



ICS Head Start Preschool

P.O. Box 160
Holly Springs, MS 38635
662-252-1582
www.ics-hs.org

ICS Mission Statement

ICS enriches and strengthens children, families, and communities for future success.



The Institute of Community Services, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer/provider. No persons shall be discriminated against because of race, religion, color, sex, gender, age, disability, homelessness or national origin.



DID YOU KNOW? Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward. Missing 10 percent of preschool (one or two days every few weeks) can:

- Make it harder to develop early reading skills.
- Make it harder to get ready for kindergarten and first grade.
- Develop a poor attendance pattern that's hard to break.

High-quality preschool programs have many benefits for your child. The routines your child develops in preschool will continue throughout school.

Institute of Community Services, Inc.

Parent Engagement Newsletter

FROM THE DESK OF OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! I am extremely excited to welcome you to the Head Start family. We are honored to enter such great relationships with our parents whether your child is returning or new to the program.

Our parents are encouraged to become active participants in the education of their children by giving input on curriculum development, health, nutrition, and mental health education, at ICS. Parents are also invited to participate in training opportunities, and elected parents serve on ICS Policy Council and Board of Directors. At ICS, we are proud of our accomplishments. We serve infants, toddlers, pregnant moms, pre-school children, and their families in 14 Mississippi counties.

Partnering with families is always a priority! As always, ICS has elevated expectations for staff, parents, and children. Your participation and engagement in your child's education, growth, and development enriches the overall ICS program. ICS supports strong healthy families and vibrant communities.

Let us join together for a remarkably successful year. *Eloise McClinton*

Parent Education Opportunities

- Early Head Start/Head Start has community partnerships to support parents in furthering their education and employment readiness skills:

- GED
 - Education training programs directly related to employment
 - High school completion
- Centers have information on the following resources:
- Financial Aid/Scholarships
 - Child Care
 - Career Planning/Job Search Skills
 - Work and volunteer experience

Ways You Can Volunteer and Get Involved

- Parents are welcome and may arrange their visit with the center director and participate in the following activities:

- Attend parent meetings
- Serve on advisory or parent committees
- Help prepare and serve snacks
- Assist with classroom or center activities
- Help arrange, clean, or prepare classroom or other areas within the center
- Contact your center director for other ways to volunteer and get involved

NON-FEDERAL SHARE (IN-KIND)

Head Start operates through federal grants. With these grants, programs only receive 80% of the grant dollars. The program is required to collect the other 20%, which we refer to as Non-Federal Share (In-Kind). Non-Federal Share is collected from donated appropriate services and supplies. We greatly need your help with these contributions. To help your child's EHS/Head Start Preschool with this, please assist your child with all learning materials sent home (or even on car rides) and document the activities on the monthly Volunteer/Parent/Child Interaction form. Return the form to the teacher. This time quickly adds up and can help your preschool reach the assigned Non-Federal Share amounts. We appreciate your help.

Time spent at home supporting your child's learning goals can count toward Non-Federal Share. The following are some things you can do to help:

- Reading to your child
- Counting and measuring activities
- Playing cards or board games
- Cooking or exercising with your child
- Working on a project together
- Singing educational songs
- Practice naming and writing letters of the alphabet and numbers
- Naming and drawing shapes
- Talk about words that rhyme (hill-Jill, wall-fall, dish-fish, cat-hat)
- Assist your child with writing his/her name



Recognizing Mental Health Signs in Yourself and Others

One of the most practical aspects of mental health awareness is learning to spot early warning signs of emotional distress. They often show up as shifts in everyday habits and energy levels. Look for these common indicators:

- **Sleep or appetite changes:** eating or sleeping significantly more or less than usual
- **Withdrawal:** pulling away from people, activities, or responsibilities
- **Low energy:** persistent fatigue or feeling like you always need to stay busy to avoid your thoughts
- **Mood shifts:** overwhelming sadness, excessive worry, guilt without a clear cause, or unusual irritability and anger
- **Physical symptoms:** unexplained headaches, stomachaches, or other persistent aches
- **Coping changes:** increased smoking, drinking, or reliance on substances including prescription medications
- **Hopelessness:** feeling helpless about the future or having difficulty readjusting to daily routines at home or work
- **Thoughts of harm:** thinking about hurting yourself or someone else

No single sign on its own means someone has a mental health disorder. But when several of these appear together or persist for weeks, they signal that something more than a rough patch may be going on. **Call or text 988**
source: scienceinsights.org

Bridging the Gap Between Home and Preschool – The key to easing the home-preschool transition is creating consistency in routines, interactions, and communication so children feel safe, valued, and connected in both settings.

Why It Matters – Preschool is a major life change for young children – new people, rules, and routines can feel overwhelming. When home and preschool work together, children receive a unified message of support, which boosts confidence, social skills, and learning.

Predictable routines help children regulate themselves and know what to expect:

- Align preschool schedules with home routines where possible
- Use visual schedules or picture charts at home to show daily activities and pickup/drop-off routines

Establish Drop-Off and Pickup Rituals – Repetition reduces anxiety:

- Choose a consistent goodbye ritual (ex. two kisses, high-five, fist bump etc)
- Use a visual calendar to show who picks up the child each day

Bring Familiar Comforts to School

- Small family photo
- Favorite blanket for rest time

Strengthen Home-Preschool Communication

- Share observations and updates between parents and teachers
- Ask teachers to suggest home activities that reinforce preschool learning
- Attend meetings, volunteer, or participate in school events

