

2026-2027 PARENT HANDBOOK

HEAD START PROGRAM OPTIONS

EDUCATION COMPLEX

FULL-DAY: Monday - Thursday, 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

PART-DAY AM: Monday - Thursday, 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

PART-DAY PM: Monday - Thursday, 12:15 PM – 3:45 PM

ROCKFORD - NEW HORIZONS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Monday - Thursday, 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

COLDWATER SITE – LOCATION TBD

Monday – Thursday, 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

SERVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THROUGHOUT MERCER COUNTY

Celina City Schools

Coldwater Exempted Village Schools

Fort Recovery Local Schools

Marion Local Schools

Parkway Local Schools

St. Henry Consolidated Local Schools

CORE VALUES, MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

Mercer County Head Start has established core values that lead and exemplify the work that we endeavor to complete in every aspect of our mission and vision. These core values include:

Trust, Integrity, and Excellence.

MISSION STATEMENT

By unifying internal stakeholders focused on the Head Start philosophy, Mercer County Head Start will provide high-quality early childhood education and care opportunities that promotes stability and innovation which fosters the confidence for families to advocate for themselves and their school-ready children in an ever-changing and dynamic world.

VISION STATEMENT

To eliminate poverty determinants and create a community full of opportunity.

It is our fervent belief that by living our core values throughout our mission, we will accomplish our vision. Children, families, community members, stakeholders, and peers will benefit from the exemplary work accomplished.

Mercer County Head Start staff will hold true to our core values, mission, and vision.

Mercer County Head Start serves families with children 3-5 years of age.

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Mercer County Head Start Leadership Team:

Executive Director - Amy Esser

Early Childhood Services Director – Angie Fiely

Mental Health & Family Services Manager – Ashley Searight

Health and Safety Manager – Angie Stephenson

Human Resources Manager – June Siefring

Welcome to Mercer County Head Start

Celina City School Site (Education Complex)

MERCER COUNTY HEAD START
585 E. LIVINGSTON ST.
CELINA, OH 45822
Phone 419.268.0301 • Fax 419-268-0017

Rockford Site

NEW HORIZON COMMUNITY CHURCH
833 S. MAIN ST.
ROCKFORD, OH 45882
Phone 419.953.6952 • Fax 419-268-0017

Coldwater Site

LOCATION TBD
Phone 419.953.8511 • Fax 419-268-0017

Parking & Entrance at the Education Complex (Celina)

Parent parking spots are available on the west side of the building – COLLEGE Avenue. Parents and students are to enter and exit the Head Start Entrance at Door #12 ONLY. Look for the Mercer County Head Start sign. **IF YOU PARK IN A RESERVED PARKING SPOT YOU MAY BE TOWED. DO NOT BLOCK PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS.**

To drop your child off at school, enter Door #12 to take your child to the restroom. Have your child use the restroom and wash/dry their hands. Then take your child to their classroom, assist with putting their bookbag/coat away and greet your child's teacher in the classroom. While walking in the parking lot and hallway please hold your child's hand to ensure they are safe. IF your child is arriving late or needs to be picked up early, parents are to report to the Head Start office with the child to sign the child in or out.

All adults are required to show their picture ID when picking up a student. Students will only be released to pre-designated names on the child's emergency list. All visitors will be escorted by a staff member while in the building.

Parking & Entrance at Rockford and Coldwater

Parent parking spots are available, staff will show you where designated area will be. To drop off your child, enter the Head Start door. Take your child to the bathroom to use the restroom and wash/dry their hands. Then assist your child with hanging their bookbag/coat up and greet the teacher in the classroom. IF your child is arriving late or needs to be picked up early, parents will need to ring the doorbell at the Head Start door and wait to be escorted to the classroom. All adults are required to show their picture ID when picking up a student. Students will only be released to pre-designated adults on the child's emergency list. All visitors will be escorted by a staff member while in the building.

Program Information

Daily Schedule: All programs will offer a daily schedule which includes:

- Restroom / Hand washing
- Arrival / Greeting
- Breakfast (full-day and part-day am)
- Toothbrushing
- Large group activity

- Small group activity
- Outdoor experience
- Gross Motor activities
- Free Choice (art, blocks, toys and games, dramatic play, etc.)
- Lunch
- Rest Time (full-day)
- Snack (full-day and part-day pm)
- Dismissal / Goodbye

A daily schedule is available in each classroom and reflects the planned activities and times. It is important to note that schedules may be altered to meet the unique needs of the children.

Classroom Door Assignments

At all locations, there is 1 designated door for families and students to enter & exit. For safety purposes, parents and visitors are asked to only use the designated entrance and exit.

- Ed Complex, Door #12 – all classrooms
- At Coldwater and Rockford sites, staff will show you the designated door to enter and leave each day during your enrollment.

Contacting Head Start Staff

Instructional time with students is extremely valuable. When trying to reach teachers during the day, please call the main office at 419-268-0301. You may leave a voicemail. Teachers will return your call when they are not with students.

Communication with our Family Advocates is extremely important. When calling the office please ask for your Family Advocate assigned to your family. If your Family Advocate is not available, please leave a voicemail and they will return your call.

Education

Creative Curriculum®

Teaching staff plan educational activities according to the Creative Curriculum® philosophy, aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) as well as the Ohio Department of Children & Youth Early Learning Content Standards. Teachers share this information with parents during Home Visits, Parent Teacher Conferences, and other times when determined beneficial by parents or staff.

Mercer County Head Start offers families opportunities to provide their children with the tools needed for a successful transition into the school system. Lesson plans, assessment data, and portfolio information are available for parents to review when in the classroom or during a scheduled meeting with agency staff.

Because parents are the children's first and most influential teachers, we encourage them to contribute to the child's portfolio by sharing information regarding their children's accomplishments at home, or other behaviors, tasks, or learned skills observed by the parents. Parent involvement is a key factor in a child's success and parents are welcomed partners in all aspects of their children's school experience. The teaching staff will share how you can follow your child's assessment and learning progress throughout the year.

Teaching Strategies

Objectives for Development & Learning

Social-Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
 - a. Manages Feelings: Child manages actions, words, and behavior with increasing independence; child manages emotions with increasing independence. (Social and Emotional Development)
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations

Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills: Child demonstrates control, strength, and coordination of large muscles. (Physical Development and health Knowledge)
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
 - a. Uses Writing and Drawing Tools: Child demonstrates increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles. (Physical Development and health Knowledge)

Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
9. Uses Language to express thoughts and needs
 - a. Uses an expanding Expressive Vocabulary: Child expresses self in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways. (Language and Literacy Knowledge)
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills

Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
12. Remembers and connects experiences
 - a. Makes Connections: Child holds information in mind and manipulates it to perform tasks. (Approaches to Learning)
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present

Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness, phonics skills, and word recognition
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
 - a. Uses Print Concepts: Children demonstrate an understanding of how print is used and the rules that govern how print works. (Language and Literacy Knowledge)
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
19. Demonstrates writing skills

Mathematics

20. Uses number concepts and operations
 - a. Connects Numerals with Quantities: Child understands the relationship between numbers and quantities. (Cognitive and General Knowledge)
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
22. Compares and measures
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology

24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things

- 26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
- 27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
- 28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

- 29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
- 30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
- 31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
- 32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

- 33. Explores the visual arts
- 34. Explores musical concepts and expression
- 35. Explores dance and movement concepts
- 36. Explores drama through actions and language

English Language Acquisition

- 37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
- 38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

School Readiness Goals

Social and Emotional Development: Children will engage in and maintain positive peer relationships and interactions including cooperation and resolving conflicts.

