

# SIU CARBONDALE HEAD START

## 2025-2026



# Parent Handbook

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

***IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS***

**CENTER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMUNITY WORKER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CELL PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CENTER DIRECTOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CELL PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL START TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL ENDING TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**SIU CARBONDALE HEAD START**  
**Program Year 2025-26**  
**School Year Schedule**

August 18, 2025	Pre-Service
August 19, 2025	Center Staff Return
August 20, 2025	Open House (11 am and 5 pm)
August 21-22, 2024	Home Visits
August 25, 2025	<b><u>Children's First Day</u></b>
September 1, 2025	Labor Day Holiday, <b>No School</b>
October 10-13, 2025	Staff Training Days, <b>No School</b>
November 11, 2025	Veterans Day Holiday, <b>No School</b>
November 24, 2025	Parent-Teacher Conferences, <b>No School</b>
November 25-26, 2025	Staff Training Days, <b>No School</b>
November 27-28, 2025	Thanksgiving Holiday, <b>No School</b>
December 24-31, 2025	Holiday/Administrative Closure, <b>No School</b>
January 1-2, 2026	New Year's Holiday, <b>No School</b>
January 5, 2026	Staff In-Service Training Day, <b>No School</b>
January 6, 2026	<b><u>Children Return to School</u></b>
January 19, 2026	Martin Luther King Holiday, <b>No School</b>
February 13, 2026	Staff Training Day, <b>No School</b>
February 16, 2026	Parent-Teacher Conferences, <b>No School</b>
March 9-13, 2026	Spring Break, <b>No School</b>
April 23-24, 2026	Home Visits, <b>No School</b>
May 14, 2026	<b><u>Children's Last Day</u></b>
May 15, 2026	Center Staff Last Day

## I. PROGRAM INFORMATION

### 1. Overview

Head Start is a federally funded pre-K program serving three to five-year-old children and their families. Head Start provides high-quality care for enrolled children from experienced and credentialed teaching staff. Children and families receive comprehensive services that are intended to increase the well-being and success of the entire family. These include:

- A. **Comprehensive program:** In addition to pre-k education, the program provides services for the family including support, goal setting, education, and leadership opportunities.
- B. **School readiness:** We prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- C. **Parent involvement:** Parents are the first and most important teachers of children.
- D. **Physical, Dental, and Mental Health Support:** The program provides screenings, education, and direct services to support the overall health of children and families.
- E. **Nutrition:** Children are served meals and snacks to meet a portion of their daily nutritional needs.

### 2. Centers

SIU Carbondale Head Start is funded to serve 290 children through center-based classes that operate Monday through Friday at one of the program's four sites in Jackson and Williamson counties:

CENTER	ADDRESS	PHONE	FAX
Carbondale	1900 N. Illinois Avenue Carbondale, IL 62901	618-453-2440	618 453-5399
John A. Logan	700 Logan College Drive, D270 Carterville, IL 62918	618-985-2828, ext. 8241	N/A
Marion	907 N. Vicksburg Street Marion, IL 62959	618-967-2072 618-713-5343	618-997-8144
Murphysboro	223 S. 13 <sup>th</sup> Street Murphysboro, IL 62966	618-967-2118	618-565-1087
Administration	1906 N. Illinois Ave. Carbondale, IL 62901	618-453-6448	618-453-3888

### 3. Class Types

For the 2025-2026 program year, the following class types are available:

- A. Half-Day Morning Sessions: 8:00 am–11:30 am (Carbondale, Murphysboro only)
- B. Half-Day Afternoon Sessions: 11:30 am–3:00 pm (Carbondale, Murphysboro only)
- C. Full-Day Session: 8:00 am–3:00 pm (all locations)

Full day sessions are prioritized for working parents, full-time students, and families with other documented needs indicating a full-day placement.

## II. CHILD AND FAMILY RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

### 1. 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.



### 2. 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. 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 copy requests for children's files will be processed within two (2) weeks.

### 3. 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.

### 4. Certified Birth Certificate

A certified birth certificate is not required to enroll a child in Head start. However, 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. 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.

Jackson County: 618-687-7360

Williamson County: 618-997-1301

### 5. Requesting a Transfer

Parents may contact the Center Director or Community Worker to request a transfer to a different classroom or center. All requests must be made in writing and include why the transfer is being requested. Not all requests can be honored due to ratio and placement concerns. Parents will be notified in writing within one (1) week if the transfer is approved.

## **6. Annual Enrollment Updates**

Once your child is enrolled in SIUC Head Start and attending through the end of their first school year, they are automatically eligible to continue attending the following year. Center staff will contact you in the spring to confirm whether your child will be returning the following school year. If your child is going into their third year with Head Start, eligibility will need to be re-determined.

## **7. 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 can always reach you or a designated adult in case of an emergency situation. Please immediately inform staff of any changes to addresses and/or phone numbers.** 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.

