

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities.”**

### Philosophy

SIU Carbondale Head Start’s philosophy dictates that honesty and integrity are central in carrying out the mission of the program. Moreover, everyone has a unique value and desire to be respected, recognized, and needed.

### Services

- **Comprehensive program:** We provide services for the entire family.
- **School readiness:** We prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- **Parent involvement:** Parents are the first and most important teachers of children.
- **Physical, Dental, and Mental Health Support:** The program provides screenings, education, and direct services to support the overall health of children and families.
- **Nutrition:** Children are served meals and snacks to meet their daily nutritional needs.

### Centers

SIU Carbondale Head Start is funded to serve 337 children through center-based classes that operate Monday through Thursday at one of the program’s four sites in Jackson and Williamson counties:

| <b>CENTER</b> | <b>ADDRESS</b>  | <b>PHONE</b>               | <b>FAX</b>     |
|---------------|---|----------------------------|----------------|
| Carbondale    | 1900 N. Illinois Avenue<br>Carbondale, IL 62901           | 618-453-2440               | (618) 453-5399 |
| John A. Logan | 700 Logan College Drive,<br>D270<br>Carterville, IL 62918 | 618-985-2828, ext.<br>8241 | 618-985-9181   |
| Marion        | 907 N. Vicksburg Street<br>Marion, IL 62959               | 618-997-4255               | 618-997-8144   |
| Murphysboro   | 593 Ava Road<br>Murphysboro, IL 62966                     | 61-687-4433                | 618-565-1087   |

### Class Types

For the 2022-2023 program year, the following class types are available at all sites:

- Half-Day Morning Sessions: 8:00 am–11:30 am
- Half-Day Afternoon Sessions: 12:30-4:00 pm
- Full-Day Session: 8:00 am–4:00 pm

See table below of distribution of enrollment slots:

| CENTER       | HALF DAY | FULL DAY | TOTAL |
|--------------|----------|----------|-------|
| Carbondale   | 96       | 58       | 154   |
| Marion       | 48       | 29       | 77    |
| Murphysboro  | 32       | 29       | 61    |
| John A Logan | 29       | 16       | 45    |
| Total        | 192      | 145      | 337   |

### Requesting a Transfer

Parents may contact the Center Director or Community Worker to request a transfer to a different classroom or center.

### Administrative Office Contacts

**Address:** 1906 North Illinois Avenue  
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

**Phone:** 618-453-6448

**Fax:** 618-453-3015

**Email:** [headstart@siu.edu](mailto:headstart@siu.edu)

**Website:** [headstart.siu.edu](http://headstart.siu.edu)

Check us out on Facebook!  
SIU Carbondale Head Start



### Head Start Management Team

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Executive Director                          | 618-453-7171 |
| Senior Business Manager II                  | 618-453-0431 |
| Administrative Aide                         | 618-453-0731 |
| Office Support Assistant                    | 618-453-6448 |
| Health and Nutrition Coordinator            | 618-453-0930 |
| Family Community Partnerships Coordinator   | 618-453-3903 |
| Disabilities and Mental Health Coordinator  | 618-453-0394 |
| Child Development Coordinator               | 618-453-3905 |
| Child Development Coach (Jackson County)    | 618-453-6632 |
| Child Development Coach (Williamson County) | 618-453-0888 |
| ERSEA Coordinator                           | 618-453-0766 |
| Health Specialist                           | 618-453-0797 |

## **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Types of Services**

The primary role of the Family and Community Partnership staff is to support families in their growth and development. The Head Start program serves as a link between families and the community. Every family enrolled in SIU Carbondale Head Start is 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 to identify and overcome challenges
- Connect families to agencies and resources in the community for assistance and support
- Encourage families to volunteer at Head Start
- Drive children and/or parents to scheduled appointments when needed
- Help families in crisis or emergency situations
- Help families obtain Head Start services, such as learning about nutrition, good health, childhood development, and more
- Inform families of parent-child and family engagement events and other opportunities to be involved at Head Start
- Follow-up with parents when the child misses school and assist the family to improve attendance

### **Family Goal Setting and Documentation**

1. Family Needs Assessment: In order to determine the needs of families, SIU Carbondale Head Start requires that each family participate in the Family Needs Assessment process with their assigned Community Worker **within 90 days** of child enrollment.
2. Based on the results of the Family Needs Assessment, each family and their assigned Community Worker will work to establish at least one family partnership goal that is documented on the Family Partnership Agreement. These goals could be personal or family-related such as furthering education, learning English as a second language (ESL), obtaining employment, and completing health requirements, etc.
3. The family’s assigned Community Worker will follow up with families by checking in on the family at least once per month. Community Workers will also meet with your family at least twice each enrollment year to complete a parent contact in the home or at the center. The purpose of this visit is to form a relationship with you and work together to build upon your family’s strengths and identify areas for support and growth.
4. As part of the goal setting process and reflecting the core belief that parents are a child’s first and foremost teacher, Community Workers will encourage parent participation in screenings, parent-teacher conferences, parent contacts, classroom interactions, and additional family services.
5. A follow up assessment will be conducted at the end of the year to determine and document family growth.



## **Volunteering**

All parents, caregivers, and family members are strongly encouraged to volunteer at Head Start. Volunteering is a good way to become more involved in a child's education, learn how to help children continue to work on their skills at home, and become more familiar with the teachers and center staff. In addition to helping the children and staff, volunteering, also known as "in-kind," helps Head Start keep its funding. Center staff keep families informed of involvement, volunteer, and employment opportunities at Head Start. See Volunteering section on page 12.

## **CHILD AND FAMILY RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION**

### **Confidentiality**

All family information and children's files are kept strictly confidential. Only authorized Head Start personnel have access to files. Head Start is obligated to receive written consent from parents, prior to sharing information with any other person or agency.

### **Review or Copy of 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. All requests to review the child's file will be processed within 72 hours. 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 to copy the child's file will be processed within two (2) weeks.

### **Transfer of Records**

To assist with entry into kindergarten, records will be provided to parents of all enrolled children as they transition out of Head Start into kindergarten. At enrollment, 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. Head Start will release records to other schools or educational agencies that have requested records if a written consent form signed by the parent/guardian is attached to the request.

