

Region 7 ESC

Early/Head Start

Parent/Volunteer Handbook



2021 - 2022



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HEAD START MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Region 7 Education Service Center Head Start is to empower children and their families to develop knowledge and skills to be more successful, self-sufficient members of the community by providing high quality, efficient, comprehensive services that meet and exceed Head Start Standards.

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HEAD START OVERVIEW

Region 7 Education Service Center, local districts, and childcare centers collaborate to provide the high quality school readiness program for children and families known as Head Start. Specific operation guidelines are found in the Head Start Performance Standards, which, along with the rulings of the State Board of Education and other local, state, and federal laws, must be followed for the program to work well. The following information summarizes the services provided by your Head Start Program.

PROGRAM GUIDANCE

- Region 7 ESC partners with local school districts and childcare centers to establish Head Start Programs
- Each campus/childcare center has a Family Service Worker/Family Advocate to help in the facilitation of the Head Start Program. They are responsible for providing and linking Early/Head Start families to comprehensive services; to act as a liaison between the schools/childcare centers, campus personnel, parents and Early/Head Start Staff; to assist building a positive relationship with Local Independent School Districts/Childcare Centers and communities; to assist families with their goal of self-sufficiency

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Students are successful when they maintain regular daily attendance in Head Start. If your child is absent for any reason, you must call your assigned Family Service Worker/Advocate or the school the morning of the absence. You must follow the local school district/childcare policies regarding attendance and tardiness. If your child was ill or was at a medical appointment, you must provide a written note from the doctor.

To ensure that your child is safe and accounted for, please call, text, or email your Family Service Worker/Advocate on or before 8:30 am the day your child is absent.

Please make sure your Family Service Worker/Advocate has the most up-to-date phone numbers for you and your emergency contacts.

Chronic absences/tardiness or patterns of unexplained absences/tardiness will result in contact by a Family Service Worker/Advocate. Patterns of unexplained absences/tardiness and/or inconsistent attendance/tardiness will result in a call from the Program Compliance Coordinator and the possibility of your child losing his/her placement in the Early/Head Start Program.

WITHDRAWAL OF CHILDREN

- Families that withdraw from Early/Head Start will be required to reapply and complete again for available slots.

DONATIONS/FUNDRAISERS

- Head Start cannot ask parents for money, gifts, or donations
- Fundraisers are allowed through the ISD/center only (fundraisers are prohibited through Head Start)

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Maintains well-qualified teaching teams. Teachers have college degrees and state teaching certificates. Instructional Assistants are required to obtain a Child Development Associate credential or the equivalent of a CDA credential
- Developmentally appropriate setting for children, ages birth to five
- Room set-up in a learning center environment; utilizing a developmentally appropriate, active learning curriculum
- At least 2 adults in the classroom (Early Head Start 1:4 ratio)
- Routine home visits by teaching staff (Enrolled August–December, 2 per year minimum), or (Enrolled January-May, 1 per year minimum)
- Routine Parent-Teacher conferences (Enrolled August–December, 2 per year minimum), or (Enrolled January-May, 1 per year minimum)
- Once-daily tooth brushing
- Developmental screenings conducted within the first 45 days of program entry
- Ongoing observations and assessment of children’s developmental progress
- Individualization of activities to meet children’s educational needs
- Positive discipline practices

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (DISABILITIES/MENTAL WELLNESS)

- Inclusion of children with identified disabilities and collaboration with ECI (Early Childhood Intervention) and school district Special Education departments to identify children with suspected disabilities
- Participate in the developmental screening process and complete additional assessments in areas of concern when needed
- Support the participation of parents of children with disabilities through providing information, materials, training, and consultation
- Complete classroom observations and makes recommendations upon referral of disabilities concern
- Attend IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) and ARD (Admission, Review, & Dismissal) meetings (when invited) and participate in the development of the IFSP/IEP goals and objectives
- Support campus administration, ECI/special education providers, and teachers in the inclusion of children with disabilities through consultation and collaboration regarding referrals, accommodations, modifications, and IFSP/IEP implementation
- Facilitates the referral of children with suspected disabilities to ECI or the school district’s Special Education department
- Supports parents, children and teachers by using positive interventions in response to behavioral and emotional concerns
- Timely observations are completed when a behavioral concern is noted
- Staff are available for consultation for child or family concerns