## **8. Court Orders and 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.

## **9. Registered Sex Offenders**

By law, 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 must be cleared through the Registered Sex Offender Registry. If someone on the Emergency Data Form has a common name, center staff will contact you for more information.

### III. 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. Don't let your child stay home unless 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.
5. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to your Teacher or Community Worker for advice on how to make them feel more comfortable.

#### **1. Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance at Head Start supports your child's development and future school success. Children who attend school regularly and on-time have been shown to have better academic outcomes and opportunities.

The arrival time for the morning and full-day sessions is 8:00-8:15am. The arrival time for the afternoon session is 11:30-11:45. Arrival will be denied after 9am and 12:30, respectively, except when approved by the Center Director. Classes are held five (5) days a week, Monday through Friday.

#### **2. Daily Attendance and Absentee Follow-Up**

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, you must call, text, or message staff via Learning Genie within one (1) hour of the beginning of class to inform staff of the reason for the child's absence. If your child is absent and you do not notify the center, staff will contact you to ensure your child's well-being and to offer any needed support. In following Head Start guidelines [*HSPS 1302.16(a.2.iii-v)*], staff will record the specific reason for the child's absence (fever, ear infection, family illness, etc.).

After three (3) consecutive days with no contact from the parent/guardian, the Community Worker will complete a home visit to check on the well-being of the child and family. If we are unable to contact you, a letter will be mailed regarding your child's participation in the program. After two weeks of no contact, your child may be placed back on the waitlist. Re-enrollment is possible once contact is re-established.

If a situation arises and you must keep your child out of school for an extended period, or if you experience a crisis that will impact your child's attendance, you should discuss this with center staff.

#### **3. Attendance Success Plan**

Each child enrolled in Head Start is monitored for chronic absenteeism. Head Start defines "chronic absenteeism" as a child who misses 10% or more school days. For this program, that's 16 days or less. Parents with children identified as chronic absentees are required to establish an Attendance Success Plan with the assigned Community Worker. The purpose of this plan is to assist with improving

children's attendance 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 will be placed on the waitlist.

#### 4. Long-Term, Consecutive Absences with No Contact

If a child ceases to attend Head Start with no contact from the parent for two weeks, the child's slot will be considered open, and the child will be returned to the wait list.

Full-day classes are prioritized for families with work, school, or other commitments, and many children are waiting for one of these slots. Children in full-day classes who fall below 65% attendance may be transitioned to half-day if absences are unexcused.

### IV. DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP



#### 1. Sign-In and Sign-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, 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 11:30 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 including the center, the bus, or field trips. **Children will not be released to any individual who is not the biological parent or not on the Emergency Data Form,** so be sure to keep their children's forms up to date. Changes to the form must be made in writing. Any person you have authorized to pick up your child will need to bring valid identification with them when picking up the child.

**IMPORTANT:** *Never leave a sibling or other child in a car when dropping off your Head Start child. Leaving children unattended is a significant safety risk and will be addressed by the Center Director.*

#### 2. 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 parent contact someone to come to the center to drive both parent and child home. If the individual has legal rights or guardianship and demands to leave with the child, law enforcement will be notified immediately.

### 3. Late Pick Up Policy

Children are expected to be picked up from the center or from the bus per schedule. Excessive late pick-ups may require parents to complete an Attendance Success Plan with center staff. The following measures are taken in case of delayed pick-up directly from centers or from buses:

- A. 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.**
- B. If a child is not picked up by dismissal time or the parent/guardian is not present when the bus arrives, a SIU Carbondale Head Start staff member will call the parent/guardian at home, work, and any cell phone numbers on file. It is critical this information is up-to-date.
  - If the parent does not answer when called, the bus route will continue with the child. If the parent calls while the route is still in action, the center will arrange a meet up spot between the bus and parent to drop off the child when possible. At times, it may be required for the parent to meet the bus at the center upon completion of the route.
- C. Children not picked up 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.
- D. If a parent/guardian can't be reached after 10 minutes, emergency contacts on file will be called.
- E. If the parent/guardian or emergency contacts cannot be reached after 45 minutes, according to DCFS licensing standards, SIUC Head Start staff will contact the local police to discuss the situation and next steps.
- F. **Parents may be charged late pick-up child care rate of \$1.00 per minute/per child.**
- G. The protection and wellbeing of your child remains the responsibility of SIUC Head Start until the parent/guardian, designated emergency contact, or police arrive.
- H. SIUC Head Start will never hold the child responsible for the situation. All discussions of late pick-up will be with the parent/guardian and never with the child.

As a condition of enrollment, parents are required to sign acknowledgement of the Late Pick Up Policy with intake paperwork.

## V. FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

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. All references to "parent(s)" fall under this definition.