### **Certified Birth Certificate**

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers requires a certified birth certificate 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.

The program is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the 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. Certified copies of birth certificates can be obtained by contacting the County Clerk's office in the county in which the child was born.

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Jackson County Clerk    | 618-687-7360 |
| Williamson County Clerk | 618-997-1301 |

### **Annual Enrollment Updates**

To continue enrollment after the first year, parents are required to provide updated family information. Examples of information that must be updated may include, but are not limited to, the following

- Family income (upon 3<sup>rd</sup> year of enrollment)
- Physical and dental examinations (see health requirements for additional information)
- Emergency Data Forms
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Enrollment Forms

### **Change in Information**

Whenever there is a change in address, phone, emergency contacts, health providers, health conditions, work/school schedule, family situation, or other pertinent information, we ask that this information be submitted, **in writing**, as soon as the change occurs. **It is essential that we are able to reach you or a designated adult at all times, in case of an emergency situation, so please keep your addresses and phone numbers up to date with us.** It is also important for staff to be aware of any household changes or transitions your child may be experiencing. This will enable staff to be supportive, empathetic, and understanding of your child's individual needs.

### **Court Orders and Custody**

State law maintains that both 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. We cannot prohibit contact with either biological parent without current court orders.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

Registered sex offenders are not permitted to enter or loiter within 500 feet of any Head Start center. Biological parents of enrolled children who are registered sex offenders may enter a center only to conduct business related to the education of their child and are not permitted into the classroom when children are present. Children will not be released to any person listed as a registered sex offender, other than to biological parents with legal custody. All persons listed on the Emergency Data Form are run through the Registered Sex Offender Registry.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance at Head Start supports your child's development and kindergarten readiness. Children are expected to attend Head Start four (4) days a week, Monday through Thursday. Please remember to call your child's school whenever your child will be absent. A letter will be sent quarterly showing your child's ADA percentage.

### **Attendance Follow-Up**

Each day a child is absent, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call, text, or send a note to the center within one (1) hour of the beginning of class to inform staff of the reason for the child's absence. If no contact is made to the center by the parent/guardian, center staff will attempt to contact the family to determine the reason for the child's absence.

If a child misses three (3) consecutive days with no contact from parents, the Community Worker will complete a home visit to check on the well-being of the child and family.

### **Attendance Improvement Plan**

Head Start defines a "chronic absentee" as a child who misses 10% or more of school. For this program, that's 16 days or less. Parents with children identified as chronic absentees are required to establish an Attendance Improvement Plan with the assigned Community Worker. The purpose of this plan is to assist with improving children's Average Daily Attendance (ADA) percentage and on-time arrival to school. If attendance does not improve or the child ceases to attend Head Start with no contact from the parent/guardian for an extended amount of time, the child's slot will be considered an enrollment vacancy.

### **Long-Term, Consecutive Absences with No Contact**

If a child ceases to attend Head Start with no contact from the parent for an extended amount of time, the child slot will be considered open, and he/she will be returned to the wait list. Based on the program's attendance policy, the family's assigned Community Worker will complete required follow-up when absences occur. They will discuss attendance, initiate appropriate family support procedures, and develop a plan to improve attendance.

## **SCHOOL SUCCESS GOES HAND IN HAND WITH ATTENDANCE**

1. Too many absences in preschool can cause children to start school behind their peers.
2. Students fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
3. Absences affect the whole classroom, not just one child.

## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:**

1. Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
2. Lay out clothes and pack backpack the night before.
3. Make sure you review the school calendar regularly.
4. Ensure your child has the required health documents before school starts.
5. Don't let your child stay home and they are truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomachache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
6. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to your Teacher, Community Worker, or Center Director for advice on how to make them feel more comfortable.

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP

### **Sign In and Out**

Children are not in the care of Head Start until they are signed in. All children must be signed in daily, regardless of how they arrive at school. This includes children being signed in at classrooms, through the drive-up system, before boarding the bus, and arriving at a field trip. **Children cannot be dropped off before class begins – 8:00 am for full day and morning sessions and 12:30 for the afternoon session** Teachers use this time to prepare for class and are not available to provide care for your child. If a child is dropped off at a center more than 30 minutes past the start time of the class, the parent will be required to sign in at the office and provide a reason why the child is late.

Children must also be signed out daily to a person who is authorized on the emergency data form. All individuals listed on the Emergency Data Form must be at least 16 years of age and have valid identification. This could be a state-issued driver's license, state ID, military ID, passport, or school ID. Children must be signed out from all learning environments, which includes at the center, from the bus, and from a field trip. Children will not be released to any individual who is not the biological parent and not on the Emergency Data Form, so parents must be sure to keep their children's forms up to date. Changes to the form must be **made in writing** and not via the telephone. Also, make sure to tell people that you have authorized to pick up your child that they will need to bring valid identification with them when picking up the child.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

Children are expected to be picked up from the center or from the bus per schedule. The following measures are taken in case of delayed pick-up directly from centers or from buses:

1. Parent/guardian should notify their child's Center by telephone if they know they will be late picking up a child. **This will not excuse the late pick-up policy.**
2. If a child is not picked up by dismissal or the parent/guardian is not present when the bus arrives, a SIUC Head Start staff member will call the parent/guardian at home, work, and any cell phone numbers which are on file, so it is critical that this information up-to-date.
3. Parents/guardians agree to advise SIUC Head Start immediately of any changes regarding their personal contact information, including addresses and phone numbers for home and work. Parents/ guardians also agree to provide immediate notice to SIUC Head Start of any changes in their emergency contacts.
4. Children on buses will be brought back to their center at the end of the bus route, and the parent/guardian will be responsible to pick up the child from the center.
5. If a parent/guardian can't be reached after 10 minutes, emergency contacts on file will be called.
6. If the parent/guardian or emergency contacts cannot be reached after 60 minutes, according to DCFS licensing standards, the SIUC Head Start staff will contact the proper authorities. Parents may be charged late pick-up child care rate of \$1.00 per minute/per child.