- Provides Head Start educational information (see Mental Health Corner on the Head Start Website at <https://sites.google.com/site/r7mentalhealth/home>) both through materials, trainings and individual meetings
- Parents may receive referrals to community agencies or mental health professionals when needed

HEALTH SERVICES

- Work with school nurses to review immunizations, medical and dental examinations, and assist with treatment as needed
- Conduct health screenings such as: anemia, height, weight, vision and hearing to identify medical problems. Parents receive information about the results of the screenings
- Health education is provided for children and parents
- Family Service Workers/Advocates assist you in medical and dental care for your child and, if needed, will remind you when health exams are due
- Family Service Workers/Advocates will ask for ongoing proof of insurance or Medicaid coverage. If you are not covered under an insurance, Medicaid, or CHIP plan, they will assist you in applying for coverage.
- Family Service Workers/Advocates regularly check with parents to find out if exams or treatments have taken place or if assistance is needed in getting them done
- Health Services Advisory Committee (parents, medical staff, and community partners) guides the Health staff

Head Start follows the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and school district policies regarding children's illnesses. If your child becomes ill at school, he or she may be sent home during the school day to protect against the spread of diseases. Please contact the school nurse if you have any questions or concerns about your child attending school due to signs of illness or if your child must take medication during school hours.

Each child must be current on immunizations according to Texas Department of State Health Services guidelines. If your child cannot be immunized for medical reasons, you must provide a written statement from your child's doctor. If your child cannot be immunized for religious reasons or reasons of conscience, you must apply to the TDSHS in writing for a *Certificate of Exemption*.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Safety of children is a high priority for parents, school/center, community, and Head Start
- Plans for emergencies are in place and are posted in the classrooms and other areas
- The school/center has required procedures for visitors, release of children, volunteering, etc. which help keep our children safe
- See **Transportation Safety** on pages 13-14 of this handbook

Tip: You can help protect your child by being aware of and following the school/center procedures and by **keeping your contact information current** to include addresses, phone numbers, emergency contacts, and information about who can pick up your child.

CHILD NUTRITION

- Children receive breakfast, lunch, and a snack while at school. (Snacks may not be sent home)
- No meals or drinks from home. Federal Regulations require that all meals come from the school
 - Performance Standard 1302.44 (a) (2) (iii), “foods served must be high in nutrients and low in sugar, salt, and fat”
 - Performance Standard 1302.44 (b) Grantee must contract only with food service vendors that are licensed in accordance with state, tribal or local laws
- Staff work with individual families regarding nutrition through parent trainings, resource materials, nutrition counseling and referrals to community resources
- Individualization takes place when there is an identified (medical doctor documented) food allergy, or modified diet
- Heights and weights of each Head Start child are recorded in the fall and in the spring

Tip: Due to the increased numbers of children with food allergies and sensitivities, **Head Start does not allow any food items to be brought in by staff or parents.**

ERSEA/ PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- ERSEA is an acronym for **E**ligibility, **R**ecruitment, **S**election, **E**nrollment and **A**ttendance which is the process for enrolling your child in the Head Start program
- Home Visits by Family Service Workers/Advocates (Enrolled August–December, 2 per year minimum), or (Enrolled January-May, 1 per year minimum)
- Family Needs Assessment/Family Partnership Agreements completed with each family
- Three PFCE Outcome Assessments completed with each family
- Community Resources offered as assistance
- Interpreting/Translation Services offered to families
- Parent trainings held for the parents on a variety of topics
- Ensures Region 7 ESC Head Start Policy Council is comprised of at least 51% parents
- Volunteering in the classroom is encouraged
- Head Start News/Newsletter provided monthly
- Childcare available for scheduled parent trainings
- Reimburse travel expenses to and from approved Head Start events
- Lending Libraries (educational materials provided for adults and children) available at all sites
- Literacy information provided at monthly parent trainings