### 1. 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 also serves as a link between families and the community. Every family enrolled in SIU Carbondale Head Start is assigned a Community Worker who will:

- A. Help families meet the child's health and dental requirements

- B. Act as the family's advocate
- C. Help the family set and reach goals
- D. Help the family to identify and overcome challenges
- E. Connect families to agencies and resources in the community for assistance and support
- F. Encourage families to volunteer at Head Start
- G. Drive children and/or parents to scheduled appointments when needed
- H. Help families in crisis or emergency situations
- I. Help families obtain Head Start services, such as learning about nutrition, good health, childhood development, and more
- J. Inform families of family engagement events and other opportunities to be involved at Head Start
- K. Follow-up with parents when the child is absent from school and assist the family to improve attendance when needed

## **2. Family Goal Setting and Documentation**

The program is required to assess family needs, assist in the development of family goals, and document the family's goal progress over the course of the school year. We encourage all families to take advantage of this opportunity to set goals and receive support from the program to achieve these goals. Below is a description of the process:

- A. Each family participates in the Family Needs Assessment process with their assigned Community Worker within 90 days of child enrollment. This assessment is typically completed during the Community Worker's visit to the family's home.
- B. Based on the results of the Family Needs Assessment, each family and 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, family, or child focused. Some examples include furthering a parent's education, learning English as a second language (ESL), obtaining employment, completing health requirements, etc.
- C. The Community Worker will follow-up with families at least once per month to discuss progress towards goals. This may occur in person or via telephone. These personal visits serve as opportunity for Community Workers and families to work together in building upon the family's strengths and identify areas for support and growth.
- D. 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.
- E. A follow-up assessment will be conducted at the end of the year to determine and document family growth.

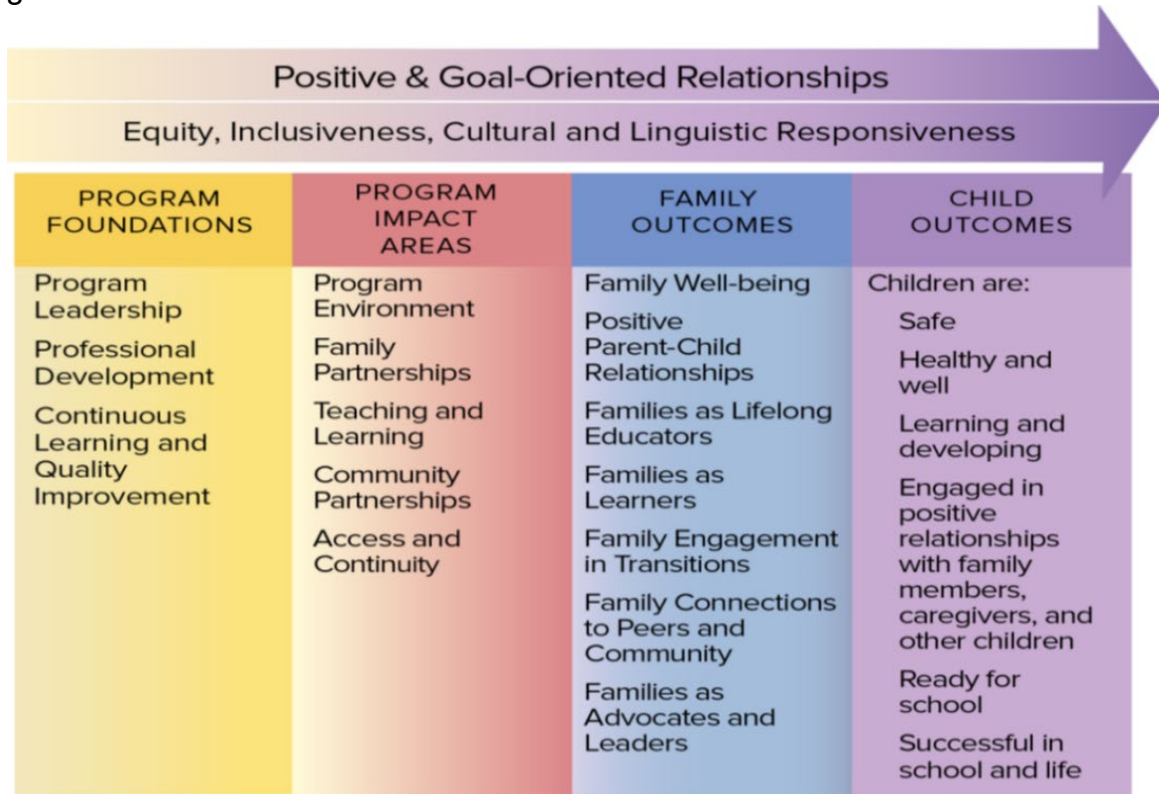
## **3. Parent Curriculum**

Head Start offers opportunities for parents to participate in research-based parenting curriculum frameworks. These frameworks are 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 SIU-C Head Start is Your Journey Together (YJT), with additional opportunities provided using the Chicago Parent Program (CPP). Both curricula, offered in group settings, promote the social and emotional well-being and resilience of families and children.