Language Development: Children will understand and use a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes and show understanding of word categories.

Literacy Knowledge: Children will demonstrate understanding of narrative structure and information from the content of a story.

Physical Development and Health Knowledge: Children will identify and practice healthy and safe habits.

Approaches to Learning: Children will manage emotions and follow classroom rules and routines with increasing independence.

Cognitive and General Knowledge: children will use reasoning and problem-solving as they ask questions, gather information, make predictions, and conduct investigations.

Mathematics Development: Children will demonstrate understanding of number names and order of numerals, the order of size or measures, the number of items in a set, and use math concepts and language regularly during every day experiences.

With input from the Mercer County Head Start, Mercer County school districts, parents, and community members, we work together to create a plan and set goals that ensure all children are progressing towards school readiness.

If you are interested in being a part of the School Readiness team, call or contact our Early Childhood Services Director.

At-Home Activities

Families will be provided "At-Home Activities" that relate directly to current classroom activities and school readiness goals to support family engagement in your child's educational progress. The At-Home Activities will include a form for you to complete including the time spent and what your child did or achieved during the activity. You can include what your child said and if they liked the activity. Return the form in your child's folder. This information will assist the teacher in documenting the child's educational progress.

Teacher Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences

Your child's teacher will schedule home visits twice per program year. Our program goal is to meet with families in your home environment whenever possible to exchange information and discuss your child's progress. You will also be invited to the center to meet with your child's teacher for Parent/Teacher Conferences (PTC) twice per program year (pending health guidelines). Open communication is encouraged between staff and families.

Field Trips

Field trips enrich and expand the curriculum, strengthen observation skills by immersing children into sensory activities, increase children's knowledge in a particular subject area and expand children's awareness of their own community.

Parents will receive a field trip permission form prior to the scheduled trip detailing where and when the trip is planned. The field trip may be a walking field trip or may include transportation by school.

Social and Emotional Well-Being

Social Emotional Development

Each child develops at his/her own pace. Head Start honors each child's capabilities. It is our desire that all children are ready to learn when entering the classroom. If your child requires additional assistance as they develop developmentally appropriate behaviors, Mercer County Head Start will partner with your family. Together, MCHS and families will work on skill development that may require additional assistance from special education and mental health specialists to prepare children for school readiness.

Information from parents and classroom observations provide vital information in the overall picture of each child's social-emotional abilities. We provide access to a behavioral health consultant.

Mercer County Head Start also implements the use of a behavioral health curriculum, parent workshops, and offers other topics as they are needed to assist families in raising socially/ emotionally healthy children.

Parents receive information about the social / emotional (ASQ-SE) screening completed on the child, along with ways and methods to increase children's resiliency in everyday ways. If you are interested in obtaining observations or other consultation through behavioral health services, contact a family advocate or your child's teacher.

Conscious Discipline

Mercer County Head Start uses the *Conscious Discipline* approach to impact social emotional growth in the classroom.

Conscious Discipline is a whole-school solution for social-emotional learning, discipline, and self-regulation. *Conscious Discipline* is a longtime leader in integrating classroom

management and social-emotional learning. It utilizes everyday events rather than an external curriculum and addresses the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's.



Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children. With *Conscious Discipline*, the teachers, students, and entire school culture will become a safe haven of cooperation, constructive problem solving and academic success. *Conscious Discipline* is an evidence-based program.

Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices designed to promote young children's healthy social and emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors. The Pyramid Model works in conjunction with the program's curriculum but is not a curriculum itself.

The Pyramid Model provides guidance for early childhood special education personnel, early intervention personnel, early educators, and families.

Through positive relationships, supportive learning environments, and intentional teaching, children learn to express emotions, build friendships, solve problems, and develop self-confidence. Families are important partners in this process, and we encourage you to work with your child's teachers to support these skills at home. Together, we are building a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success.



Family Participation

Parent Involvement Equals Student Success

Parent involvement is encouraged. As their children's first teachers, parents have an amazing opportunity to nurture their children's growth and development and to advocate for their education. Here are the many ways parents/guardians can be involved:

- Policy Council Member
- Parent Group Involvement
- Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)
- Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC)
- Volunteer to help the teacher
- Participate with your child in At-Home School Readiness Activities

Policy Council

Policy Council is comprised of parents/guardians of currently enrolled children as well as representatives from our community. Members of Policy Council are elected (in October) to participate in decision and policy making of the Head Start programs and acts as the parents' voice. Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the agency's Head Start programs. Policy Council is an essential part of the governance structure that helps guide the Head Start program.

Parent Group Involvement

Head Start offers a variety of groups where parents and guardians can participate monthly.

- FUDGE Group - If you are a male role model in your preschooler's life you are welcome to participate in monthly events. Bring your preschooler and learn about a variety of topics such as cooking, fishing, and construction.
- Parent Committee – Each location has a Parent Committee. The parent committee represents the families at each of their respective locations. Parent committees help drive local programming for parent activities and events. Parent committees report to the Policy Council.
- Family Engagement Nights are held 4 times a year and provide families with an opportunity to come together in a family setting. Parents engage in learning activities that focus on health, literacy and mental health education programs. The staff support families during these social interactions. The planned activities are held at a location within the families' community.

With guidance and support, parents can confidently take on their role as their child's first teacher and biggest advocate. It is a powerful connection, which can make all the difference for children, parents, and educators. Watch our Facebook page and newsletter for event dates, times, and details!

Family Advocate Home Visits

Each family is assigned a Family Advocate. One of the services Family Advocates provide is home visits. The Family Advocate will contact you to schedule a day and time for your home visit. Families can meet with the Family Advocate in the comfort of your own home to discuss any needs your family may have and establish goals to meet those needs.

Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)

HSAC: The Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) meets twice per year and is designed to discuss information relevant to health services with Head Start. This committee includes medical professionals, community members and agencies, and parents.

HSAC helps our program to make decisions about health services and strengthen the communities where Head Start families live. HSAC members can help in navigating the ever-changing health concerns faced by children, families, and staff. HSAC members may give advice, help problem-solve issues, share or guide analysis of data, offer solutions and resources, and collaborate on program activities. If you are interested in participating in this committee, please contact your family advocate or the Health and Safety Manager.

