



Mid-Willamette Valley

COMMUNITY ACTION

Compassion in Motion

Head Start & Early Head Start

Parent Handbook

2024-2025

MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.

OUR VISION

- All people are respected for their infinite worth and are supported to envision and reach a positive future

OUR MISSION

- Empowering people to change their lives and exit poverty by providing vital services and community leadership
- Community Action Head Start will establish and embrace a program culture of safety that promotes dignity and respect by practicing kindness and acceptance to reflect our belief in the infinite worth of every person.

OUR VALUES

We are dedicated to establishing, cultivating, and sustaining a diverse and inclusive culture. We embrace and value those we serve and our employees regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information or family medical history, or membership in any other protected class as defined by applicable state or federal law, and we expect Head Start families to do the same.

Parents and staff are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times to create a positive learning and work environment. Parents treating others without respect will be reminded to act in a way that reflects our mission and values.



Family Nights

See the fun things your child has been working on. Connect with staff to encourage your children's growth with fun activities and sharing the moment with your child's friends.

Policy Council

Be a parent voice as part of our Policy Council to help support families, advocate for kids and give guidance to our program.

As a Policy Council representative, you help with the decision making process for our program, and sharing the information back to the parents during parent meetings.

Volunteer

We need parent help in our classrooms. Please consider helping once per week during outside time, inside activities, reading with children or helping during meal times. Talk with your Teacher or Family Educator to see how you can help your child's classroom reach its potential.

For those who would like to volunteer, but not in the classroom, we may have some opportunities that could be done from home.

Licensed Facilities

All Staff are required to pass a state and FBI background check to help ensure the safety of your children. All of our sites are licensed per requirements from the State of Oregon and subject to inspections.

Emergencies

Children will participate in emergency drills including for natural disasters, fire, and other potential dangerous situations. In case of emergency, staff will contact emergency responders and parents as soon as possible. Staff will remain with the child or children to ensure safety until the parent or appropriate authorized person is able to be with the child. For longer term emergencies, each site has supplies to help keep children and staff fed and safe for 72 hours.

Family Changes After Enrollment

Please contact your child's Teacher or your Family Educator if your address or phone number changes. It is very important that we have your current information in case of an emergency involving your child and that voicemail is able to accept messages.

At enrollment each family filled out emergency contacts on the Persons Authorized to Receive Child form. This form authorizes certain people the family has chosen to be called in an emergency, pick your child up from school and receive your child from the bus. If your emergency contacts change contact your Family Educator or your child's Teacher immediately to fill out a new form. We will not allow your child to go home with someone that is not on the list.

Confidentiality

Information that is gathered about your child and family is kept confidential and stored in a secure data base. Records will only be sent to another school or agency with written permission from parents or legal guardians. Head Start staff and volunteers are responsible to maintain the confidentiality of all information about children and families.

Child Abuse Prevention

All staff at Head Start are mandatory reporters of child abuse. Parents of children enrolled in Head Start are provided with a copy of the Child Abuse and Neglect Policy during their enrollment appointment. As mandatory reporters, staff are required by law to report child abuse or neglect to Department of Human Services Child Welfare or the police. Staff are required to report if a child is home alone or if there is no authorized adult present to receive the child after the school day has ended. Head Start keeps confidential all records pertaining to any report.

Our intent is to ensure safety of children and support families.

My Child is Sick: Should I Send My Child to School?



You will be asked to keep your child home when they are ill, especially with symptoms of unusual cough, shortness of breath, fever, loss of taste/smell, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, sore throat or rash.

Symptoms	What to do
Fever (over 100°) Cough Shortness of breath Loss of Taste/Smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact doctor about COVID-19 testing. • Child will be cleared to return to school depending on the physician diagnoses and when the symptoms resolve without fever reducing medication.
Diarrhea Vomiting Headache Sore throat Rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact doctor • Child may return to school 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, however a doctor's note may be required in some situations.
Cold Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep child home until symptoms resolve. • Contact doctor if fever develops or swollen glands are present.
Stomach Ache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep child home until symptoms resolve. • Contact doctor if pain is severe or lasts longer than 4 hours.
Other communicable diseases such as Chicken Pox, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact doctor. • Keep child home and consult staff regarding when your child may return to school.