## VI. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

### 1. PFCE Framework

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework enhances and coordinates program services to engage families and communities. This framework is culturally and linguistically responsive and has achieved better outcomes for children and families by emphasizing positive, goal-oriented relationships. The visual below shows the components of the PFCE framework which guides the program's approach to family engagement.



### 2. Importance of Involvement

Head Start is family-centered and encourages parents to become actively involved in their child's education. This includes direct involvement in decision-making groups within the program. SIU Carbondale Head Start strives to meet the needs and interests of the families enrolled while providing opportunities for parents to learn and grow. 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 Learning Genie.

### 3. How to Be Involved

Parents are highly encouraged to participate in the program through a series of learning formats - at home, at centers and classrooms, online, and through Learning Genie.

Some ways parents participate are:

- A. Working with the child at home to develop school readiness skills
- B. Participating in parent contacts, home visits, and parent teacher conferences

- C. Participating in Self-Assessment and Community Assessment
- D. Participating in classroom activities
- E. Planning, developing, and attending parent activities
- F. Attending and supporting the monthly Parent and Child Together (PACT) Activities and Parent meetings
- G. Serving as elected members of the Policy Council
- H. Serving on the Male Advisory Panel (MAP)
- I. Serving on Health Advisory Committee (HSAC)
- J. Serving on the Pyramid Model Leadership Team (PMLT)

#### **4. Parent Meetings and Parent and Child Together Activities (PACT)**

All parents who have children enrolled in Head Start are welcome to attend parent meetings. Parent meetings and PACT Activities are determined by families and staff at the individual centers. Notifications of upcoming parent meetings and PACT activities will be made via newsletters, Learning Genie, and classroom/center postings. Parent meetings provide updates from the center, opportunity for parents to ask questions and/or provide feedback on center happenings, and interactive opportunities for parents and children to engage in learning together.

#### **5. 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. A Father-Figure at Head Start is defined as an adult male who is important in the life of a child. This may include adoptive fathers, foster fathers, older brothers, godfathers, uncles, legal guardians, family friends, etc.

The program celebrates and strengthens the father and father-figure engagement by:

- A. Encouraging responsible role modeling
- B. Helping children and fathers and father-figures relate and connect
- C. Educating those caring for their children about parenting
- D. Creating opportunities for involvement and leadership

SIU Carbondale Head Start offers a unique opportunity to help foster father and father-figure engagement through involvement with the Male Advisory Panel (MAP). MAP is a group of Father and Father-Figures and male 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 are usually served during in-person attendings. MAP advises on the types of Father and Father-Figure activities to implement, ways to encourage increased participation, and other related needs. Fathers and Father-figures wishing to join MAP should notify their Community Worker of their interest.

#### **6. Policy Council**

The Policy Council is made up of Head Start parents and community representatives. Representatives from each center are elected to serve as members of the Policy Council. These elections take place during the September parent meetings. 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. The direct functions of the Policy Council are:

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

## **7. Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)**

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.

## **8. Pyramid Model Leadership Team (PMLT)**

The Pyramid Model Leadership Team is comprised of Head Start staff, parents, and community members. The leadership team oversees the implementation of Pyramid Model and supports child, family, and staff social-emotional development and well-being. The leadership team meets monthly per the agency calendar.

## **9. In-Kind**

The program is required to generate 10% 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 \$35.17 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.

## **10. 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 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.

## **11. 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. Siblings are welcome to attend special events held outdoors or at off-site locations with parent supervision.

## 12. Parent Code of Conduct

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

Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behave in an orderly manner</li><li>• Model safe actions</li><li>• Follow confidentiality policies</li><li>• Supervise child/ren while under your care</li><li>• Use positive methods of child guidance</li><li>• Keep contact information up to date with center staff</li></ul>
Be Kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speak in a respectful manner</li><li>• Respect the rights of others</li><li>• Address concerns reasonably and respectfully</li></ul>
Be Ready to Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turn cell phones on silent or off</li><li>• Actively participate in school activities with your child</li><li>• Adhere to all attendance policies</li></ul>

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

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

When violations 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 Code of Conduct, SIU Carbondale Head Start reserves the right to:

- A. Restrict access to program children, classrooms, and activities
- B. Remove the child's name from the Waiting List
- C. Contact the Department of Children and Family Services
- D. Contact the police if safety of the children, families, and staff is threatened
- E. Take civil or criminal action

## VII. VOLUNTEERING

### 1. Importance of Volunteers

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 mealtime, assisting on the playground, 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.

Individuals who volunteer are required to complete the Volunteer Orientation. This orientation is provided by administrative staff.