Mental Health Services Advisory Committee (MHSAC)

MHSAC: The Mental Health Services Advisory Committee (MHSAC) meets twice per year and is designed to discuss information relevant to health services with Head Start. This committee includes mental health professionals, community members and agencies, and parents.

MHSAC helps our program to make decisions about mental health services and strengthen the communities where Head Start families live. MHSAC members may give advice, help problem-solve, share or guide analysis of data, offer solutions and resources, and collaborate on program activities. If you are interested in participating in this committee, please contact your family advocate or the Mental Health & Family Services Manager.

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities are posted in the Head Start office and Parent information bulletin board. Postings are also on the Celina City School website, www.celinaschools.org, Mercer County Head Start website, mercerheadstart.org, Head Start Facebook page, and Hometown Opportunities. If interested, complete an application at the Head Start office located at 585 E. Livingston St., Celina or online at mercerheadstart.org.

Health and Nutrition

Meal Service

Head Start encourages family-style meal service to provide children with additional opportunities to eat at a leisurely pace while serving them to the greatest extent possible. Adults eat at the table and model healthy eating habits, proper table manners, and promote conversations between adults and children.

Family-style meal service also means serving food in bowls or dishes at the table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves with assistance from an adult as needed. Children enrolled in Head Start AM session will receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch daily, and those in the PM session will receive a nutritious lunch and snack daily. Full day session receives breakfast, lunch, and snack. A monthly menu is posted on our website at www.mercerheadstart.org and posted on the parent board outside each room. Meal service is provided through *Child and Adult Care Food Program* (CACFP). For more information about CACFP, see the *Building for the Future* image on the next page.

USDA prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. OASCR, through the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, will investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination in programs operated or assisted by USDA.

Due to participating in CACFP program, no outside food is permitted into the center. MCHS follows a Healthy & Responsible Foods policy which restricts food additives as Red No. 40, FD&C Green No. 3, Yellow No. 5& 6, and Blue No. 1&2.

If you feel you have been discriminated against regarding the USDA CACFP program, please contact the Health and Safety Manager at 419-268-0301.

USDA Food and Nutrition Administration

SNAP and FDPIR NDS

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, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information

(e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and 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 form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 1320 Braddock Place, Room 334, Alexandria, VA 22314; or (2) email: FNACIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

All Other Programs NDS

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, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form

Complainant Information		
First name	Middle Initial	Last Name
Mailing Address		
Primary Phone Number	Alternate Phone Number	Email
Best way to reach you: ☐ Mail ☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Other		
Representative Information		
Do you have a representative? ☐ Yes ☐ No		Do you have written authorization from representative? If so, please attach. ☐ Yes ☐ No
First name	Last Name	
Mailing address		
Phone	Email	
Complaint Information <i>(attach additional pages and supporting documentation as needed)</i>		
1. Provide the name of the program you applied for (if known/applicable).		
2. Select the USDA agency that conducts the program or provides Federal financial assistance for the program. ☐ FNS ☐ FS ☐ FSA ☐ RD ☐ NRCS ☐ Other _____ ☐ Unknown		
3. Date of recent alleged discrimination (mm/dd/yyyy)	4. Location and/or address of the office where discrimination occurred	
5. Who do you believe discriminated against you? Include the name(s) of person(s) involved in the alleged discrimination (if known).		
6. What happened to you? (please include dates of each allegation)		
7. It is a violation of the law to discriminate against you based on the following: race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, and political beliefs. (Not all bases apply to all programs). Reprisal is prohibited based on prior civil rights activity. I believe I was discriminated against based on:		
Remedies		
8. How would you like to see this complaint resolved?		
9. Have you filed a complaint about the incident(s) with another federal, state, or local agency or with a court?		
10. If yes, with what agency or court did you file?	11. If yes, when did you file? (mm/dd/yyyy)	

Complainant Signature _____

Date _____

Representative Signature _____

Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS

PURPOSE: This form may be used if you believe you have experienced discrimination in any USDA program or activity, and you wish to file a complaint of discrimination. The form can be used to file a complaint of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from public assistance program and political beliefs. If you need assistance filling out the form, you may call any of the telephone numbers listed at the bottom of the complaint form. You are not required to use the complaint form. You may write a letter instead. If you write a letter it must contain all of the information requested in the form and be signed by you or your authorized representative.

We must have a signed copy of your complaint. Incomplete information or an unsigned form will delay the process of your complaint

FILING DEADLINE: A program discrimination complaint must be filed within 180 days from the date you knew or should have known of the alleged discrimination unless the time for filing is extended by USDA. Complaints sent by mail are considered filed on the date the complaint was signed, unless the date on the complaint letter differs by seven days or more from the postmark date, in which case the postmark date will be used as the filing date. Complaint documentation or Complaint Forms sent by fax or mail will be considered filed on the day the complaint is faxed or mailed. Complaints filed after the 180-day deadline must include a 'good cause' explanation for the delay. For example, if:

1. You could not reasonably have been expected to know of the discriminatory act within the 180-day period;
2. You were seriously ill or incapacitated; or
3. The same complaint was filed with another Federal, state, or local agency and that agency failed to act on your complaint.

USDA POLICY: Federal law and policy prohibits discrimination against you based on the following: race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, and political beliefs. (Not all bases apply to all programs).

USDA will determine if it has jurisdiction under the law to process the complaint on the bases identified in the complaint and in the programs indicated in the complaint. Reprisal that is based on prior civil rights activity is prohibited.

OFFICE LOCATION WHERE DISCRIMINATION OCCURRED: List the location and/or address of the office where discrimination occurred. If not known, this part of the form can be left blank.

WHERE TO FILE YOUR COMPLAINT: You may submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence, Ave, SW, STOP 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410;

Fax: 1 (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or e-

Mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

You may also visit our [website](https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint) at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>.

LEGAL INFORMATION

CONSENT: This USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form is provided in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. §552a), and is used to solicit information for processing complaints of discrimination. The United States Department of Agriculture's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) requests this information pursuant to 7 CFR Part 15.

If the completed form is accepted as a complaint, the information collected during the investigation will be used to process your program discrimination complaint.

REPRISAL (RETALIATION) PROHIBITED: No Agency, officer, employee, or agent of the USDA, including persons representing the USDA and its programs, shall intimidate, threaten, harass, coerce, discriminate against, or otherwise retaliate against anyone who has filed a complaint of alleged discrimination or who participates in any manner in an investigation or other proceeding raising claims of discrimination.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT (5 U.S.C. § 552a)

AUTHORITIES: Collection of this information is authorized by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d); and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. §§ 790-790f) and any other anti-discrimination statutes, rules and regulations.

PURPOSE: The information solicited on this form is used for processing complaints of discrimination under the statutes listed in the "Authorities" section of this notice. Any information obtained from this form will be maintained in our system of record.

ROUTINE USES: To respond to requests from individuals and agencies outside the Department (*such as the White House, Congress, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*) regarding the status of a complaint. More information on the routine uses for the system can be found in the System of Records Notice USDA-2021-0007 records maintained by the OASCR.