Your child may have a health condition not listed above that will require them to stay home or be picked up from school. Community Action Head Start wants your child to be at school every day, but when children are sick, the best place for them to recover is at home. Community Action Head Start reserves the right to require a doctor's note that clears your child for readmission into the classroom.

General Health

A child's health will determine their ability to develop and to learn. According to federal requirements, all children at Head Start must be up-to-date with their health care. Please ensure your child's necessary preventative care is completed within 45 days of enrollment.

In order to be up-to-date with health requirements your child must have:

Immunizations including DTP, Polio, MMR, Hib, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A and Varicella up-to-date. Shots for flu and Covid-19 are strongly recommended. Please discuss with your child's health care provider with any questions.

Well child exam within the last year, including blood lead level and hemoglobin/hematocrit testing.

EHS Children Regular physical exams as required by ESPDT at: 2 Weeks, 2 Months, 4 Months, 6 Months, 9 Months, 12 Months, 15 Months, 18 Months, 24 Months, 30 Months & 3 Years old.

Dental exam within the last year.

EHS Children A dental examination within 12 months of the child getting their first tooth and then once a year after that.

Please let us know if we can help you with any part of this process.

Serious Health Conditions

If your child has a serious health condition, please let staff know so that we can work together to keep your child well.

Prescribed Medication Administration

If your child needs medication at school, you will be required to turn it in before your child can start attending class. Staff may administer a prescribed medication to a child when the parent/guardian is unable to administer the medication at home outside of school hours and only when it is authorized by the child's health care provider. Before any medication can be given to a child, a treatment order must be completed by the child's doctor and signed by a parent, and a Health Management Plan created by our Health Team. If you need support paying for medications, please speak with your Family Educator or EHS teacher.



Health Screenings

Throughout the year, children will receive various age-appropriate health screenings, with parent permission obtained at enrollment. These will include dental, vision, hearing, and height/weight screenings. During the dental exam, families will also have the option to have their children receive a fluoride varnish to protect their children's teeth. Screenings are conducted by Health staff in class to minimize interruption to the children's day. Staff will contact parents if there are any concerns and can help with follow ups if needed.



Head Lice Policy

For communicable disease prevention, children with live lice will be sent home and may only return to the classroom when they are lice free. If a child has nits, they may be allowed to remain at school until the end of the day, but the parent must use an appropriate treatment to remove the nits before the child returns to school. Children cannot return to school until there is verification that the child is free of live lice. Staff will support families in their efforts to treat head lice by providing consultation and referrals as needed.

School Closures

We know attendance is very important but your child's and your family's health and safety are the top priority. We understand that any potential closures can be difficult to manage. Our goal is to keep you informed with the most up to date information and to ensure we are doing everything we can to keep a safe and healthy environment for your family and the staff members serving them.

We cancel or delay classes due to snow, ice or other inclement conditions based on the public schools in that area. Our automated system will notify you when we have an inclement weather or event closure or delay. If the local public schools delay starting classes by two hours, then Head Start classes will be delayed starting for two hours. If there is a 2 hour delay all morning class will be canceled. Staff will notify parents of duration classes in regards to when classes will open. Classes would still end at the same time as usual.

It is very possible that your child's class may need to be canceled due to staff illness. If any classes or transportation are cancelled, staff will try to contact families as soon as possible to give you information about reopening and when bus services will resume.

RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURES & DELAYS

Television

KATU-CH. 2

KOIN-CH. 6

KGW-CH. 8

Radio (English)

KBZY 1490 AM

KCKX 1460 AM

KEX 1190 AM

KINK 101.9 FM

KKRZ 100.0 FM

KCCS 1220 AM

KRKT 990 AM

KISN 910 AM

KKBK 106.7 FM

KRKT 99.9 FM

KUPL 1330 AM

KXL 750 AM

KYKN 1430 AM

KKCW 103.3FM

KUPL 98.5 FM



Why Does My Child Play So Much At School?

Preschool children achieve most of their learning through play. The classroom environment is divided into areas that offer specific types of learning through free-choice play, such as: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Library, Writing, Sand and Water, Toys and Games. Children are also offered opportunities throughout their day to learn together in small group environments that are led by teachers, such as: Circle Time and Music and Movement. The Outdoor environment offers necessary and unique experiences that expand children's large muscle development and coordination (gross motor). Children will have opportunities for outside play every day, even in inclement weather conditions. When circumstances exist that do not permit outside play, alternate indoor gross motor activities will be provided.