### 2. Requirements of All Volunteers

- A. Show emotional maturity when volunteering
- B. Demonstrate respect for children and adults
- C. Commit to following the program's Standards of Conduct
- D. Complete a volunteer orientation before classroom volunteering

### 3. Additional Requirements of Regular\* Volunteers

Regular volunteers have requirements in addition to those listed above in helping ensure the safety of Head Start's children, families, and staff. Additional requirements include:

- A. 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.
- B. Submit to a DCFS background check and fingerprinting.

\*As defined by DCFS Licensing Standard 407.180

#### 4. 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.

### VIII. HEALTH

#### 1. 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/hearing screenings as well as height/weight assessments for every enrolled child. Assessment results are provided to parents.



#### **PRIOR TO CHILD ATTENDING:**

- 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 or ISBE-approved center. In this case, the date of the physical exam cannot exceed more than one (1) year prior to the date of enrollment. If a child is enrolled for a second or third year, an updated physical exam will be required upon expiration of the initial physical exam.
- 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

#### **WITHIN 45 DAYS OF ENROLLMENT:**

- Height and weight are assessed. This information is shared with the family.
- Vision and hearing are tested. Results are shared with the family. The Health Specialist will follow up with families on areas of concern.

#### **WITHIN 90 DAYS OF ENROLLMENT:**

- All children *must* have a dental exam. This can be done through the family’s dentist or by scheduling an appointment with the SIU Dental Clinic. The Health Specialist will assist in scheduling and transporting families to appointments as needed.

#### **ANNUALLY AFTER ENROLLMENT:**

- An updated physical exam
- An updated dental exam



## **2. 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.

***Note: 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 may be given at Head Start with a written statement from the physician *and* medication request form from the parent.

## **3. Follow Up**

To support healthy development of the child, it is critical for parents follow up with identified health concerns or treatment needs. This includes dental treatment, glasses, hearing assessments, high blood lead, etc. The Health Specialist will work directly with parents to complete follow-up care.

## **4. 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 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, 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.**

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.

## **5. 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:

- A. Inability to participate comfortably in program activities
- B. Flu-like symptoms (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea)
- C. Rash combined with fever
- D. Open, oozing, or bleeding sores and/or mouth sores with inability to control saliva
- E. Live head lice or scabies
- F. Signs of communicable disease: pink eye (conjunctivitis), impetigo, strep throat, chicken pox, etc.
- G. Breathing difficulties or other signs or possible severe illness

## **6. Communicable Diseases**

During a school year, it is to be expected that children enrolled in childcare settings may be exposed to common communicable diseases. It is not until approximately age six that children's immunities begin to become fully established. Illnesses children experience during these early years provide a means for their bodies to recognize and fight infections as they grow.

When determining exclusion and attendance policies for children that are exhibiting symptoms of any communicable disease, SIU Carbondale 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 any 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, COVID, fifth disease, impetigo, pin worms, hand foot and mouth, flu, and ring worm. Notification will be made via Learning Genie as well as notices posted in the classroom(s). If your child has a communicable disease, please inform your Center Director immediately.



## **7. Hygiene**

The program promotes healthy hygiene practices in children to support the development of lifelong healthy habits. All classrooms practice routine hand washing with the children. We ask parents to reinforce handwashing habits by having their child wash hands regularly at home. Throughout the day, children at Head Start will wash before each meal and after the following: using the restroom, blowing or wiping their nose, playing outside, and handling animals or soiled items.

## **8. Toothbrushing**

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

## 11. 90-Day Dental Exams

Regular dental care prevents tooth decay and disease and improves chewing, nutrition, language skills, and overall health. 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 received ongoing, routine preventive care and, if needed, restorative treatment.* If a child has an established dental provider, parents should inform Head Start staff so that provider may be contacted for dental records.

## IX. SAFETY

### 1. 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. State law prohibits use of these substances on University property. Smoking in front of children at any of the centers, on field trips, during Head Start activities, near the bus, or at bus stops is prohibited.

### 2. Weapons

Weapons are not permitted in or on school property. This includes weapons in cars when dropping off or picking up children. University police will be contacted if a weapon is brought onto school property.



### 3. Child Abuse and 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 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.

### 4. Accidents and 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. This report 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. 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.

## **5. 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 disasters, or damage to center buildings. All emergency cancellations or changes to the school day will be communicated through Learning Genie and call/text. In the event of early dismissal or cancellation of classes, parents are responsible for either picking up their child in the allotted time frame or arranging for someone to be home when the child is dropped off by the bus.

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

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.

## **X. FACILITIES**



### **1. 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.

### **2. Video Surveillance**

Head Start facilities use video camera surveillance to aide 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.

### 3. 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.

## XI. TRANSPORTATION

### 1. Bus Services

Transportation is provided for some children to and from our Head Start sites. Transportation availability is prioritized based on the following: enrollment in half-day sessions (AM or PM), homeless and foster children, and family proximity to established routes. *Transportation is not guaranteed for all enrolled children.* Per Head Start standards, children may not be on the bus for more than one hour. This means that children who live far away from centers or well outside established routes may not be eligible for bussing. Children must be picked up on the curb-side of the bus. Buses may not be able to pick up/drop off on some streets or multi-family dwelling parking lots because they are not permitted to perform U-turns.