DISCLOSURE: Providing this information is voluntary. Failure to complete this form may lead to a delay in processing of the complaint or rejection of the complaint due to an inadequate information to continue processing.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (*44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.*) requires us to inform you that this information is being collected to ensure that your complaint contains all the information required to process it fully. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights will use the information to process your discrimination complaint.

Response to this request is voluntary. The information you provide on this form will only be shared with persons who have an official need to know, and will be protected from public disclosure pursuant to the provisions of the Privacy Act, (5 U.S.C. § 552a(b)). The estimated time required to complete this form is 60 minutes. You may send comments regarding the accuracy of this estimate and any suggestions for reducing the time for completion of the form to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, nor is a person required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. **The OMB Control Number for this form is 0508-0002.**

IMPORTANT: Please do NOT send food or treats of any kind to school with your child. The program will provide all food needed. If food items are sent to school, they will be sent home

How does CACFP work?

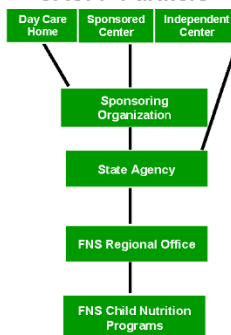
Day care homes and centers receive money for serving nutritious meals. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees CACFP.

States approve sponsors and centers to operate the program. States also monitor and provide training and guidance to make sure CACFP runs right.

Sponsoring organizations support day care homes and centers with training and monitoring. All day care homes participate in CACFP through a sponsor.



CACFP Partners



FNS-319
October 2018
USDA is an equal
opportunity provider,
employer and lender.

Child Nutrition Programs
RI Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903
(401)222-4600

Mercer County Head Start
585 E. Livingston St.
Celina, OH 45822
(419)268-0301

Building for The Future



In the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Building for the Future in the CACFP

What is CACFP?

CACFP is the Child and Adult Care Food Program. It is a Federal program that pays for healthy meals and snacks for children and adults in day care.

CACFP Improves the quality of day care. It makes the cost of day care cheaper for many low-income families.

Besides providing meals in day care, CACFP makes afterschool programs more appealing to at-risk children and youth. Serving afterschool meals and snacks attracts students to learning activities that are safe and fun.

Children and youth who are homeless can also receive meals at shelters that participate in CACFP.

Child Nutrition Programs RI
Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903
(401)222-4600

Mercer County Head Start 585 E.
Livingston St.
Celina, OH 45822
(419)268-0301

Who is eligible for CACFP meals?

- Children under age 13,
- Migrant children under age 16,
- Children and youth under age 19 in afterschool programs in low-income areas,
- Children and youth under age 19 who live in homeless shelters, and
- Adults who are impaired or over age 60 and enrolled in adult day care

What kinds of meals are served?

CACFP meals follow USDA nutrition standards.

- Breakfast consists of milk, fruits or vegetables, and grains.
- Lunch and Supper require milk, grains, meat or other proteins, fruits, and vegetables.
- Snacks include two different servings from the five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, or meat or other proteins.

Where are CACFP meals served?

Many types of facilities participate in CACFP.

Child care centers:

Licensed child care centers and Head start programs provide day care with meals and snacks to large numbers of children.

Outside-School-Hours Care Centers:

Licensed centers offer before or afterschool care with meals and snacks to large numbers of school-aged children.

Family Day Care Homes:

Licensed providers offer family child care with free meals and snacks to small groups of children in private homes.

"At-Risk" Afterschool Care Programs:

Centers in low-income areas provide learning activities with free meals and snacks to school-age children and youth.

Emergency Shelters:

Homeless, domestic violence, and runaway youth shelters provide places to live with free meals for children and youth.

Adult Day Care Centers:

Licensed centers provide day care with meals and snacks to enrolled adults.

according to agency policy.

Medication / Special Diets

No medications or special diets will be administered unless instructions are written, signed, and dated by a licensed physician and are prescribed for a specific child. The Health and Safety Manager and parent will meet regarding the medication or special diet, resulting in a Medical or Nutrition Plan of Action. Plans of Action must be on file prior to your child's first day of school to dispense medication or to institute the special diet. If your child must have medication or a special diet, contact your family advocate regarding the necessary paperwork. No child requiring modifications to diet or requiring administration of medication can be in attendance without a plan of action in place.

Screenings and Health Services

Healthy habits are established in the classroom with daily tooth brushing, an emphasis on hand washing, health-focused activities, and family-style meals and snacks. We adhere to federal Head Start and state licensing guidelines, which require a physical exam, dental exam, and proof of immunizations.

Family Advocates will assist parents in locating a medical or dental service provider and with obtaining appointments and follow up, if needed. If a family has no health or dental insurance, contact your family advocate for assistance.

Immunizations are an important part of your child's health and are mandated to be up to date or a signed exemption on file prior to enrollment according to Ohio Department of Education licensing {3301-37-08}.

Children will be provided with the following screenings:

- Vision Screening: The vision screening is conducted with a PlusOptix Vision device and is completed on site. Staff prepares the children prior to the screening. You will be notified of your child's results.
- Height/Weight Measurements: Your child will be weighed and measured in the fall and spring. Patterns of growth are tracked, and results sent home.
- Hearing Screening: An audiometer will be used to check hearing. Results will be shared with parents.
- Speech/Language Screening: Speech/Language Pathologist will screen children upon entry to the Head Start program. If your child needs further testing, you will be notified so that you can complete the necessary paperwork for your child.
- Developmental Screenings: Our staff will assist families in completing the ASQ Screening Instrument. A plan will be discussed to determine your child's individual goals and teaching/home activities that will assist in reaching those goals. Teachers will also complete Brigance screening twice throughout the school year and will review information with you during parent teacher conferences. During the school year you will have many opportunities to share your thoughts with teaching staff and make plans for your child's return to Mercer County Head Start/ or transition into kindergarten.
- Social Emotional Screening: ASQ-SE and DECA.

If you have any questions about the screenings or results, contact your Child's Head Teacher.

Communicable Disease: When Your Child is Sick

All classroom staff is trained in the management of communicable diseases.

IMPORTANT: Please keep your child home if he or she exhibits any of the symptoms listed below.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you or the person(s) at the emergency number you provided to pick up him/her. He/she will be immediately isolated from the other children, but within sight and hearing of teaching or other staff members. **IMPORTANT: Your child is not well enough to be in class if any of the following symptoms are present (Ohio Dept. of Preschool Licensing 3301:37:11):**

- A body temperature of 100.4 °(F) or higher
- A sore throat, even if no fever is present
- An earache
- A deep, hacking cough or untreated wheezing
- Severe congestion
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- An unexplained rash
- Vomiting (within the past 24 hours)
- Complaints of stiff neck and headache
- Thick, green drainage from nose
- An unusual yellow coloring to the skin or eyes
- Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing
- Lice, scabies, or parasitic infection
- A contagious disease
- Conjunctivitis (pink-eye)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within 24 hrs.)