7. The protection and wellbeing of your child remains the responsibility of SIUC Head Start until the parent/guardian, the designated emergency contact, or proper authorities arrive.
8. SIUC Head Start will never hold the child responsible for the situation. Any and all discussions of late pick-up will be with the parent/guardian and never with the child.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT

### **About**

Head Start is family-centered and designed to support parents as the most important influence in their child's life. Head Start encourages parents to become actively involved in their child's education, including direct involvement in decision-making groups within the program. The program strives to meet the needs and interests of the families enrolled.

SIU Carbondale Head Start works with the family as a whole and provides opportunities for parents to learn and grow. Family participation and education opportunities, events, and activities for parents are held on a regular basis throughout the year.

Parents are highly encouraged to participate in the program through a series of learning formats—at home, at centers and classrooms, online, and through the ClassTag app. Some ways parents participate are:

- Working with the child at home to develop school readiness skills
- Participating in parent contacts, home visits, and parent teacher conferences
- Participating in Self-Assessment and Community Assessment
- Participating in classroom activities
- Planning, developing, and attending parent activities
- Attending and supporting the monthly Parent Committee meetings
- Serving as officers of the Parent Committee
- Serving as elected members of the Policy Council
- Electing parents to represent them at Parent Committee meetings and Head Start Policy Council meetings
- Serving on the Male Advisory Panel and/or Health Advisory Committee
- Volunteering at Head Start centers

Parents come from diverse backgrounds and have a variety of educational training levels and skills and have many skills to offer the program. Parents interested in volunteering should contact the Center Director, Community Worker, or Teacher. All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Orientation. Additionally, regular volunteers are required to pass a DCFS background check and physical.

**Any parents/caregivers or community members volunteering MUST be vaccinated against COVID-19.**

## Parent Committee Meetings

All parents who have children enrolled in Head Start are members of the Head Start Parent Committee and are welcome to attend parent committee meetings. A parent at Head Start is defined as a Head Start child's mother or father, other family member who is a primary caregiver, foster parent, guardian, or the person with whom the child has been placed for purposes of adoption pending a final adoption decree.

Parent committees are established at the center level and meet monthly both in-person and virtually. Participation in parent committee meetings are extremely beneficial because it allows parents to:

- a) Participate in the governance of the Head Start program.
- b) Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services.
- c) Plan, conduct, and participate in programs and activities for parents and staff

## Father and Father-Figure Engagement

SIU Carbondale Head Start promotes the involvement of Fathers and Father-Figures in the program to significantly influence children's development and well-being. The program celebrates and strengthens the parenting roles by:

- Encouraging responsible role modeling
- Helping children and fathers and father-figures relate and connect
- Educating those caring for their children about parenting
- Creating opportunities for individuals with involvement and leadership

Two unique opportunities are provided by SIU Carbondale Head Start to help foster father & father-figure engagement:

1. **The MUSCLE (Men Understanding Small Children's Learning Experiences) Program:** MUSCLE encourages male involvement in children's literacy activities by recognizing the contribution of fathers and father figures who read to children. Certificates, storybooks, child and adult sized t-shirts (while supplies last) can be earned by men participating in the MUSCLE program.
2. **Male (Father Figure) Advisory Panel (MAP):** MAP is a group of Father and Father-Figures and community volunteers who meet both in person and virtually two to three times per school year. Participants are also encouraged to be involved in other scheduled events throughout the program year. The meetings typically last 1½ - 2 hours. and refreshments and/or meals are usually served during in-person attendings. The purpose is to:
  - Enhance the experiences of Head Start children by supporting the roles of fathers and father figures in their role in children's development
  - Plan program-wide involvement activities
  - Provide input about the needs/interests of fathers and father-figures
  - Learn about topics of interest to male role models
  - Help male role models to meet and get to know each other
  - Identify fathers and father-figures to serve as role models for children attending Head Start

## **Policy Council**

The Policy Council is made up of Head Start parents and representatives of the community. Representatives from Parent Committees are elected to serve as members of the Policy Council. Elected representatives serve a one-year term, from October to September, and no member may serve more than five total terms. No SIU Carbondale employees or members of their immediate families may serve on Policy Council except parents who occasionally substitute for regular staff.

Policy Council meetings are held monthly. On-site childcare and meals are provided at the meetings. Mileage reimbursement, at the established state rate and/or transportation arrangement, is provided for Policy Council members attending meetings. Staff will provide and verify forms for reimbursement for qualifying events. The direct functions of the Policy Council are:

- 1) Serve as a link to the Parent Committees, grantee governing body, public and private organizations and the communities they serve.
- 2) Communicate with parents about their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in Head Start and encourage participation in the program.
- 3) Assist Parent Committees and staff in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents using funds set aside from program budgets to support parent activities.
- 4) Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents and community organizations.
- 5) Establish and maintain procedures for working with the grantee or delegate agency to resolve community complaints about the program.

## **Health Services Advisory Committee**

The Health Services Advisory Committee is composed of Head Start staff, Head start parents and community health professionals. The committee offers support and guidance to the program's health services, which includes physical health, dental health, and mental health. The Health Services Advisory Committee meets two times each year—in Fall and Spring.

## **Employment Opportunities**

Parents may, when qualified, be considered for employment in positions in the Head Start program. Former and current parents are encouraged to apply for vacant positions and their Head Start background will be given consideration when positions are 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 protects their safety at all times.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

### **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 contribute \$30.02 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. Weekly homework is sent out with an in-kind form to return to the center – this is an important source of in-kind for the program, so parents are asked to complete the work and return the form in a timely manner.

### **All Volunteer Requirements**

- Show emotional maturity when volunteering
- Demonstrate respect for children and adults
- Seek guidance from the classroom teachers and the Center Director
- Keep all information about children and families confidential
- Commit to following the program's Standards of Conduct
- Complete a volunteer orientation before classroom volunteering

### **Regular Volunteer Requirements**

In addition to the above requirements for all volunteers, regular volunteers have additional requirements to ensure that all children are safe. Regular volunteers are defined as those persons who are scheduled to volunteer five or more days or 30 or more hours in the classroom. These additional requirements include:

- 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, and the program will pay for the physical.
- Submit to a DCFS background check and fingerprinting.