What are the Rules at School?

Be Safe

Be Respectful

Be Responsible

What Should My Child Wear to School?

Children should wear comfortable play clothes that are allowed to get dirty. Children paint, use play dough, play with sand, water and mud, and play outside while they are at school. For safety reasons, children should wear shoes with closed toes and backs, preferably tennis shoes. Because children have the opportunity to enjoy daily outside play in various weather conditions, it is important that they wear clothing that is appropriate for the weather. Children should wear a jacket and warmer clothing, including a hat and gloves or mittens during colder months. Please send an extra set of clothing, including shoes and socks, if possible, that can be kept at school for your child to use in case they need to change their clothes for any reason.

Meals at Head Start

All children in Head Start will be served a minimum of two nutritious meals every school day. Morning classes will be served breakfast and lunch; afternoon classes will be served lunch and a "pm breakfast" snack; full day classes will receive breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack daily.

EHS Children Small snacks are available for children between meals as needed.

For infants feedings are based on schedule and on demand.

Meals are prepared in Head Start kitchens. Menus meet USDA guidelines and emphasize whole grains, milk, fresh fruits and vegetables, and are low in sugar, salt, and fat. Children are offered a variety of foods to broaden their food experience, while many cultural and ethnic preferences are honored.

Meals are served "family style" with serving dishes of foods available on the table. If your child has special food requirements, please notify your teacher and contact the Nutrition Specialist at (503) 581-1152.



Daily Attendance

Being at school on a regular basis is very important to your child's learning. Please send your child to school every day unless they are ill. If your child is sick or unable to attend class, parents need to call the site before school or their bus pick up time to report the reason for the absence and when your child will return. Parents may bring their child to school no more than five minutes before class time.

When children are absent, staff are required to communicate with parents and guardians to help ensure your child is safe. If staff are unable to reach parent/guardian, staff will reach out to emergency contacts.

Discuss with your child's Teacher in advance of any planned absences.

Parent & Child Activities

Throughout the year, we offer opportunities for family fun events in the community and at your sites. These are opportunities for parents to better connect with their children and be better connected with the community. Parents are always welcome to speak with your Teacher or Family Educator with any ideas you may have. We encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom as well. Please talk with your Family Educator or Teacher if you are interested.



Holidays

Community Action Head Start will encourage children to learn about holidays in developmentally appropriate, fun ways. We will reflect the culture of our community in holiday practices while respecting culture and beliefs of individual families in the program. Family participation will be encouraged in planning and implementing holiday activities.

SCHOOL BUS RULES

Not all sites will have bus transportation, but if you are at a site that does, here are important things to know.

The Head Start Code of Conduct: **Be Safe, Be Respectful,**

Be Responsible also applies to the bus.



- If your child will not be attending, contact the school 1 hour prior to the start time for your child's class.
- The Bus may arrive a little bit early or slightly later than the scheduled time, so be ready 5 minutes before. If the bus will be later, site staff will work to communicate with you as soon as possible.
- Children will be seated in car seats with individual seat belts for each child.
- No pets are allowed on the bus.
- No food is allowed on the bus, including candy and gum. This applies to all passengers.
- Do not bring toys, umbrellas, pencils, backpacks, etc. for safety reasons. Jackets, hats, and other items should remain on the child or in the seat beside them.
- When the bus stops at railroad crossings, all passengers must remain quiet until the bus crosses the tracks.
- Families, please no smoking within 10 feet of the bus. Second hand smoke is unhealthy for children.

Build Your Parenting Toolbox

We will offer several opportunities for parents to sharpen their parenting skills with parenting classes, phone apps and other opportunities.

Smart Connections-

Recognizing how to help you and your children feel safe, supported and nurtured are the keys to helping your family learn and grow in a positive way.

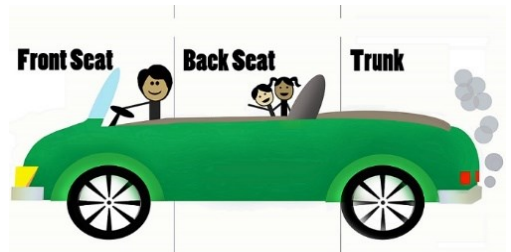
Circle of Security-Children are learning new independence as they grow and develop. Parents need to be a safe anchor as children return to celebrate what they learn or a comfort if the world starts to look a little bit too big for their explorations.

