



Family Forum, Inc.

Project Head Start/Early Head Start

Parent Policy Manual

2016-2017



Family Forum, Inc. - Head Start and Early Head Start

Visit us at: www.familyforum.org

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Statements

Mission

“We are dedicated to preparing children and their families for success; through high quality programming, family support and wellness education, while fostering meaningful relationships.”

Vision

*Every young child will have the tools
to begin their education
with a Head Start.*

Family Vision

*Partnering with families and communities
to build school readiness through
passionately committed relationships
that connect families to goal orientated outcomes.*

Welcome

Welcome to our Head Start family. We are pleased to partner together to provide your child and family with many amazing learning opportunities that promote positive social, emotional, physical, and educational growth. We in Head Start believe that parents are the child's first and primary teacher and we will build on your strengths and knowledge to provide a quality experience that meets your child's and family's needs.

This Parent Policy Manual contains agency policies in place to protect and ensure that your child is safe and secure when in our care in the center and when your family is receiving services from our home based program.

These policies provide for a consistent level of understanding and apply to all Family Forum Head Start centers and participants. In addition, these include federal, state and day care licensing requirements.

Please use this manual as a reference to our rules and regulations to help you understand why we do what we do. When you have questions, we ask that you first discuss your concern with your child's teacher or home visitor, and if more information is necessary, contact the center manager.

What is Family Forum, Inc.?

Family Forum, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation that provides programs for families in Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Iron, and Price Counties of Wisconsin. The corporation is made up of a Board of Directors who manages the affairs of the corporation through the Executive Director. The programs provided by Family Forum, Inc. are: Head Start and Early Head Start. We are also a site for the Superior Community Preschool Program in Superior and 4K partner sites in Brule and Phillips. Family Forum is federally funded and licensed by the State of Wisconsin. Each of our centers has a Young Star Five Star rating. This is the highest rating given only to those programs that demonstrate high quality early childhood services.

What is Head Start & Early Head Start?

Head Start is federally funded comprehensive quality prenatal to five year old program that includes a center-based and home-based model that provide learning experiences in all domains of learning and assists in the development of social and emotional competence so children will be successful in school. Head Start / Early Head Start involve children in experiences and activities that help them grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. We partner with parents to support their family's wellbeing, to promote positive parent-children relationships to enhance adult learning opportunities, to engage families in positive transitions, to partner to connect families to peers and community and to become leaders and advocates for their child and family. Head Start helps all children and their families succeed.

Policies & Procedures for All Parents

1. Parents' permission is required for pictures and videos to be taken of your child, yourself and other members of your household (spouse, siblings of Head Start child, etc.) to be used in displays, videos, bulletin boards or for other educational purposes and for names to be used in the captions.
2. Parent permission is required to determine what social media may be used to share your pictures, the newspaper, newsletters, and FF Web page, Facebook or Twitter.
3. Parent permission is required to give out your name and phone number to other parents for contacting you about Head Start related activities.
4. Parent permission is required to have your child participate in agency screenings.
5. Parent permission is required to participate in center based transportation services or when transportation is provided for a field trip.
6. Parents are encouraged to inform us of special family celebrations, culture and religious or ethnic beliefs that may affect participation in regular Head Start or Early Head Start activities or require accommodations. The celebrations and/or holidays celebrated at each center will be reflective of the enrolled

families. We recognize and appreciate the diversity of all families. We strive to respect and validate each individual family in an environment that is inclusive of all.

7. Positive guidance techniques will be used to encourage the development of self-esteem, respect for others, problem solving skills, and expressive abilities. Redirecting a child's behavior or attention, offering appropriate choices, setting consistent rules and limits, and reinforcing positive behaviors are techniques used in the classroom to encourage and support positive behaviors.
8. If unsafe or harmful behaviors do occur your Head Start Teacher will notify you to come to the Head Start Center immediately to help your child regain composure and/or to take him/her home. The Teacher will work with you, the parent/guardian in the development of a Functional Behavior Plan. Staff may at times need to briefly hold your child in order to calm or comfort him/her, hold your child's hand or arm to escort him/her from one area to another, move a disruptive child who is a danger to him/herself/others and is unwilling to leave the area when other methods such as talking to the child have been unsuccessful and intervene to break up a fight.
9. All personally identifiable information about enrolled infants/toddlers /preschoolers and their families will remain confidential through word, action, and deed at all stages: collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction.
10. The center will maintain a Medication and Injury Log Book which contains a record of medical accidents, injuries, daily health check concerns, authorized medications, and child abuse or neglect situations.
11. Foods served will be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. Only foods provided by the agency food service will be served.
12. Tobacco in all forms is not allowed at any Head Start function or location. All centers, offices, and socialization sites reinforce the smoke and drug free environment policy.