### **Volunteer Recognition**

SIU Carbondale Head Start values its parent volunteers and recognizes parent contributions annually. At end-of-the-year recognition events, all parents who volunteer over the course of the year receive a certificate. Additionally, Center Directors nominate a volunteer of the year award and this individual is recognized at the staff appreciation day at the end of school year. Volunteers are recognized during or at the end of the program year during designated events or at the end of their volunteer term. Parents should notify their Center Director when the volunteer term has ended to receive a volunteer certificate.

### **Volunteer Ethics and Standards**

All volunteers must abide by the standards of conduct detailed in the program's policies and procedures. These policies clearly guide the expectations for working with children in a way that always protects child safety. If a parent witnesses the behavior of an employee or another volunteer indicating that a child in the care of SIU Carbondale Head Start is being



mistreated, we encourage you to contact your Center Director immediately. The program will investigate the individual's behavior based on internal policies and procedures. The individual will be removed from the classroom until both internal and Department and Children and Family Services investigations are complete and a determination has been made about how to proceed with the appropriate placement of the individual.

### Volunteer Ideas

| <b>IN THE CLASSROOM...</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Activities</b>  | <b>Benefits</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist the teacher in classroom activities</li> <li>- Support teacher in preparing bulletin boards and other materials for educational activities</li> <li>- Read stories to children</li> <li>- Monitor children on the playground</li> <li>- Assist children with hand washing and tooth brushing</li> <li>- Accompany classroom on field trips</li> <li>- Help clean and sanitize</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn how a preschool operates</li> <li>- Gain experience in a possible career field</li> <li>- Strengthen a resume</li> <li>- Learn appropriate educational techniques</li> <li>- Gain an understanding of child development and classroom management</li> </ul> |
| <b>IN THE CENTER...</b>  |  |
| <b>Activities</b>  | <b>Benefits</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist the Center Director in carrying out activities for the center</li> <li>- Check all center/classroom first aid kits monthly</li> <li>- Assist in monthly updating of the parent/classroom bulletin boards</li> <li>- Ensure parent meeting and other notices are posted throughout centers</li> <li>- Copy, staple, collate printed materials</li> <li>- Set-Up and clean-up at special program events/meetings</li> <li>- Help ensure the center is clean and furnishings and materials are sanitized</li> <li>- Assist with routine maintenance of playground (clear branches, rake surfacing materials, clean tables/surfaces)</li> <li>- Assist with recruitment of families to the program by posting flyers in the community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn how a preschool operates</li> <li>- Gain experience in a possible career field</li> <li>- Strengthen your resume</li> <li>- Learn professional office procedures and techniques</li> <li>- Gain an understanding of child development</li> </ul>            |

## HEALTH

### Health Requirements

Your child's health impacts their total development and ability to benefit from the Head Start experience. Healthy children have better school outcomes and are ready for school success as they transition to kindergarten. 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 a complete physical exam, immunization record, TB screening, blood lead test with results, hemoglobin screening with results, and yearly dental exam. Head Start provides vision and hearing screenings for every child attending and the results are provided to parents.

| <b>PRIOR TO CHILD ENROLLMENT:</b>   |
|---|
| – All children must have a physical exam on file. The physical exam should include current immunizations. The exam cannot be more than six (6) months old prior to the date of enrollment, unless directly transferring from a DCFS licensed center or ISBE approved center. In this case, the physical exam cannot be more than one (1) year old prior to the date of enrollment. If a child is enrolled for a second or third year, an updated physical exam will be required once the initial physical exam expires. |
| – Blood lead test with results completed at or after 24 months of age   |
| –   |
| – TB test with results or TB risk assessment  |
| – Hemoglobin or Hematocrit blood test with results  |
| <b>WITHIN 45 DAYS AFTER ENROLLMENT:</b>   |
| – Each child's height and weight are assessed, and this information is shared with the family.  |
| – Each child's vision and hearing are tested. The family's assigned Community Worker or health services staff will follow up with families on areas of concern.   |
| <b>WITHIN 90 DAYS AFTER ENROLLMENT:</b>   |
| – All children must have a dental exam. This can be done through the family's dentist or by scheduling a appointment with the SIU Dental Clinic. The family's assigned Community Worker can assist in scheduling and transporting families to appointments as needed.   |
| <b>ANNUALLY AFTER ENROLLMENT:</b>   |
| – An updated physical exam  |
| – An updated dental exam  |

### Follow Up

It is critical for the healthy development of the child that parents work with center staff to follow up with needed treatment or health issues. This includes dental treatment, glasses, hearing assessments, high blood lead, etc. The family's assigned Community Worker will work directly with parents to complete any follow up.

## Medical Conditions

Some children enrolled in the program require special attention due to a medical or physical condition. Children with restrictions, medications, or special conditions at the time of enrollment or throughout the year must have written documentation from a physician. This is to be done on the SIU Carbondale Head Start Physician's Statement for Medical Condition and Limitations form. Due to requirements outlined in the State of Illinois DCFS Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers, a child will not be able to attend until all forms are received.

Health services employees provide individual attention to those families with special health concerns and ensure that children with special health needs are monitored closely while in the program, noting the child's general wellness daily.

Whenever the limitation or treatment is discontinued, parents should again provide written documentation from the child's physician stating the limitations were lifted.



### Medication at School

If possible, every effort should be made by parents to administer prescribed medication to their child before or after school hours. Please notify us if your child is receiving any type of medication at home, so we are aware and can watch for adverse signs or allergic reactions.

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

Prescribed medications must be in their original container with the full pharmacy label attached. When necessary, prescribed medications can be given at Head Start with a written statement from the physician and medication request form from the parent. All medication forms may be picked up in your center's front office. Please take the forms with you to your doctor visit.

Due to requirements outlined in the State of Illinois DCFS Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers, child requiring medication will not be able to attend until forms are and medication are received. Head Start will maintain documentation of when and who administered medication to your child. These forms will be reviewed with parents regularly.