Contact us if your child has a confirmed contagious illness or communicable disease. A Health Alert Notice regarding the health concern will be sent to each family in the classroom. Confidentiality will be maintained.

IMPORTANT: Your child MUST be fever-free and symptom-free, WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours prior to returning.

Good Hygiene Practices

We believe that building healthy habits early sets the foundation for lifelong well-being. We emphasize the importance of good hygiene through regular routines such as handwashing and toothbrushing. Children are guided to wash their hands thoroughly before meals and snacks, after using the restroom, and after outdoor play or messy activities.



Prevention,
treatment, and
support services
for all babies, kids,
and adults younger
than age 21

Healthchek

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment services

- Well-child exams
- Vaccinations
- Lead testing
- Vision, dental, and hearing exams
- Developmental and mental health screenings
- Follow-up services
- Support services like transportation and referrals to other social services
- and more!



Call:

Your county Healthchek Coordinator

**Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline
(800) 324-8680**



Go online:

medicaid.ohio.gov/healthchek



Department of
Medicaid



Apply for healthcare:

- online at Benefits.Ohio.Gov,
- by phone at (800) 324-8680, or
- in-person at your County Department of Job and Family Services.

Find your local office at
JFS.Ohio.Gov/County.

Call the Medicaid Consumer Hotline at
(800) 324-8680 for help completing an
application or other questions.

Additional information is available at
Medicaid.Ohio.Gov.



Department of
Medicaid

Healthchek

Healthchek is Ohio's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit.

Individuals younger than age 21 who are covered by Ohio Medicaid can receive important preventive services through Healthchek, including:

- physicals,
- hearing, vision, and dental screenings,
- nutritional screenings,
- mental health screenings,
- developmental screenings,
- vaccinations, and
- blood lead screenings

Babies should have at least 8 Healthchek exams by their first birthday.

Children should have Healthchek exams at 15, 18, 24 and 30 months.

One exam per year is recommended for children over 30 months old.

Any doctor that accepts Medicaid can provide Healthchek services. Ask your doctor to give your child a Healthchek exam.

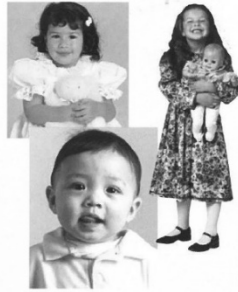
Healthchek support services are also available to help you with making appointments, transportation and referrals to community services for food, clothing and other needs.

For more information about Healthchek services:

- contact your County Department of Job and Family Services,
- go online at Medicaid.Ohio.Gov/Healthchek,
- contact your Medicaid managed care plan, or
- call the Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline (800) 324-8680.

What Do I Bring to My First Visit?

- ♥ Proof of income (current pay stubs, approval letter for Healthy Start, Ohio Works First, Food Stamps or current Medicaid card)
- ♥ Proof of address (utility or credit bill, or Ohio driver's license)
- ♥ Proof of identity for you and any other applicants (birth certificate, driver's license, Medicaid card, crib card or shot record)
- ♥ All family members applying for WIC services
- ♥ If pregnant, a doctor's statement showing due date
- ♥ Children's shot records



In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

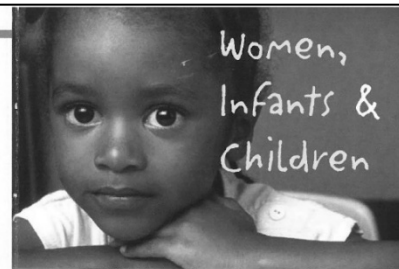
Healthy **Ohio**
The State of Living Well.



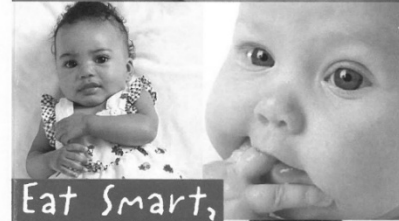
The mission of the WIC program is to improve the health status and prevent health problems among Ohio's at-risk women, infants and children.

Visit our Web site: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov>

0700.13



Women,
Infants &
Children



Eat Smart,
Play Hard



Ohio WIC

What is WIC?

WIC is a nutrition education program. WIC provides nutritious foods that promote good health for pregnant women, women who just had a baby, breastfeeding moms, infants and children up to age 5.



Who is Eligible for WIC?

Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or have a baby less than 6 months old, and infants and children up to 5 years old are eligible to apply for WIC. Fathers are welcome to apply for WIC for their children up to age 5.

To qualify for services you must:

- ♥ Live in Ohio
- ♥ Meet WIC income guidelines
- ♥ Have certain nutritional or health risks



What Does WIC Provide?

- ♥ Nutrition education and support
- ♥ Breastfeeding education and support
- ♥ Referral for health care
- ♥ Immunization screening and referral
- ♥ Supplemental foods such as:

Cereal
Eggs
Milk
Whole-grain foods
Fruits and Vegetables
Infant formula



How Do I Apply?

Make an appointment

Call your local clinic to schedule an appointment to meet with a WIC staff member or call **1-800-755-GROW (4769)** for locations and more information.

See if you qualify

All it takes is a visit to your local WIC clinic to see if you qualify for services.



Receive WIC coupons

If you are eligible, you will receive coupons to buy healthy foods at local WIC-approved grocery stores.





Preschool and Kindergarten *Vaccine recommendations*

Prior to beginning school, all preschoolers are required to be up to date on the following immunizations:

- Dtap vaccine
- Polio vaccine
- M-M-R vaccine
- Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Hepatitis A vaccine
- Haemophilus (HIB) vaccine
- Influenza vaccine

Prior to Kindergarten, and beginning at 4 years of age, the following immunizations are recommended:

- Dtap vaccine: 5TH DOSE **REQUIRED**
- Polio vaccine: 4TH DOSE **REQUIRED**
- M-M-R vaccine 2ND DOSE **REQUIRED**
- Varivax (chickenpox) vaccine 2ND DOSE **REQUIRED**
- Hepatitis B (3 doses correctly spaced) 3RD DOSE **REQUIRED**
- COVID-19 vaccine (Children age 5 years and older) **RECOMMENDED**
- Influenza vaccine **RECOMMENDED**

For more information go to www.immunize.org or call Mercer County Health District and ask to speak to a nurse.

The vaccines can be administered at your doctor's office, pharmacy, or the Mercer County Health District.

Please call 419-586-3251 option 2 to schedule your appointment.
Appointments are available Monday through Friday. **Late appointment every Thursday.