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

PURPOSE

- Parents are the most important influence on a child's development
- An important part of every Head Start program is the engagement of parents in parent education, program planning and operating activities
- Through participation in parent trainings and home visits, parents learn about the needs of their children
- Parent engagement is very important to children's development and emotional success

SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- Parents are notified in writing by the Family Service Worker/Advocate of all parent trainings/events
- The first training will be held at the beginning of the school year. This will be an introduction to the Early/Head Start program. Parents will be given an overview of the goals and purposes of the program
- Parents will be provided a telephone number of the Head Start Family Service Worker/Advocate office
- Parents are welcome in their child's classroom and are encouraged to participate



TO EARLY/HEAD START PARENTS:

Hello, and welcome to the Head Start Program. We hope this will be a wonderful experience for you and your child. During the Parent Orientation you will learn about the different parts of the Early/Head Start Program. If you have any questions now, or later, the Early/Head Start Staff will be glad to help you. To reach your child's teacher, you may call the school/childcare center your child attends.

The Early/Head Start program needs many parent volunteers during the year. We hope you will be willing to attend parent trainings and help in your child's classroom/center or in other ways during the year. Please contact your family service worker/advocate if you are interested in volunteering.

ROLE OF A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers at Early/Head Start have a big role in the children's lives. The teacher and children love to see your face when you come to the door. When you come to volunteer, you will be directed by a teacher, or a member of the support team. Your cooperation is always appreciated.

- Any person interested in volunteering in the Head Start Program, and who is eighteen (18) years of age or older must complete a Volunteer Application Form
- Volunteers may include parents, guardians, family members and/or community people
- Persons under age eighteen may volunteer as part of a service organization
- All Volunteer Applications are kept confidential

WAYS YOU MAY VOLUNTEER

Just to name a few. . .

- Provide a helping hand at different times of the day- nap, lunch, centers, field trips, etc.
- Share cultural activities or a special talent
- Read aloud to children
- Help in setting up for different trainings
- Assemble and distribute parent newsletter
- Assist with special projects

Any time you contribute is always helpful and welcomed. Thank you for coming to Early/Head Start!

Sincerely,
 Your Early/Head Start Staff
 Region 7 Education Service Center Head Start

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/VOLUNTEERS

1. The principal/childcare center director is in charge of each school/childcare center.
2. Classroom volunteers must have a background check run and approved by the school principal/center director before volunteering.
3. All volunteers must receive volunteer/confidentiality training before volunteering in the program.
4. Every person volunteering in the classroom or elsewhere in the school/childcare center must check in at the office and follow the school/center procedures for visitors.
5. The teacher and/or instructional assistant are the responsible persons in each classroom.
6. If volunteers choose to assist with children's meal time and volunteer for two hours, the volunteer's lunch may be paid by the Head Start program.
7. Suggestions are encouraged and welcomed, but final decisions rest with the staff and/or school/center administration.

STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Head Start Program is bound by law and policy to set certain standards so that public school/childcare center children (and their families) will be protected while they are attending school/childcare. The following are safeguards designed to protect patrons of the public school system:

1. Volunteers must not give medications or medical treatment to a child.
2. Volunteers must not promote any political candidates or parties on the school campus/center.
3. Volunteers must not promote any religious doctrines or beliefs.
4. Volunteers must seek the aid of school/center personnel in case of discipline problems.
5. Volunteers must not evaluate, diagnose, or prescribe for students educationally.
6. Volunteers must comply with the health requirements of the school district/center.
7. Volunteers will not necessarily serve in his/her child's or grandchild's room.
8. Volunteers must follow established hygiene procedures while volunteering at the Head Start/Childcare center. This includes washing hands with soap and running water upon arrival.
9. Appear neat and clean.
10. Use appropriate speech and behavior at all times.
11. Must follow ISD/center visitor rules and regulations.
12. When on campus, always wear a visitor tag.
13. When present for lunch time, volunteers must eat at the table with the children.
14. Fill out Volunteer sign-in sheet located in the Family Service Worker/Advocate office.