## Illness

Children must not be sent to school when sick. Parents are to notify the center when their child is absent due to illness. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents are notified and requested to pick up their child immediately. In some instances, the center may request a statement from a physician stating that the child may return and participate in activities before that child can return to school. A child should be kept home and may be sent home for any of the following symptoms:

- Complains of not feeling well and is unable to participate comfortably in program activities (**See information on attendance: What you can do!**)
- Shows any flu-like symptoms (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea)

- Shows any symptoms that could be related with COVID-19
- Has a rash combined with fever
- Has open, oozing, or bleeding sores and/or has mouth sores with inability to control saliva
- Has live head lice or scabies
- Shows any sign of any communicable disease: Pink eye (conjunctivitis), impetigo, strep throat, chicken pox, etc.
- Has breathing difficulties or other signs or possible severe illness

## **Communicable Diseases**

During the course of the year, it is to be expected that a child enrolled in any childcare setting may be exposed to common communicable diseases. Keep in mind that it is not until about age six before a child's immunities begin to become fully established. The illness children experience during the pre-school years provides a means for their bodies to recognize and fight infections as they grow.

SIU Carbondale Head Start follows guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments, when determining exclusion and attendance policies for children that are exhibiting symptoms of any communicable disease (i.e. Pink eye, conjunctivitis, impetigo, strep throat, chicken pox etc.). Parents/guardians will be contacted regarding any health concerns and/or any requests that their child see a physician for diagnosis and treatment.

## **COVID Infections**

The program has been significantly impacted by the pandemic and follows recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control in handling positive cases of COVID. Children who test positive for COVID must isolate for a period of five days before returning to school and must be fever free for more than 24 hours. Parents of exposed children will be notified, but the classroom will continue to operate unless there is widespread infection in the class or center.

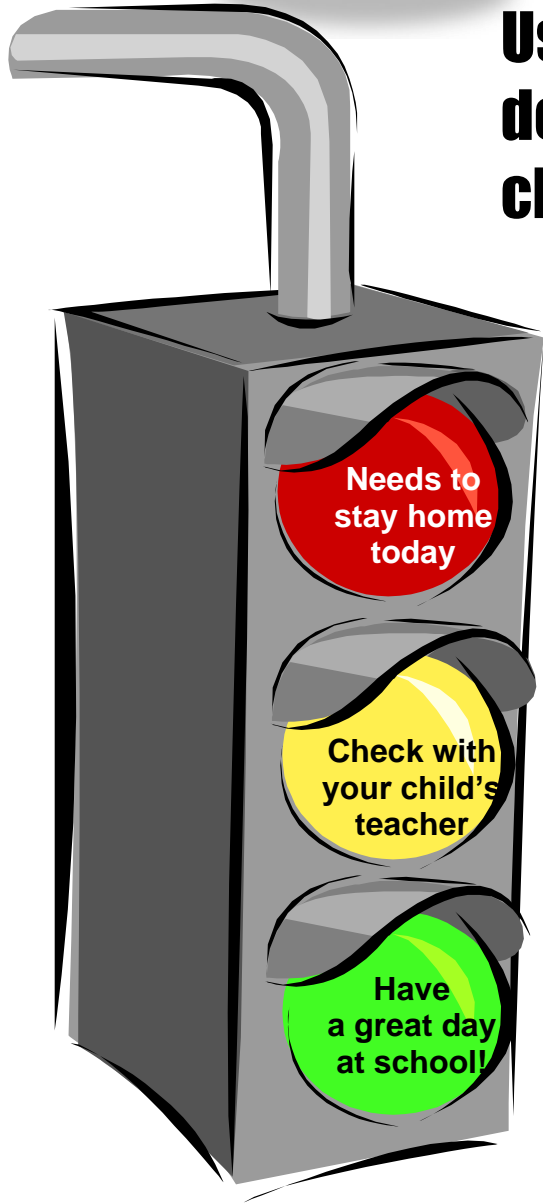
## **Hygiene**

It is the program's intent to reinforce healthy hygiene practices in children to develop lifelong healthy habits. To this end, all classrooms practice hand washing routinely and frequently with the children. Another healthy habit that practiced in the program is daily tooth brushing in all classrooms. Dental health is critical to the overall health of children, and tooth pain aggravates challenging behavior and health eating habits. To avoid the need for dental treatment, all parents are encouraged to help in this effort by promoting regular toothbrushing at home and acting as a role model for children.



# IS YOUR CHILD WELL ENOUGH TO BE IN SCHOOL TODAY?

**Use this guide to help you determine when to send your child to school:**



- Fever over 100 degrees (underarm)
- Any symptoms relating to COVID-19
- Open/infected sores not easily covered
- Vomiting more than twice in 24 hours
- Diarrhea
- Earache
- Red eyes with discharge
- Not feeling well enough to participate in school activities
- Live lice bugs

- Runny nose
- Cough
- Rash
- Been to the doctor, hospital, or emergency room due to illness
- Is not acting like usual
- Family member that is ill

- Feeling well today
- Has been well for the last 24 hours without use of fever medication

**Working together to keep children, families, and staff healthy!**

## **Hearing and Vision Screenings**

Head Start provides vision and hearing screenings for every enrolled child, and the results are provided to parents. This developmental screening is completed within the first 45 days of child attendance and completed by Certified Vision and Hearing Screening Technicians. If there is a concern about the screening, additional treatment or services may be needed. Parents should work together with their centers Community Worker to arrange all necessary follow-up services.

## **Height and Weight Assessment**

Height and weight assessments are completed twice during the program year for all children to track individual growth and development. Children are weighed in the fall and spring. Following the second assessment, the “How’s my child growing?” form is sent home to parents. This form shows a how much growth the child has had as well as the child’s BMI percentile. Parents are encouraged to follow up with their medical provider if they have any concerns.

## **Toothbrushing**

Children attending full day sessions will brush teeth twice and rinse once throughout their school day. Half day sessions (AM or PM) brush teeth once and rinse once. Toothbrushing is done at the table to help minimize the spread of germs. Each child has their own labeled toothbrush. Brushes are stored in a holder and out of the reach of children when not in use. Toothbrushes are replaced every three months during the program year. Parents are strongly encouraged to help children continue good dental habits at home.

## **90-Day Dental Exams**

Regular dental care prevents tooth decay and disease and improves chewing, nutrition, language skills, and overall health. A dental exam is required for every child within 90 days of entry to the program. The Community Worker may help in making appointments and transportation if needed.