*We are contracted with many insurance carriers and will bill the insurance as a courtesy. Please bring all your insurance cards to your appointment. Please verify with your insurance carrier via website, or call the 1-800 number on your card to prior to appointment to verify insurance coverage. **Federally provided vaccines will not be denied due to inability to pay. ***

220 W. Livingston St.-B152, Celina, Ohio 45822

Phone: 419-586-3251 Fax: 419-586-2583 – E-mail: healthdistrict@mchdohio.org

Website: www.mchdohio.org An Equal Opportunity Employer

Essential Child Policies

Drug Free Program

Mercer County Head Start is a drug free environment. This includes the use of tobacco or vaping products. **There is no smoking permitted on school grounds .This includes pick-up and drop-off locations.**

Enrollment Process

Intake Process: Staff must follow Head Start guidelines that have been set up by federal funding agencies to determine eligibility for the program. Up to 10% may be from families whose incomes exceed these guidelines. Ten percent of the agency's total enrollment must be children with disabilities. Each child's application and eligibility criteria are reviewed by a committee. Children are accepted based on eligibility and availability of necessary resources to meet the unique needs of each applicant. There are no fees for children attending Mercer County Head Start.

A child is enrolled in the program after the availability of space is confirmed and the required paperwork is received and approved. Enrollment paperwork includes health records, emergency transportation and parent or guardian roster permissions.

It is important that families share all health and developmental information with us during application and enrollment. This information helps us place your child in the most appropriate program and classroom.

Emergency Transport / Child Release Policy

To ensure that a child is safe at all times and that any staff member who is in control of custody of child is completely informed of any necessary information that would support them in critical decision making for the overall health & well-being of a child the program will create an emergency transport packet. Copies of the child's emergency transport packet will be located in the child's classroom.

An emergency transport packet is comprised of the following:

- A photo of the child
- The child's emergency enrollment document (SS02)
- A copy of the child's most recent physical/Health History
- A copy of the child's immunization record
- A copy of any and all Plans of Actions for the child if applicable.

Release of Children Policy

Children will be permitted to leave the center only with parent/guardian or authorized adult who is at least 18 years of age and has a photo ID. Parent/guardian will be responsible for notifying staff of any changes to the emergency release list. Staff must have written permission (24 hours prior to) from the parent/guardian before a child can be released to any other persons.

The written permission must include

- The authorized adult's name
- The authorized adult's address
- The authorized adult's phone number
- Date the authorized person(s) will begin picking up the student
- Written permission must be signed by parent/guardian

Staff must request identification from designated adults before releasing children from the center and utilize release of student form to fidelity.

Appropriate Dress

Your child should be comfortably dressed in play clothes that will give him/ her freedom to participate in all activities. Head Start believes that outside play is an extension of the indoor learning environment. Children who are well enough to come to school are expected to play outside. The Children are better able to play safely outside and inside if they are wearing tennis shoes (fall, spring) and/ or boots (winter). **NO sandals or flip flops please.** Keep in mind the following considerations:

- Please dress your child in washable, comfortable clothing. We do messy activities in the classrooms daily.
- Be aware of the weather. Children go outside daily, weather permitting. Temperature changes throughout the day, so it may be wise to layer your child's clothing. When winter weather requires boots, children must also have a pair of shoes to wear in the classroom.
- Children will not be outside under the following circumstances: raining, snowing heavily, temperature or wind chill is at freezing or the heat index (configured by combination of temperature and humidity) is higher than 90 degrees. In the winter months, boots, hats, mittens, snow pants and a warm coat are appropriate.
- Shoes must always be worn in the classroom. **Due to safety reasons, please do not send your child in sandals, flip flops or slippers.** These types of shoes make it difficult for your child to run and play in the gym, on the playground, and outside.
- Each child must have one labeled change of clothing at the center at all times.
- If your child brings home a *Change of Clothing Form*, and is wearing clothing belonging to Head Start, please promptly wash and return the clothing.

Absences/ Attendance

It is very important that children be in attendance every day to become accustomed to regularly attending school. **Only absences due to child illness, doctor appointment, or emergency/death in the family are marked as "absent (excused)".** Part of Head Start's work is to assist parents in preparing their child for public school. Each child's attendance or reason for absence will be recorded daily at the center. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a child being moved to the wait list until they are fully able to participate in the program.

- **Notify the office by calling (419) 268-0301 if your child will be absent that day.**
- **It is extremely important to communicate the absences to the program. If you do not call our office within the hour following the beginning of school, a Family Advocate will call or come to your home.**
- Attendance is crucial to assure maximum program benefit: School Readiness for your child.
- High number of absences or erratic attendance will be reviewed to determine if this is the best program for your child.
- Contact us with all changes you need to make for your family or child.



Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten Build the Habit of Good Attendance

DID YOU KNOW...

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.

Missing 10% of school (1 or 2 days every few weeks) can make it harder to:

- Gain early reading and math skills.
- Build relationships.
- Develop good attendance habits.

High quality preschool and kindergarten has many benefits!

- The routines your child develops will continue throughout school.
- Make the most of early grades by encouraging your child to attend every day.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with your child and his/her teacher to develop your child's strong attendance.

Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Share ideas with other parents for getting to school on time.

Before the school year starts

- Find out what day school starts and begin a countdown!
- Make sure your child has the required shots.
- Attend orientation with your child to meet teachers and classmates and find out about health and safety procedures.

Ready, Set, GO!

- If you are concerned your child may have a contagious illness, call your school or health care provider for advice. Ask for resources to continue learning at home if needed.
- Ask family members or neighbors for assistance if you need help.
- Try to schedule non-urgent medical appointments and extended trips when school is not in session.
- If your child seems anxious about going to preschool, talk to the program director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice. Make sure the program is a good fit for your child.

Revised April 2024



Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!



© Jason Miczek Photography

Jiban Ajiri eo Nejum Bwe en Tobrak an Jikuul:

Jino Kaaaminene Bed ilo Jikuul Aolep Raan. An emman jikuul ej etal wot ippan an emman attendance ak bed ilo jikin jikuul!

EKAR WÖR KE AM JELA?

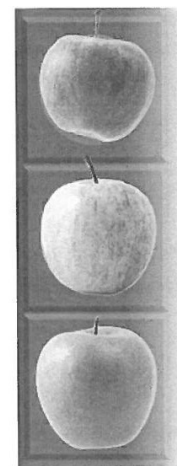
- Jino jen kindergarten, elañne elukkun lõn alen jako emaron komman bwe rijikuul ro ren rumwij aer wonmaanlok ilo jikuul.
- 10 percent in jako (ak 18 raan ko) emaron komman bwe en ben lok aer ekatak kilen riit.
- Enaj rumij an rijikuul ro kaloñlok elañne renaaj jako juon ak ruon raan ilo kajojo week.
- Aer rumwij ñan jikin jikuul enaj bar komman bwe en nana attendance eo.
- Jako ko rellõn remaron jelet aolepen rijikuul ro ilo kilaajruum eo elane rikaki eo enaaj aikuj karumwijlok an katakin er bwe en jibañ ro jet rekar jako catch up ak bok katak ko rekar jab boke kin aer kar jako.

An rijikuul ro bed ilo jikin jikuul aolep raan ejibañ rijikuul ro bwe en emman aer lomnak kin jikuul---im kin er make. Jino kamineneik er habit in ilo preschool bwe ren jino enjake im jela bwe bed ilo jikin jikuul mokta jen an ijjino, aolep raan elap an aorõk. Aer bed ilo jikuul aolep raan enaaj jibañ bwe en emman aer katak ilo high school, college, im ilo jikin jeral ko renaaj jeral ie.