In some instances, an approved pick-up point may be arranged if you live in an area where transportation cannot be provided. Contact your Center Director to determine whether an alternate pick up/drop off location is available.

Bus transportation is provided by Jackson County Mass Transit District (JCMTD). Drivers are employees of 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 policies and procedures. Children's safety is the main concern and responsibility of the bus drivers and bus monitors. *Parents must abide by the bus rules listed below.* These rules have been provided on the Transportation Agreement signed during the time of application.

### 2. Bus Rules

- A. Children should be ready and waiting for the bus. Head Start's policy is a **one (1) minute wait at each house.**
- B. The parent or designated person is responsible for walking children to and from the bus. Parents that do not 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.
- C. Head Start assumes responsibility for children upon boarding the bus. Once released from the bus, children are the responsibility of the parent or designated person.
- D. 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. Once the one-minute wait time

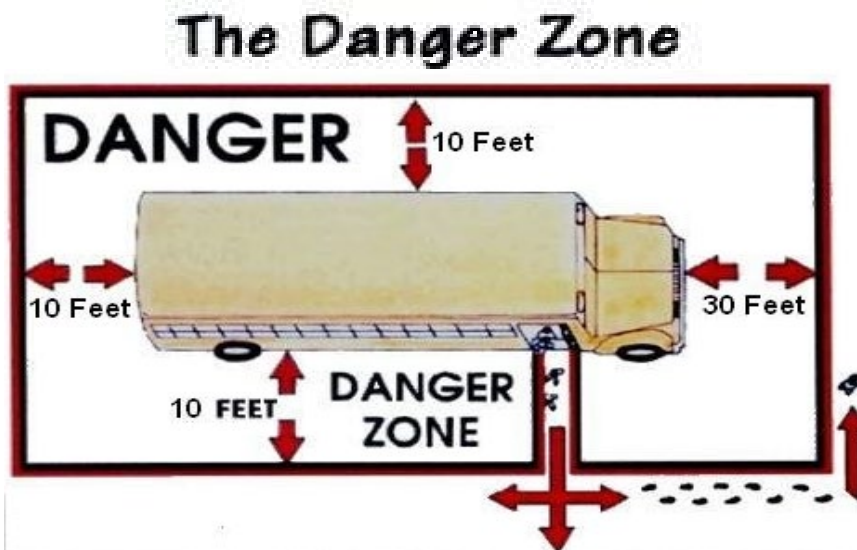
has been reached, the bus route will resume. Head Start staff will continue attempting to contact an authorized adult, though it is not guaranteed the bus will be able to return to the regular drop-off location. It may be required that the child be picked up from the center once the bus route is complete.

- E. 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 Department of Children and Family Services after 45 minutes.
- F. Parents should notify the center if for any reason their child will not be riding the bus.
- G. 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.
- H. 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 at least 24 hours in advance** to determine if the change can be made. *Only the Center Director may authorize a change in bussing.*

*See Forms Document 1 for Transportation Change Request Form.*

### 3. The Danger Zone

Most children injured or killed in student transportation are injured outside the bus by motorists who fail to stop or do not see the children. This area around the bus is often referred to as the “**DANGER ZONE**.” As noted above, Head Start requires that all children *always* be walked to and from the bus. At the Carbondale Center, parents must park in designated parking spots when walking children to their classrooms. No cars may enter the designated bus areas as these are designed to ensure clearance of the “danger zone”.



## XII. CLASSROOM INFORMATION AND PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

### 1. 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 & Development
- Social/Emotional Development
- Language
- Cognitive Development
- Academic Content Skills (Math, Science, Literacy, Social Studies, Fine Arts)
- Adaptive

### 2. General Daily Schedule

Below are daily schedules by class type. These schedules are subject to change based on classroom need.

*Note: Please consider the classroom schedule when dropping children off late or picking them up early. It is preferable for children to eat meals/snacks with their peers and have a full nap when possible.*

#### A. Half-day schedule:

MORNING SESSION	AFTERNOON SESSION	ACTIVITY
8:00	11:30	Arrival/Greeting-restroom
8:15	11:45	Breakfast/Lunch-before & after restroom
9:15	12:45	Self-Selection/Gross Motor-if needed restroom
10:45	2:00	Lunch/Snack-before & after restroom
11:20	2:50	Prepare for Departure-restroom
11:30	3:00	Departure

#### B. Full-day schedule:

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00	Arrival/Handwashing
8:15	Breakfast/Toothbrushing/Handwashing
8:30	Self-Selection/Gross Motor (Restroom as needed)
9:30	Restroom/Handwashing
9:35	Self-Selection
10:30	Restroom/Handwashing
10:45	Lunch/Toothbrushing/Restroom
11:15	Nap
1:15	Gross Motor
1:35	Handwashing
1:40	Snack
1:45	Self-Selection
2:45	Read Aloud
3:00	Departure