SIU Head Start partners with SIU Community Dental Clinic to provide free dental exams. Exams are performed by a licensed dentist and completed at the health intake day annually 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 received ongoing routine preventive care and if needed, restorative treatment. If a child has a current established dental home, parents should inform Head Start staff so that the dental provider can be contacted.

## **SAFETY**

### **Drug Free Environment**

SIU Carbondale Head Start centers operate a healthy environment that is free from alcohol, illicit drugs, and smoke. State laws and University policies regarding these items are strictly enforced.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Illinois state law mandates, under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, that any school/day care personnel 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 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 call the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873) or use the new online reporting system located at <https://dcfsonlinereporting.dcf.illinois.gov/>. Parents may also contact the Center Director or Executive Director to discuss any concerns.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

Staff members are trained in first aid to handle all injuries. Minor injuries (bumps, scrapes, bruises) are reported to parents through the program's Injury/Incident Report, which is sent home with your child. Should a child receive an injury that requires medical care, Head Start provides the parents with an SIU Carbondale Accident/Medical Claim Form. If the child is taken for medical care, the parent must notify the Center Director, who will provide guidance. 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 the next person designated on the Emergency Data Form. This is why it is so important to keep the child's Emergency Data Form up to date.

## **Emergency Closing**

In the event of an emergency, the Head Start Executive Director is responsible to decide if classes will be canceled, postponed, or shortened. Examples of situations that might call for canceling or postponing classes would be inclement weather, natural disasters, or damage to center buildings.

All emergency cancellations or changes to the school day will be communicated through School Messenger. It is important that parents keep phone numbers updated all year round so that the notifications are received. The ClassTag application allows parents to receive text notifications regarding program events and other information and to have the ability to send texts to your center.

When bad weather causes early dismissal or cancellation of classes, parents are responsible for picking up their child in the allotted time frame or arrange for someone to be home when the child is dropped off by the bus.

## **Crisis Situations**

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.
- We are prepared to care for all children in times of critical situations. Staff are trained in first aid certificates and work with various local emergency services on emergency preparedness procedures.

## **FACILITIES**



### **Pest Management**

Public Act 93-381 Integrated Pest Management in Licensed Day Care Centers (effective July 1, 2004) requires licensed child care 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.

### **Video Surveillance**

The Carbondale and Marion facilities use video camera surveillance at the main entries, hallways, parking lots, and playgrounds. The purpose of video recording is to keep all children, staff, and parents safe while at the facilities.

### **Buzzer System**

Centers utilize a buzzer system and real-time video surveillance system to control who accesses facilities. Doors remain locked during the school day and visitors, including parents, will only have access to the building by being buzzed in. This security system is utilized to enhance the safety and security of Head Start facilities.



## TRANSPORTATION

### Bus Services



Transportation is provided for many children to and from our Head Start sites. Transportation is not guaranteed and is determined at the beginning of each program year based on serving the most children possible. Per Head Start standards, children should not be on the bus for more than one hour. This means that children who live far away from centers or well outside routes may not receive bussing to and from school. Children must be picked up on the curb side of the bus, so

buses may not be able to pick up/drop off on some streets or apartment/mobile home complex parking lots because they are not permitted to perform U-turns.

In many instances, an approved pick up point can be arranged if you live in an area where transportation will not be provided. Contact your Center Director to arrange an alternate pick up/drop off location if necessary.

Most bus transportation is provided by Jackson County Mass Transit. Most drivers are employees of the JCMTD and bus monitors are Head Start employees. All bus drivers comply with the Illinois Secretary of State Bus driver regulations. Head Start takes the responsibility of transportation very seriously and requests full cooperation in following our bus procedures and policies. Children's safety is the main concern and responsibility of the bus drivers and bus monitors. Parents must abide by the following bus rules listed below and also in the Transportation Agreement signed during the time of application.

### Bus Rules

1. Children should be ready and waiting for the bus, as Head Start's policy is a **one (1) minute wait at each house.**
2. The parent or designated person is responsible for walking children to and from the bus before and after each bus route. **Parents that have failed to walk children to and from the bus, and/or are not present at the bus stop to receive their children from the bus will be documented by the bus driver on a designated form. Failure to comply could result in the loss of bus service.**
3. Head Start assumes responsibility for children after they have entered the bus. Once released from the bus, children are the responsibility of the parent or designated person.
4. The parent or authorized person listed on the Emergency Data Form is responsible for being at the assigned drop-off location when the bus arrives. If the approved adult is not at the drop-off location, the child will not be released from the bus. The driver will contact a Head Start staff member via radio, who will attempt to contact an authorized adult listed on the Emergency Data Form. Head Start staff are not expected to work after normal work hours and therefore, cannot be responsible to care for your child when the approved adult is not at the designated drop off location.
5. When an approved adult is not at home or at the drop-off location and no contact can be made with persons on the Emergency Data Form, the program notifies the local police

department and the Department of Children and Family Services after 45 minutes (see late pick up policy). However, procedures vary with each individual case.

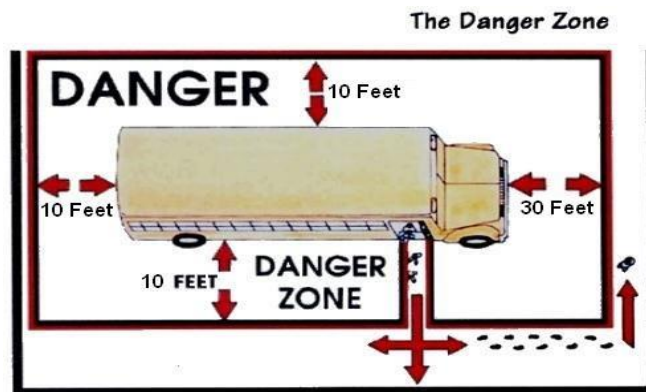
6. Parents should notify the center when their child will not attend class.
7. If there is a change in the child's pick-up or drop-off point, the parent/guardian **must contact the center director in writing** to determine if the change can be made. **Only the Center Director can authorize a change in bussing.**
8. For safety reasons, the following items are not allowed: rolling backpacks, food, drink, toys, or other personal items. Personal items are allowed if requested by the teacher for a special day and these items must fit in the child's backpack.