Other community parenting classes, tips and activities can be found at:

Marion Polk Early Learning Hub

(Marion County)

(Polk County)



Mid-Valley Parenting



Curriculum

The curriculum is the educational foundation teachers use to create lessons and materials that encourages children to become socially competent and ready for kindergarten. Our most important goal is to help children become enthusiastic learners. Our curriculum identifies these developmental goals.

- **Social and Emotional:** Children will feel comfortable in school, talk about their feelings, make friends and solve problems that occur in play. Children learn to respect different kinds of families and learn about people in the community.
- **Cognitive:** Children become confident learners by trying out their own ideas and experiencing success. We offer activities that help children to be excited about books and writing, numbers, shapes, measuring, scientific experiments, music, art, and dramatic play.
- **Literacy:** Your child will be assessed on his/her literacy skills at the beginning and end of the year if they are 4 when they enter Head Start. We will be working with your child on literacy by reading aloud with your child, motivating your child to write, building your child's vocabulary, and working with them on letter recognition and sounds of letters as they are developmentally ready.
- **Language:** Children develop greater skills in listening and asking questions, using words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings. Children will increase their English speaking ability and learn some words in the first language of other children in their class.
- **Physical Health and Development:** Children grow in their ability to control their muscles through activities like kicking, throwing and running. Children learn about exercise, taking care of their bodies by eating healthy food, blowing their noses, washing their hands, using the restroom, and learning about health and safety such as fire safety and safely crossing the street.



Teacher Home Visits and Conferences

Teachers will communicate with you throughout the year during home visits, conferences, notes and phone calls. This allows education staff and families the opportunity to develop relationships and share information. Teachers will be setting up at least two home visits and two conferences with you. Generally home visits last between 45 and 60 minutes. At the visit, the parents and teacher will discuss goals for your child and family and ways to meet them. These goals will be discussed and updated throughout the school year. You will be asked to meet two times during the year for a 30 minute parent-teacher conference. Conferences are a time for you to come and see your child's classroom, update your child's goals, and discuss your child's progress with the Teacher.

Family Educator Home Visits

Your Family Educator will set up home visits with you during the year. The purpose of these home visits are to develop a partnership with you and to support your family goals by providing information and resources. These home visits are also an opportunity for parents to share about how our Head Start program is doing and if our program is meeting your needs.

EHS Teacher Home Visits

Teachers will communicate with you throughout the year during home visits, notes and phone calls. This allows education staff and families the opportunity to develop relationships and share information.

Home visits will be scheduled twice a month and will last at least 1 1/2 hours. At the visit, the parents and teacher will discuss goals for your child and family and ways to meet them. These goals will be discussed and updated throughout the school year.

Parent child activities are planned to enhance your child's development and ideas for activities that will help you as a parent to provide ongoing support.

Family Services will be a part of your home visits. The purpose of these home visits are to develop a partnership with you and to support your family goals by providing information and resources. These home visits are also an opportunity for parents to share about how our Head Start program is doing and if our program is meeting your needs.

- * Our home based program visits weekly to supply educational activities and family supports for children who are not enrolled in the classroom.

Family Services

Parents and families have the really important job of raising children. We support families in being well and encourage positive parent and child relationships. Families teach their children and learn with them. We want parents to be a strong part of their community and be advocates for their children, as well as leaders in our program and community.

Please participate at parent meetings or serve on Policy Council. Attend fun family events throughout the year in our community, or connect with others in one of our parenting classes. Please talk with your Family Educator or Teacher about ideas you may have to support the classroom.

Parent Concern Resolution

Parents who have a concern or complaint regarding the Head Start Program or an employee of the program are encouraged to take the following steps:

- A. Parents discuss the matter with classroom staff to help clarify Head Start policies and procedures.
- B. If the matter cannot be resolved with the classroom staff, parents are to contact the Regional Team Resource Specialist (site supervisor).
- C. If the matter cannot be resolved with the Regional Team Resource Specialist, it will be brought to the Program Manager.
- D. If the matter cannot be resolved with the Program Manager, parents can contact the Associate Director for support with any final resolution.