13. Parents/guardians will be notified of any suspected and diagnosed communicable diseases. The County Public Health Department and Day Care Licensor will be notified of all reportable communicable diseases.
14. Children with a communicable disease will be temporarily excluded from the center or socialization during the period the disease is contagious. Participation can be resumed with a signed statement from a physician or county nurse that the child's condition is no longer contagious or if the absentee time is equal to the longest usual incubation period of the disease.
15. Routine safety drills, which may include fires, tornadoes, severe weather, vehicle evacuations, transportation breakdown or other emergency evacuations at the center, on the bus or at socializations will be done with children.
16. Head Start staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report all situations in which they know or have reasonable cause to suspect that an infant/toddler /preschooler has been abused or neglected or threatened with abuse or neglect. Parents/guardians may not be notified prior to the report being made.
17. Family Forum, Inc. believes that parents set an example in dress and grooming for the children and families to follow. We ask your support for the following rules; bring forth a positive image and attitude that is helpful and respectful, wear comfortable, clean, safe, and weather-appropriate dress, dress in a way that does not have offensive language or pictures, be groomed in a way that your hair style or dress does not disrupt the educational process nor cause a health or safety hazard. Refrain from wearing any clothing or items that are offensive or suggestive in nature or those that address any type of alcohol, drugs, or violence. Cover tattoos when possible. The center manager will meet with and explain to any individual who presents at the center with clothing and appearance that is considered inappropriate in an early child environment.

18. Family Forum, Inc. recognizes and appreciates the diversity of all of the families it serves. We strive to respect and validate each individual family in an environment that is inclusive of all. We want to expose children to different ways of celebrating special days and to celebrations that are different from their own. The celebrations and/or holidays celebrated at each center will be reflective of the enrolled families. Through discussion and notes taken at the first home visit teachers and home visitors will collect specific information from each family about holidays or celebrations observed by the family. They will gather information on any such events the staff is not familiar with and they will determine if there are any holidays or celebrations the family would have objections to participating in. This information will be documented on the Permission and Understanding form completed at the initial visit.

19. Birthday celebrations are most often an important event for young children. It is a time to help that child feel special and to acknowledge how much they have grown in the past year. Parents are encouraged to work with their child's classroom teacher on ways to celebrate, such as taking time in the classroom to share pictures or tell stories about the child and make a special sticker or crown to honor the special day. Food items from home are not permitted as part of the birthday celebration.

Center Based Programs

Our Head Start classes operate five days a week, September - May. Each family will receive a parent monthly calendar that identifies the specific class attendance days and center closings.

Center based parents/guardians will meet with their child's teacher at a **MINIMUM** of 4 times per year. Two visits will be in the home and two will be at the center. These meetings are for sharing information and planning to enhance your child's learning and to discuss the Family Partnership Agreement and family goals.

Parents are encouraged to attend the three parent /child educational events held throughout the school year. These events provide interactive learning experiences

for both you and your child and are a celebration of the child development learning that has been achieved.

Policies & Procedures for Center Based Programs

1. Parent permission is required to participate in center based transportation services or when transportation is provided for a field trip.
2. All staff, parents and volunteers are expected to use positive guidance to encourage the development of self-control, respect for others, problem-solving skills, and expressive ideas.
3. Children are expected to attend class sessions on a regular basis, this is crucial for early learning and learning outcomes.
4. A consistent record of attendance and absences are kept on each enrolled child. Parents are encouraged to contact the center each and every day your child will not be attending. We are required to contact parents by phone when a child is absent and prior notification was not given.
5. The Head Start Center is legally licensed to operate under the State of Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families. The license verifies that the staff, program, and facility meet all requirements for operating a group day care center and the license is posted in the center.
6. Medication cannot be administered at the center without a completed Medication Permission Form signed by the physician and the parent/guardian. Only prescription medication is permitted to be administered.
7. A child will be released only to adults designated on the Childcare Enrollment Form. Parents/guardians are responsible to inform staff of ANY changes.
8. Parents/guardians must sign his/her child in and out of the center classroom or other center activities when transporting the child or when removing the child from the classroom.