## Camera Usage

Video surveillance is used on all buses to enhance the safety of students and employees while in transport to and from school. Video is not reviewed on a regular basis and only pulled to investigate incidents on the bus which include situations including child or staff conduct and traffic incidents.

## The Danger Zone

Most children injured or killed in pupil transportation are injured outside the bus by motorists who fail to stop for the flashing red lights and extended stop arm. This area around the bus is often referred to as the “**DANGER ZONE.**” To keep all children safe, Head Start requires that all children be walked to and from the bus at all times.



## Communication

Parents are notified as soon as possible if transportation will be unavailable through calls, texts, and ClassTag. If the bus experiences mechanical issues while children are being transported, parents and/or other authorized persons (as listed on the child's Emergency Data Form) are contacted immediately to pick up their child.

**Remember to keep the Emergency Data Forms updated by contacting the Center Director and/or Community Worker.**

# CLASSROOM INFORMATION AND PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

## The Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to meet each child's individual and school readiness needs. The number of children in each class varies, but ranges between 15 and 17. Regardless of cultural background or special needs, every child is offered a variety of learning experiences designed to help them develop in the following areas:

- Physical Development and Health
- Social/Emotional Development
- Language
- Literacy
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Creative Arts
- Cognitive



In addition, children are provided opportunities to develop an appreciation for ethnic and cultural diversity. Children participate in indoor and outdoor play and field trips around the community. They are encouraged to express their feelings, develop a good feeling about themselves (positive self-concept), and get along with other children.

## General Daily Schedule

Below is the general daily schedule by class type. Parent must consider what their child is scheduled to do when dropping children off late or picking them up early. It's best for children to eat meals and snacks with their peers and have a full nap if possible.

### Half-day schedule:

| <u>AM Session</u> | <u>PM Session</u> |                            |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 8:00              | 12:30             | Arrival/Greeting           |
| 8:15              | 12:45             | Breakfast/Lunch            |
| 9:15              | 1:45              | Self-Selection/Gross Motor |
| 10:45             | 3:00              | Lunch/Snack                |
| 11:20             | 3:50              | Prepare for Departure      |
| 11:30             | 4:00              | Departure                  |

### Full-day schedule:

|       |                                     |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 8:00  | Arrival/Greeting                    |
| 8:15  | Breakfast/Clean-up                  |
| 9:00  | Self-Selection/Gross Motor          |
| 11:30 | Lunch/Clean-up/Prepare for Nap Time |
| 12:30 | Nap Time                            |
| 2:45  | Snack                               |
| 3:00  | Self-Selection/Gross Motor          |
| 3:50  | Prepare for Departure               |
| 4:00  | Departure                           |

## What to Bring and What NOT to Bring

Head Start provides all the classroom supplies that your child will need.

| SEND CHILDREN WITH   | DO NOT SEND CHILDREN WITH  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Play clothes*<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Shoes should be protective of toes, heels, and soles of little feet (no flip-flops)</li><li>– Clothes that are easily washable</li><li>– Simple clothing without complicated fastenings</li></ul></li><li>2. At least one extra set of clothing*<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Used in the event of a bathroom accident, paint spill, etc.</li><li>– Remember to send extra replacement clothing when the child wears them home or when the weather changes</li></ul></li><li>3. Jacket/coat, hat, and gloves*<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Used when weather is cold</li><li>– Children <u>WILL</u> go outside on clear days when the temperature is above 25° Fahrenheit (wind chill included)</li></ul></li><li>4. A backpack or bag for belongings (no rolling backpacks due to bus safety)</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Any toys from home unless requested by the teacher for an activity such as show and tell</li><li>2. A rolling backpack</li><li>3. Snack or other food items unless approved by the Center Director in advance (see Treat/Snack Policy on page 37)</li><li>4. Inappropriate clothing, such as dress clothes or other clothing that cannot get messy</li><li>5. Expensive jewelry that may be lost during play. The program does not reimburse parents for lost jewelry.</li><li>6. Any item that will not fit in the child's backpack or bag</li></ol> |

\* Write the child's name on all belongings

## School Readiness Goals

The program has 13 school readiness goals that are implemented through developmentally appropriate and individualized activities in the weekly lesson plans. Teachers assess children three times a year to determine progress in meeting the school readiness goals. These outcomes are assessed by individual child, classroom, center, and program and inform future activities within the classroom and for individual children.

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

## School Readiness Skills

The school readiness skills listed on this page were identified by local schools as key to a successful transition to kindergarten.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Relates to the skills children develop that allow them to interact with others and to express their emotions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Easily separates from parents</li> <li>○ Responds appropriately to directions given by adults</li> <li>○ Follows one or two step directions</li> <li>○ Understands there are rules and consequences for their actions</li> <li>○ Understands turn taking, waiting, and not interrupting others</li> <li>○ Understands the meaning of “no”, “please,” and “don’t do that”</li> <li>○ Demonstrates respect/manners towards themselves, others, and possessions</li> <li>○ Shows ability to keep track of personal belongings</li> <li>○ Demonstrates the ability to solve small problems on their own</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COGNITION</b></p> <p>Relates to the areas of math, science, social studies, and the arts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Counts in correct order from 1-20</li> <li>○ Recognizes numbers 1-20</li> <li>○ Matches quantities 1-10</li> <li>○ Names 9 basic colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, black, brown, white)</li> <li>○ Classifies objects based on color, size, shape, and quantity</li> <li>○ Names basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, star, oval)</li> <li>○ Understands positional words (on/off, under/over, in/out, up/down, in front of/behind)</li> <li>○ Recognizes alike/different</li> <li>○ Recognizes and names common objects and pictures</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LANGUAGE AND LITERACY</b></p> <p>Relates to the skills necessary for speaking, understanding, listening, communicating, reading, and writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speaks in complete sentences understandably</li> <li>○ Able to discuss picture/events from a story or experience</li> <li>○ Identifies rhyming words</li> <li>○ Has exposure to books and nursery rhymes</li> <li>○ Recognizes name in print</li> <li>○ Writes first and last name using upper and lowercase letters (i.e. John)</li> <li>○ Identifies letters, especially those in own name</li> </ul>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Relates to gross and fine motor skills and the ability to take care of their own needs, is healthy and ready to learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Correctly holds a pencil, crayon, etc.</li> <li>○ Demonstrates ability to use scissors, glue, paint, and other art materials appropriately</li> <li>○ Demonstrates ability to zip, snap, and button clothing items</li> <li>○ Demonstrates ability to dress themselves and care for personal bathroom needs</li> <li>○ Bounces a ball</li> </ul>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>APPROACHES TO LEARNING</b></p> <p>Relates to the child’s response to learning situations, such as the child's curiosity, flexibility, or persistence at challenging tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focuses on an activity for at least 10 minutes</li> </ul>   |   |