Volunteers must not bring infants, toddlers, or any other children to the site, classroom, or field trips when volunteering.

CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

Childcare Vouchers are used for Early/Head Start sponsored events to reimburse childcare providers.

- A completed and signed Childcare Voucher Form (will be provided by the Family Service Worker/Advocate or Head Start Staff) **must be received in the Head Start Administration office within fourteen calendar days following the event in order to be reimbursed**
- Childcare providers must complete a W-9 form each time they submit a childcare voucher
- The childcare provider must include a valid Social Security number to be compensated

PROCEDURES FOR CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

Region 7 ESC Head Start provides vouchers to assist parents with childcare expenses when they are involved in one or more of the activities listed below:

1. Parent Committee trainings (if childcare is not provided by the district/center).
2. Participation in Region 7 ESC Head Start Self-Assessment.
3. Participation in Region 7 ESC Head Start Policy Council.
4. Participation in Region 7 ESC Head Start training or conference.
5. Participation in Region 7 ESC Head Start Health Advisory Committee meetings.
6. Participation in Region 7 ESC Head Start School Readiness meetings.

These vouchers are available as outlined in the following guidelines and are provided to any parent without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or political belief (form provided by the Family Service Worker/Advocate).

- Parent participation in one of the activities listed above and needs childcare for the Head Start child or a sibling of the Head Start child
- Parent obtains a voucher at the Head Start campus from the Family Service Worker/Advocate
- If a Head Start site has a designated person to provide childcare for the children whose parents will be in a Head Start training, Head Start will not reimburse another childcare provider off site except for Policy Council
- Parent gives the voucher to the childcare provider for him or her to complete. All childcare providers must be 18 years of age. All information must be complete before payment can be processed
- A parent of a Head Start child cannot be a paid provider

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

There are times when Head Start will reimburse travel expenses to and from Head Start events. The following procedures must be used:

1. A completed and signed Travel Non-Employee Reimbursement Form ESC 412 must be used for reimbursement. (See your Family Service Worker/Advocate for this form).
2. Completed forms should be left with the Head Start person in charge of the event. To be reimbursed, forms **must be received in the Head Start Administration office within fourteen calendar days**. No later than the second day of the month for the prior month's travel.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY-See handouts at the back of this Handbook

BUS SAFETY: The school district determines if transportation is provided to pre-school age children. If bus transportation is provided, the ISD has rules which must be followed by *all* students who ride the bus. There may be special rules for younger children. If your child will be riding the bus, obtain a copy of the rules from the school office and complete the requested forms. Please *keep this information up-to-date* so that the school can better provide services to your family. If anyone besides the parent or guardian is picking up the child, *either from the bus or the classroom, permission for this must be in writing from the parent/guardian.*

Other ways you can help your child ride the bus more safely:

- Review the bus rules with your child periodically
- Ensure that your child's clothing or backpacks have no loose drawstrings or long straps which can get caught in the handrail or bus door
- Be on time for pick up and drop off
- Wait with your child until the bus arrives/departs
- Accompany your child to the door of the bus if the child must cross the street or otherwise pass in front of the bus
- Stay at least 10 feet away from the bus
- Communicate with the ISD Transportation Department if you have questions or concerns about bus safety