### 3. What to Bring and What NOT to Bring

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

#### To Keep At School:

- ✓ One extra set of clothing (includes shirt, bottoms, underwear, socks\*)
  - Used in the event of a bathroom accident, spill, etc. and as the weather changes
  - Please send replacement clothing if your child has worn an article home

#### To Have Daily:

- ✓ School-friendly attire. Characteristics of “school-friendly” attire include:
  - Shoes which are protective of toes, heels, and soles.
  - Note: No flip-flops or heeled shoes.
  - Easily washable
  - Without complicated fasteners
  - Simple for the child to maneuver through bathroom routines independently
- ✓ Weather-appropriate Outerwear (jacket/coat, hat, gloves\*)
  - Used in chilly weather and as temperatures fluctuate throughout the day
  - Children **WILL** go outside on clear days when the temperature is >25 degrees Fahrenheit (wind chill included).
  - **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 or bag with secure closure for transporting belongings to/from home

**\*Please label each of these items with your child's name.** We ask that you label them using First Name and Last Initial, First Initial and Last Name, or both First and Last Name as there are often children with the same name in class together.

#### Please **do not** send the following items to school with your child:

- ✗ Toys, blankets, or pillows from home
  - There may be times particular items are requested for purposes such as Show and Tell. You will be notified by your child's teacher in those instances.
  - All nap items will be provided by Head Start
- ✗ Clothing which is not school-friendly. This includes:
  - Clothing which is difficult for the child to take off/put on during bathroom routines.
  - Expensive jewelry (the program does not reimburse parents for lost jewelry)
  - Clothing which is not easily cleaned or would be of issue if it became dirty during meals or messy play
  - *Note: Head Start staff will do their best to ensure all 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 during meals, and supporting children in appropriate use of messy materials. However, accidents happen, especially as children are developing their self-help skills and independence. We appreciate your understanding and support of these efforts!*
- ✗ Rolling backpack or other bag with wheels
  - These are prohibited on buses and become a safety hazard in the centers
- ✗ Any item which will not fit in your child's bag/backpack
- ✗ Snack or other food items unless approved by the Center Director
  - See Treat/Snack Policy on page 34

#### 4. School Readiness Goals

The program has 14 school readiness goals. These 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)

Development of school readiness goals is supported by implementation of developmentally-appropriate and individualized activities. Teachers assess children three (3) times a year to determine progress towards meeting these school readiness goals. These assessments inform future activities within the classroom as well as individualized planning for each child.

#### 5. School Readiness Skills

The Southern Illinois Coalition for Children and Families worked with local school districts and pre-kindergarten programs to develop a list of school readiness skills for children entering kindergarten. Working with your child on this list will promote academic achievement and success in school.

#### 6. 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, and cognitive development.

As a part of this approach, children have opportunity to choose from a variety of interest areas in their classroom. Interest areas are equipped with materials which support child/teacher interactions and are 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              |

## 7. Outcomes

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

## 8. Learning Framework

The program uses the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework as its approach to child development and learning.

CENTRAL DOMAINS					
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

## 9. Home Visits and 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 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 shared times together are integral in allowing 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.

## 10. Field Trips

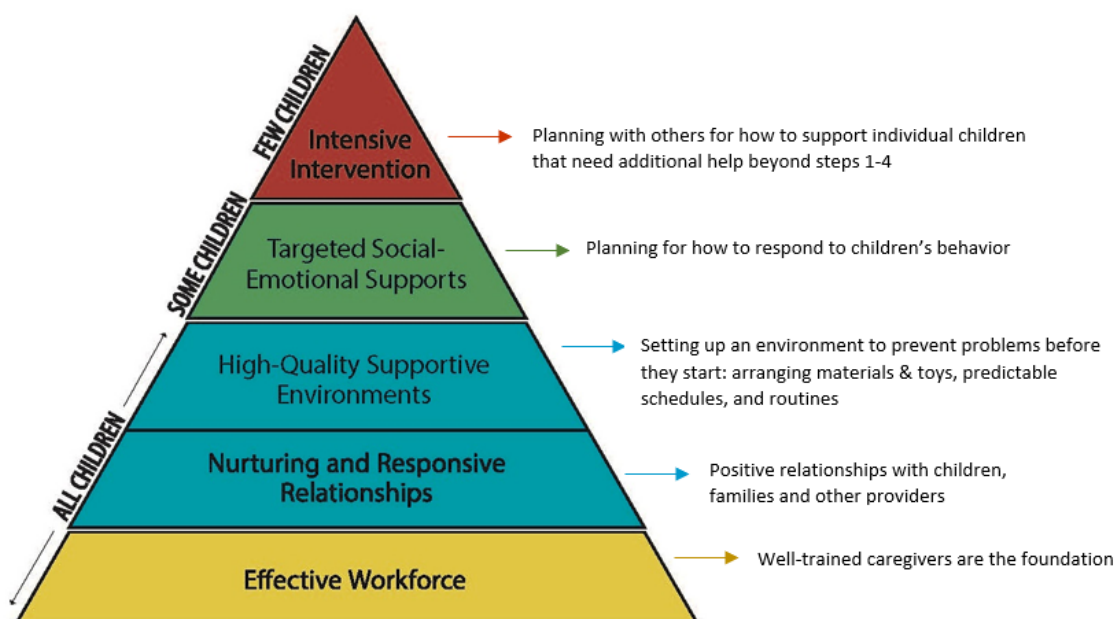
Field trips are scheduled multiple times throughout the year. They are designed to enhance curriculum studies, spark children's interests, and provide opportunity for children to practice social skills in a variety of settings.