## Newsletters

Parents will receive monthly classroom and agency newsletters during the school year. Calendars list classroom activities, field trips and special days. The agency newsletter contains Head Start news, parent/child activity suggestions, and agency/center announcements and activities. It is important for parents to read both newsletters to be informed of center, classroom, and program updates and to be a part of the child's education.

## Curriculum

SIU Carbondale Head Start implements the Creative Curriculum, a research-based curriculum that supports a developmentally appropriate approach to learning for preschool-age children. Children are taught in a play-based approach through a series of study guides that promote language, literacy, math, science, creative arts, social emotional development, cognitive, physical development and health, and English language development. Development of good health and nutrition habits, personal safety habits, and self-help skills are also individualized. The curriculum is designed to meet your child's individual needs. Children participate in daily indoor and outdoor play as well as quarterly field trips around the community. Children are encouraged to express their feelings, manage emotions, and get along with other children and adults.

Children are free to choose from a variety of learning interest areas located in each classroom during self-selection. Interest areas are equipped with materials that go along with teacher interactions and learning objectives to build children's skills and promote school readiness. The interest areas included in the classrooms are listed below:

- Blocks
- Dramatic Play
- Technology
- Library
- Art
- Discovery
- Toys and Games
- Sand and Water
- Music and Movement
- Outdoors



## Screenings

Head Start is mandated to provide health and developmental screenings to all 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, developmental skills, social-emotional development, and hearing and vision. Results of your child's screenings are provided to you, but otherwise kept confidential.

## **Outcomes**

Every child's progress is assessed throughout the school year. Teachers work with each child to complete assessment, rating scales, portfolios, and record observations. Results from these assessments are shared with you throughout the year and used to plan educational experiences based on each child's strengths, needs, and interests.

## **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 also acknowledges that the parent is the child's first and most important teacher. We will work closely with each child's family to assess current beliefs and practices at home in general and/or about 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.

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
- Any form of 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)

The program defines a “persistent challenging behavior” as:

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

If a child exhibits persistent challenging 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 to implement. 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.

### **Home Visits and Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Enrolled families participate in **two home visits** and **two parent-teacher conferences** with teaching staff during the year. 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 activities
- Provide teachers with feedback regarding curriculum ideas and instructional materials
- Discuss screening and assessment results
- Enhance knowledge and understanding of child’s development
- Encourage parents to participate in upcoming events

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



### **Field Trips**

Field trips are scheduled throughout the year. They are designed to enhance a curriculum study, spark the child’s interest, and provide an opportunity for children to practice and develop social skills in a variety of settings.

Written permission **MUST** be obtained from parent or guardian for each trip. Parents are notified in advance of each scheduled trip and are encouraged to attend with their child. To ensure safety, field trips require a minimum of four adults per classroom to keep adult to child ratio low, and at least one staff member must be certified in First Aid and CPR.



## **MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITIES SERVICES**

### **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 role of the Head Start Mental Health service area is:

- 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

### **Disabilities**

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

- Complete developmental screenings on each child to identify possible delays
- Implement individualized supports based on screening results
- Work with families to initiate referrals to the local special education agency
- 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 and special education agencies to provide services
- Educate parents on their child's disability, referral process, and rights and responsibilities

## **NUTRITION**

### **Daily Meals and 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 or extended day programs to receive one-half to two-thirds of their recommended daily nutritional allowances.

- Morning children will receive breakfast and lunch
- Afternoon children receive lunch and snack
- Full-day children receive breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack
- Parent input and feedback is used during menu development

Staff are trained to create a pleasant meal atmosphere which develops acceptance of a variety of foods and positive attitudes toward eating. Nutrition activities for children are conducted in the classroom on a monthly basis. Parent education covering a variety of nutrition topics is provided through formal workshops/trainings, newsletters, and informational handouts.

## Family Style Meals

Meals and snacks are normally served family style. Due to COVID, however, teachers will place the food on the children's plates at the tables. Mealtime is an opportunity for learning and developing good health habits, socialization skills, self-help skills, decision-making skills, and communication skills. Head Start adheres to strict requirements set forth by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), DCFS, and HSPPS. 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. The Health and Nutrition Coordinator, who is also a nutritionist, is available to parents for one-on-one nutrition counseling.



### Treat and Snack Approvals

Head Start welcomes parents to send in treats and snacks for special occasions. Part of the program's mission is to promote child health and development. Any parent who wants to send food to school must receive prior approval by completing the treat and snack form (page 37) and follow these general guidelines:

1. Parents must select **nutritious** foods. Suggestions of food items - muffins, dried fruits, raisins, popcorn, snack crackers, graham crackers. Snacks must be nut-free and adhere to health restrictions of all children in the classroom.
2. Parents must send a note with their child to the center director three (3) days in advance stating what food item you would like to bring and on which day.
3. The center director will send a note home with the child giving consent to send the food item(s).
4. All food brought in must be pre-packed and in the original container, unopened.
5. Parents may choose to bring party plates, napkins, cups, etc., instead of a food item, since Head Start already provides a snack.





## INFORMATION

My Child's Head Start Center: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

My Child's Community Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child's Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child's Center Director: \_\_\_\_\_

My Child's Bus Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

My Child's Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

My Child's Dentist: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Poison Control Center # (800) 222- 1222 or [www.poison.org](http://www.poison.org)

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