TA KOMARON KOMMANE

- Kajejet juon awa in kiki im makitkit ko in jibbon.
- Kwalok nukruk ko kadede nan jikuul im kebooj backpack ko ilo boñin eo mokta jen rujlok.
- Lale raan eo jikuul ej ijjino im lale bwe ajiri eo najum en bok wã ko ej aikuji.
- Kwalok kadkadin ajiri eo nejum nan rikaki eo im rijikuul ro mokta jen an jino jikuul bwe en jibañe ilo an naaj jela wõn ajiri ro jet mottan ilo kilaaj eo.
- Jab kötlok bwe ajiri eo nejum en bed wõt imweo ijelokkin wõt elañne ej lukkun naninmej. Kememej bwe an complain kin an metak lojen ak bõran emaron juon sign eo ej kalikar anxiety im ejjab lukkun wun eo ej aikuj bed wot imweo.
- Ak elanne ajiri eo nejum elukkun kijoror in etal in jikuul, konono ippan rikaki ro an, jikuul counselor ro, ak kajitok kabilok ippan jinen im jemen rijikuul ro jet ikijien wawen ko remaron komman bwe rijikuul eo en lukkun monono im itoklimoin ilo an bojak in ekatak.
- Ejaake jet back-up plan ko nan boklok er nan jikuul elane ewor tok jidimkij in makitkit. Kir ro jet ilo paamle eo am, neighbor ro am, ak bar juon parent ak jinen ak jemen rijikuul ro jet.
- Kajion jab jikejul appointment in takto im trip ko reaitok elane emoj an jino jikuul.

NAAT EO ABSENCES AK RAAN IN JAKO KO AN RIJIKUUL RO REJ MENIN ABNONO



JAKO KO RELLOÑ JEN JOÑAN
18 ak eloñlok raan

SIGN IN KAKKÖL
10 nan 17 raan

EBWE
9 ak eietlok raan in jako

Note: Nomba kein rej kötmane ilowaan 180-raan kane ilo juon iio in jikuul.

Nan melele ko relõñlok ikijien kōpopo ñan jikuul, etal ñan
attendanceworks.org im reachoutandread.org

Cancellations/ Delays

Based on consideration of local weather, Head Start classes may be delayed or cancelled. You will receive a call from the *One Call* phone system. *One Call* is a great method for quick parent communication; however, it is imperative that your phone number is kept up to date. **If the public school in your community is closed Head Start MAY remain open.**

On delay days:

Part-day AM classes will be in session from 9:00 am -11:30 pm.

Full-day classes will be in session from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.

If a LEVEL 3 EMERGENCY is declared, all MCHS locations will be closed.

Parents can choose to bring their child to school later or keep them home. Please call the office to let staff know.

General Guidelines

In keeping with guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Children & Youth (DCY), the following procedures are adhered to:

- Staff members always supervise children.
- A telephone and hand-held radio are available in each classroom.
- If you bring your child to school late or need to pick up your child up early, contact the Head Start office at 419-268-0301 (Ed Complex classrooms); 419-953-6952 (Rockford classroom); or 419-953-8511 (Coldwater classroom)
- Children will be permitted to leave the center only with a designated person with proper identification.
- Fire and tornado drills are held monthly. Lockdown drills occur 1 time a year.
- Labeled cleaning supplies and medication are kept in an area inaccessible to children.
- Center staff members are trained in the administration of first aid, AED and CPR. First Aid kits are available in each classroom and are taken on all field trips.
- Emergency plans for evacuation and medical and dental emergencies are posted in each classroom.
- Center equipment is maintained in a safe and sanitary manner.
- An *Incident Report* will be completed and sent home with the child in the event of an accident or injury.
- If a child is involved in a more serious incident, the parent/guardian shall be notified immediately. Emergency 911 services will be utilized, if necessary.

Accidents and Emergencies

The center has several procedures to follow if an emergency would occur while your child is in the center's care. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff would follow the written instructions posted in each classroom, describing emergency evacuation routes, and the procedures to be followed to ensure that children have arrived at the designated location. In the event of an environmental threat or threat of violence, the staff will secure the children in the safest location possible, contact and

follow the directions given by the proper authorities and contact the parents as soon as the situation allows.

Parents will receive an incident report should an unexpected event occur which jeopardizes the safety of the children or staff or requires evacuation of the center.

The staff is trained in First Aid, CPR, Communicable Childhood Illnesses and Child Abuse and Neglect. If a serious injury occurs, the rescue squad will be called, the parents notified, and a staff person will accompany the child to the hospital in the rescue squad with all available health records. Staff will not transport children in their personal vehicles. For minor injuries, staff will administer first aid. While an injured child is being cared for, the staff/child ratio will be maintained, and activities will continue as scheduled. The staff member observing the incident will complete the ODE Incident/ Injury form and provide it to the person picking up the child.

An incident/ injury form will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the incident/ injury, if any of the following occur:

- The child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid.
- The child receives a bump or blow to the head.
- The child is transported by the emergency squad.
- An unusual/ unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child.

Cameras

Keeping your child safe while at Mercer County Head Start is a top priority. To add to our safety practices, the Education Complex and Rockford site have video cameras (recording) in all areas except private areas (ie: bathroom facilities).

Confidentiality

Policy: To comply with applicable law, and to ethically safeguard the privacy and well-being of our employees and those we serve, Mercer County Head Start requires confidentiality and discretion from all employees, volunteers, and contractors.

Procedure: All medical and personnel records are classified as confidential information. Medical records are governed by The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations and Head Start Performance Standards referenced below and all personnel are expected to comply with their storage, transmission, and communication. Any questions about disclosure may be directed to the Executive Director or Superintendent of Celina City Schools or designee.

- Client's confidential information will be seen and discussed only with staff members who have need of the information to perform their job. Any information that must be shared will only be done after consent is obtained.
- Staff personnel records will not be disclosed without written consent of the staff member. Staff members have the right to examine their own personnel files and to respond to the contents of the file in accordance with OAPSE Negotiated Agreement Article XI-Personnel Files.
- Efforts to ensure confidentiality in all aspects include but are not limited to keeping paper documents in locked file cabinets, maintaining, and following records retention policy as prescribed by state and federal mandates, ensuring safety policies for electronic databases and communications systems.

Relevant Authorities:

- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
- Head Start Performance Standards 1304.51 (g), 1304.22 (b), 1304.41 (1), 1304.52 (ii), 1308.6 (4), 1308 (appendix)
- Mercer County Head Start Code of Ethics
- Celina City Schools Bylaws & Policies

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

As required by the Ohio Revised Code 2151.421 employees are to report any suspected instances of child abuse and / or neglect to the proper authorities.