Developmental Screenings

You will be invited to complete two different screenings about your child's development: the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE). These screenings measure children's abilities in communication, physical development, cognitive problem-solving, and social skills. Head Start and Early Head Start staff are happy to assist you if you need help in completing these screenings. They can also answer any questions you have about your child's development. We encourage you to discuss any concerns you have with your child's Teacher or Family Educator who can provide additional information and resources to you.

Inclusive Classrooms

Head Start provides a range of services to children with identified disabilities. Parents, Head Start staff, and WESD (Willamette Education Service District) specialists work together to give your child the best learning experience possible. Head Start teachers include IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) goals in every weekly lesson plan and WESD specialists come to our classrooms to provide Special Education services to children with IFSPs. Specialists will consult with teachers and may work with your child one-on-one or in small groups.

Referrals for Special Services

If teachers or parents see limited progress or developmental concerns in their child, Head Start staff can assist parents in preparing a referral for a free evaluation. We work in partnership with WESD throughout the evaluation process. Head Start staff may also attend the evaluation and meetings to provide information about the child at school and to assist the parents to understand the process.

For help with referrals to WESD or with questions about Special Education services, you can talk with your child's teacher or contact the Inclusion Team at 503-385-8802.

Understanding Children's Behaviors and Helping Children Express Feelings

Children develop self-regulation and social skills at *different rates* throughout childhood. We incorporate social skills practice into all aspects of your child's Head Start day to help her/him learn how to appropriately interact with others. Caring adults will work to connect with your child to help her/him feel safe and to learn to calm her/himself.

Our top priority is to keep all children safe, physically and emotionally. If your child's behavior creates risks for her/his own safety or the safety of others, we will work with you to identify the *need behind the behavior* and to help your child have that need met appropriately. Our strategies will include Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), as well as individualized interventions using a Skill Building Plan developed collaboratively which can be used both at home and at school.

Our partnership with you will be the most effective strategy to ensure your child's success with social interactions with others and positive feelings about her/himself.

Supporting All Children

Community Action Head Start believes in providing high quality learning experiences to all children. We will work individually with you to set educational goals for your child. If you have concerns about your child's development we will work closely with you to determine how to best support your child. We can also help connect you with community resources or our Early Childhood Mental Health Department which provide additional observations, assessment, and consultations of children's development. These resources provide information to parents and teachers working together to best support a child's educational progress.



The Tobacco Policy at Head Start

Here at Head Start, we are committed to the health of children and families in the program, as well as our staff. Our policy also reflects Oregon laws and Head Start requirements. Please read the following to know how the Head Start Tobacco Policy may affect you and your family.

Head Start staff, families, and visitors will **NOT** be allowed to use or have any tobacco products:

On Head Start property

At Head Start bus stops

At Head Start functions such as field trips and parent meetings,

Within the sight of Head Start children at school, and

Please do not smoke during home visits or parent conferences that may occur at your homes.

While at Head Start classroom functions and property, Head Start Staff, families, children and visitors may not wear clothing that smells strongly of smoke or advertises tobacco products.

Please contact your Family Educator if you have any questions about the Tobacco Policy, the effects of smoking and second hand smoke, or how to quit smoking.

This applies to all banned substances—Alcohol, weapons, drugs, etc.



In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or email: Program.Intake@usda.gov

People in my Child's Classroom

Teacher: _____

Teacher Assistant: _____

Classroom Aide: _____

Family Educator: _____

Cook: _____

Bus Driver: _____

Regional TRS: _____

Site Name: _____

Site Address: _____

Site Phone: _____

Head Start and EHS by Content Area

503-581-1152

Head Start & EHS Program Director.....	Liz Salinas
Assoc. Dir. Child & Family Services.....	Stacey Eli
Assoc. Dir. Operations & Compliance.....	Teri Lewis
Program Manager.....	
Operations Manager.....	Debra Devine
Education Manager.....	Julie Siefert
Inclusion and Support Manager.....	Aimee Klingler
Health Specialist.....	Alyssa Mercier
Family Services Comm. Engagement Mng.....	Kyle Miller
Nutrition Services Specialist.....	Jolanda Ibarra
Transportation Supervisor.....	George Shay



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