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 ensure safety, field trips require a minimum of four adults per classroom to keep adult to child ratio low. All parents attending field trips must complete the program's field trip procedure training and adhere to the Parent Code of Conduct.

## XIV. MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITIES SERVICES

### 1. Social-Emotional Development

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 represents the Pyramid Model Approach.



### 2. 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.

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)

### **3. 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

### **4. 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.

## **5. 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.

## **6. 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
- 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

## **7. 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

## XIV. COMMUNICATION

### 1. Newsletter & Classroom Calendars

Parents will receive monthly agency newsletters throughout the school year. The agency newsletter contains Head Start news, community 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 Learning Genie. Classroom calendars share class-specific information related to curriculum, field trips, and other special events.



### 2. Learning Genie

Parents are expected to set up an account with Learning Genie upon enrollment to the program. Your teacher will assist you in this process. Learning Genie is how reminders about school events and resources are shared throughout the year. Learning Genie is available for communicating about your child's attendance, individual family needs, etc. This is also how in-kind hours will be recorded. Instructions for setting up your account will be provided by your assigned Community Worker.

### 3. School Messenger

School Messenger is used to relay emergency messages only. This includes unplanned school closures, early release, and other urgent messages. We use the cell phone number provided on family intake forms. If your cell number changes, please let your Center Director or Community Worker know so that you can continue to receive messages.

### 4. Texting

Center Directors and Community Workers have program-issued cell phones you may call or text. If you make contact outside of regular business hours (8:00am-4:00pm) you may not receive an immediate response.

### 5. Child's Backpack

Children are required to bring a non-rolling 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.**

## **6. Respectful Two-Way Communication**

Communication is very important to the success of your child in the Head Start program. We ask that you update your child's records as soon as changes occur in communication methods (phone numbers, addresses, etc.). Other changes that may affect your child's daily routine (birth, death in the family, marriage, divorce, move, etc.) should be shared as well.

Parents who have concerns or questions about their child's experience at Head Start are encouraged to contact their Center Director, Teacher, or Community Worker to discuss these concerns. Parents may also complete a complaint form should they choose.

*See Forms Document 2 for the SIU Carbondale Head Start Complaint Form*

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.

## **XV. NUTRITION**

### **1. 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

### **2. Family Style Meals**

Mealtimes are 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 Head Start Program Performance Standards. 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.

### **3. Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)**

WIC is a food assistance program for Women, Infants, and Children. It helps pregnant women, new mothers, and young children eat well and stay healthy. WIC serves pregnant women, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to 5 years of age (including foster children). If you are interested in WIC services, please contact the health department in the county where you reside. The Jackson and Williamson County phone numbers may be found on page 3 of this handbook.

#### 4. Lead

Head Start programs have a major role in preventing children's exposure to lead. This includes preventing lead exposure in the Head Start facilities, its water supplies, as well as working with the wider community to reduce lead exposure in other locations. Families are an important line of defense against lead poisoning. If you have concerns for your child's blood lead or if you would like to have your home tested for the presence of lead, please contact health department in the county where you reside. See below for county health department phone numbers.

Jackson County: 618-684-3143	Williamson County: 618-993-8111
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#### 5. Treat and 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 our children. Because our program serves a snack item each day, we encourage parents to volunteer on your child's birthday or contribute party plates, napkins, cups, etc. instead of bringing a food item. 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. Suggestions of food items – low sugar muffins, dried fruits, raisins, popcorn, snack crackers, graham crackers. *Snacks must be nut-free, pork-free (including gelatin) and adhere to health restrictions of all children in the classroom.*
- Parents must send a note with their child to the center director **three (3) days in advance** stating the food item you would like to bring and the date you plan to bring it.
- The center director will send a note home with the child giving consent to send the food item(s).
- All food must be store-bought, pre-packaged, and unopened in the original container.

*See Forms Document 3 for the Treat and Snack Approval Form*