Ohio Department of Children and Youth

If you would like to review our licensing through the Ohio Department of Children & Youth (DCY), please go to their website: <http://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/>

Complaint Procedure

If you have a complaint in an area of operation, complete the form on the following page. Completed forms should be mailed to Executive Director, Amy Esser. Complaints concerning the operation of this program may be reported to the *Department's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness* at (614) 466-0224.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Persons having a concern or complaint regarding programming are encouraged to speak directly with the responsible staff member or contact an immediate supervisor. If the concern cannot be eliminated the following formal process is to be initiated.

1. Persons having a concern or complaint regarding an area of operation of Mercer County Head Start/Celina Public Preschool are encouraged to complete a complaint form.
2. Forms are located in the Parent Handbook and are also available in the Head Start Office located at 585 E. Livingston St., Celina, OH 45822.
3. Completed forms should be mailed to the Executive Director, at the above address or hand carried to the office.
4. The Executive Director may address individual concerns with staff and/or Policy Council as needed.
5. A written response regarding the area of concern will be sent within seven days to the person submitting the original concern/complaint. This response may include an explanation of operations and/or a plan of action to correct the situation.
6. Following receipt of the agency response, the individual filing the concern/complaint may request or provide additional information in writing within seven days.
7. Upon receipt of follow up communication the Executive Director will schedule a hearing for final resolution. Individuals included in the hearing process may include: The complainant, Celina City School Superintendent, Board of Education President or his/her designee, Mercer County Head Start Policy Council Chairperson or his/her designee and the Mercer County Head Start Executive Director. The Hearing will be scheduled as soon as possible and no later than thirty days from receipt of the follow up written response.
8. Written response will be provided with 45 days of the scheduled hearing. The decision of the hearing committee will be considered final.



MERCER COUNTY HEAD START COMPLAINT FORM

Date _____

Explanation of Concern:

Suggestions:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Please mail and or hand deliver to:

Mercer County Head Start
Amy Esser, Executive Director
585 E. Livingston St.
Celina, OH 48522

Behavior Guidance

While children are in the care of their parent, parents should be holding their child's hand while walking throughout the facility. Parents should be modeling and reinforcing appropriate behavior in the school setting. The school facility is a cell phone free zone. Please use the time in the school facility to be present with your child.

Children are provided with activities designed to assist in developing the ability to make choices, express their needs and wants, and resolve conflicts. Positive behavior is reinforced to encourage the development of self-control and minimize negative behavior.

When there is a minor conflict amongst students, the children are encouraged to talk about the problem, and with teacher support, come to a mutually agreeable solution.

The goal is to help children learn self-control and negotiating skills when dealing with their peers. If a behavior issue arises requiring teacher intervention a child may be:

- Redirected to another activity
- Removed from the situation to discuss away from others
- Given time to allow him or her to regain control at their own pace, with assistance.

A distinction should be made between guidance and punishment. Under no circumstances will physical (hitting or spanking), emotional (shaming or blaming), or withholding food or toilet use, or threats of any kind be implemented or tolerated (3301-37-10).

CHILD GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Positive Social/ Emotional Environment

- The environment is set up to maintain a developmentally appropriate space
- Classroom traffic pattern minimizes wide open spaces to run, but provides ample space and boundaries for learning centers
- Staff will ensure each child is always within their sight and hearing
- A picture schedule is displayed at child's eye level and is implemented consistently most of the time, providing a predictable, well-balanced schedule of large/ small group and quiet/ active activities
- Children assist in creating classroom/ bus/ school rules General Early Childhood Practices
- Staff and volunteers will build, nurture, and maintain positive relationships with children through communication, conversation at meals, showing interest in their work, etc.
- Staff and volunteers will communicate with children at eye level as possible
- Staff and volunteers will verbally interact with children during routines and activities (staff are not to be on computers or telephones when children are present)
- Staff and volunteers will participate in children's play during center play
- Staff will provide a variety of materials in all learning centers to support child interests, preferences, and needs
- Staff will prepare all children for changes in the day or schedule
- Staff will provide warnings and expectations to encourage smooth transitions, ensuring wait time is held to a minimum
- Staff and volunteers will demonstrate active listening with all children, demonstrating empathy, acceptance, and sensitivity to children's feelings and needs
- Staff and volunteers will encourage independence and self- help skills in all children
- Staff will create a planned method of problem solving in the classroom Positive Guidance Techniques
- Staff will speak to children with respect, always using sentences and modeling positive behaviors
- Staff will adapt the environment, routine, and activities to the needs of individual children
- Staff will maintain consistent reasonable expectations, including the classroom rules
- Staff and volunteers will use environmental and verbal cues what will happen next and allow time for transition, assisting individual children to transition as needed

- Staff and volunteers will model and teach social skills such as turn- taking, cooperation, waiting, treating others respectfully, and conflict resolution
- Staff and volunteers will model and teach emotional skills, such as identifying and recognizing feelings
- Staff will utilize the skills, supports, and strategies of the program- approved social emotional Curriculum (Conscious Discipline)
- Staff will recognize and respect each child's energy level, learning style, temperament, developmental ability, including stage of play and capacity
- Staff and volunteers will redirect children to appropriate activities that match the child's needs and preferences
- Staff will assist children in solving peer difficulties through problem solving
- Staff will be mindful of and seek out causes and patterns in behavior Intervention
- Staff will assist children in finding replacement skills for inappropriate behaviors
- Staff will refer children to the agency-contracted Mental Health Consultant for an individual observation.
- Staff will consult with the Education Manager concerning the implementation of any individualized interventions
- Unacceptable Guidance Practices
- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in any enclosed areas such as a closet, a box, or similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, and derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation when used as discipline shall be brief and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the program.
- During each employee's orientation and updated annually, an employee will receive a review of the policy, sign a Child Guidance and Discipline acknowledgement form, receive a copy, and the original placed in the employee's file.
- The IT secretary will monitor the completion of the training and subsequent updates through the COPA system.

Self -Transport Rules and Regulations

- ❖ Children may arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before each session. **Staff CANNOT accept your children early.**
- ❖ **CHILDREN CANNOT BE LEFT UNATTENDED AT ANY TIME. THIS INCLUDES YOUR PERSONAL VEHICLE IN THE PARKING LOT.** This includes other children, do not leave children unattended in your vehicle while you bring your preschooler to class.
- ❖ **Children MUST be picked up on time.**
- ❖ **No child will be released to anyone other than a parent / guardian or an adult 18 years of age or older who is on the emergency transport list.**
- ❖ **Picture identification is required.** Bring it with you each time.
- ❖ **To add another person to your emergency pick up list, you MUST give 24 hour notice.**
- ❖ **If no one picks your child up from school:**
 - **The staff will attempt to contact you, and anyone listed as an emergency contact.**
 - **The staff will keep the child at the center for no more than 30 minutes while attempting to contact an authorized pick-up person on the list.**
 - **After 30 minutes, the local child protective services agency / law enforcement will be called if it is determined there is no one to take responsibility for the child**