9. A parent or other designated adult must be present for his or her child to be dropped off the bus. The person accepting the child must be known or identified and visible to the driver or monitor. If no authorized adult is present, the child will be returned to the center and a designated staff person will try to contact the parent(s) and / or other authorized person. If no one can be contacted to take responsibility of the child, Head Start will contact the local Department of Human (Social) Services or local sheriff/police department. The child will then be turned over to their custody.
10. Child pick-up and drop-off locations are expected to be consistent. Bus schedules are set up to allow for the maximum number of children to be transported to the center and home safely in the shortest amount of time.
11. When a parent/guardian is transporting his or her child to/from the center, if the parent/guardian has not made arrangements or picked up his or her child within 30 minutes after the child's Head Start class has ended, designated staff will turn the child over to the police department as an abandoned child. (Day Care Code)
12. Parents are required to meet the bus at arrival and departure and to assist your child getting buckled up and unbuckled.
13. Pet, smoking and food are not allowed on or around the bus.
14. Each parent working or volunteering at the site must sign a background verification statement that verifies he/she has not been convicted of crimes against children or have any such cases pending.
15. Consultants may be utilized from time to time to observe classrooms to provide teachers with strategies and techniques to help them improve their ability to deliver a quality child development program and develop meaningful partnerships with parents and children.
16. Our climate has very extreme weather conditions. Parents will use their own judgment on whether or not to send their child to school when the weather is bad. Centers will be closed when the public schools are closed but may be closed more due to the young ages of children served. The center manager will

make all decisions regarding weather, when the busses with children leave early or stay until the storm has lifted and weather has improved.

17. Daily outdoor play is encouraged when the weather permits; Children must be dressed appropriately to go outside.
18. Parents must provide documentation of guardianship, and provisions for joint custody or physical placement to determine who we are to communicate with and when.

Policies & Procedures for Home Base Programs

The Early Head Start program serving pregnant women, infants and toddlers will be available for 48 weekly home visits and 24 socializations in the full year home-based program. The parents/guardians will attend the 2 ½ hour socializations experiences with their infants/toddlers twice a month.

1. Parents are expected to regularly attend the weekly home visit and the socializations. Attendance at the home visits and socializations are tracked and those cancelled are rescheduled as soon as possible.
2. Parents/guardians together with the home visitor are responsible for the supervision of their infant and toddler during socializations.
3. Parents/guardians will sign their infant and toddler in and out, such as during center parent meetings or at parent trainings, etc.
4. Parents/guardians may administer medication if needed during socialization.
5. Our climate has very extreme weather conditions. Parents will use their own judgment on whether or not to attend socializations when the weather is bad.

Prohibited Items – Personal Property Not Allowed at Head Start

Cap guns, water guns, toy guns or look alike weapons, lights, matches, sharp or dangerous or nuisance items, nail files, Swiss army knives or pocket knives, medication, nail polish or nail polish remover or any item that may be harmful or may be viewed as harmful to children are prohibited at the Head Start center. A

prohibited item is in a child's possession if the item is in a pocket, clothing, purse, book bag, backpack, or any other container used for holding, storing or carrying personal belongings.

Prohibited items not including weapons and illegal or suspicious substance:

- The teacher and or teacher assistant will immediately take the prohibited item from the child.
- Prohibited item will be removed from the classroom and given to the center manager immediately.
- If the prohibited item is discovered on the bus, the bus driver and or bus monitor will immediately take the item into their possession and as soon as the children are transferred at the center, the item will be given to the center manager.
- Center manager will secure the item and document.

Parent notification if prohibited item is harmful or potentially harmful, yet not illegal

- The parent/guardian will be notified by the child's teacher prior to the child leaving for the day.
- Notification will include the following: "Today during _____, a _____ was observed and removed from your child's personal possession. This was done to insure the safety of your child and the other children in the center. We encourage you to come and meet with us (teacher and center manager) to discuss your concerns and provide support.

Notification of illegal substances or weapons

- If a weapon or illegal substance is found in a child's possession or in any location within the classroom, center, playground or bus, children and staff will be removed from the location where the weapon or substance is located and the area will be secured until authority arrives. If on the bus, the driver will isolate the children to a safe area on the bus or evacuate the children and then notify the center manager. If in the center, the Center Manager will notify local police or sheriff.

- Children will be moved to a designated safe place within the center if possible or to the designated off-site shelter.
- The center manager will immediately notify the executive director.

Protocol for reporting illegal prohibited items

- The center manager will notify local law enforcement of the weapon and or suspicious substance and follow their instructions.

Secured Centers

Each Head Start center is secured so that only authorized persons are allowed into the building. Doors are locked. Centers are equipped with a security camera and the entrance door is locked and remains locked during hours of operation. Parents are required to wait until an authorized person opens the door.

Nondiscrimination Statement with Complaint Filing Procedure

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by:
 Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
 Fax: (202) 690-7442;

Email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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