CAR RIDER SAFETY: The school has instructions regarding pick up and drop off. Follow these carefully to ensure the safety of all children. If you need to go into the school, please park your vehicle in the specified area. Do not leave the motor running if you get out of the vehicle for any reason. Wear your seatbelt and ensure that your child uses the required child safety restraint. As young children are often unpredictable and may not wait in line as they are expected to, please be observant at all times while in the line or anywhere in the parking lot.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY: You and your child can be safer pedestrians by following these tips:

- Always cross at intersections - Look left, then right, then left again before proceeding
- Look for traffic when stepping off a bus or from behind parked cars
- Get in and out of vehicles on the curb side of the street
- Hold your child's hand
-

HEAD START PARENT COMMITTEES AND POLICY COUNCIL

An important way for parents to make their voice heard in Early/Head Start is through participation in the program's policy groups.

At the local level, parents may participate in the **Parent Committee**. Every parent/guardian (or other adult) is automatically a member of the Parent Committee. Parent Committee members help to develop and monitor the implementation of their program's policies, activities and services. The Parent Committee operates as an important link in the election of representatives to the Policy Council. Each Head Start site has a Policy Council parent representative and alternate (EHS has 3 total representatives).

Policy Council is a way in which parents may participate in making policy decisions about the operation of the program. Policy Council membership must consist of a minimum of 51% of parents with children currently enrolled in the program. Community representatives may comprise the remaining 49% membership. The Policy Council plays an active role in planning, developing, reviewing, approving and disapproving policies, plans and procedures for the local Head Start program, as well as building linkages with the community it serves. All Policy Council meetings will be held at noon with lunch served at 11:30 AM.

Policy Council members must adhere to the following regulations:

- All participants must RSVP
- No children are allowed (Childcare vouchers are provided)

Committee Officers

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1304.50 (e)(1), (2) & (3)

Chairperson: Duties and Responsibilities

- Learn how to conduct trainings using parliamentary procedure (Roberts Rules of Order)
- Assist other members of Parent Committee with program preparation (speakers, Parent Committee business)
- Assist Secretary in preparing training agenda
- Assist campus committee with planning/goal setting
- Set-up committees for special projects
- Notify vice chairperson if unable to attend

Vice-Chairperson: Duties and Responsibilities

- Support and assist Chairperson
- Service as substitute for Chairperson when he/she is absent
- Help plan trainings with Chairperson and Parent Committee

Secretary: Duties and Responsibilities

- Record minutes of each training
- Transcribe minutes and gives them to training facilitator
- Help with preparation of agenda
- Ensure that Monthly Parent Training form is completed properly

Assistant Secretary: Duties and Responsibilities

- Support and assist Secretary
- Serve as substitute for Secretary when he or she is absent

Policy Council Representative: Duties and Responsibilities

- Share information from individual campuses with the Policy Council
- Attend **all** Parent Committee trainings
- Attend **all** Policy Council trainings

Policy Council Alternate: Duties and Responsibilities

- Attend **all** Parent Committee trainings
- Serve as substitute for the Policy Council Representative, when he/she is absent
- In the absence of the Policy Council Representative, the Policy Council Alternate shall have the same privileges and duties as the Policy Council Representative

TEACHER HOME VISITS AND CONFERENCES

Teachers and Family Service Workers/Advocates will work together to set-up appointments with parents for at least two home visits (*one in the fall and one in the spring). In addition, the teachers will request that parents come to school/center for two (2) conferences. These visits are used to share information which will help the child receive maximum benefits from his/her education program. Please make every effort to be present for the appointment. *Note: If a child enrolls after January 1st of the program year, a minimum of one Home Visit and one Parent Conference must be conducted.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR HEAD START

The standards of conduct and confidentiality policy for Early/Head Start are requirements and expectations for all Early/Head Start parents. An electronic copy is kept in the child's data-software file.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD #: 1302.90 (c)(1)

(c) Standards of conduct. (1) A program must ensure all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct that:

(i) Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior;

(ii) Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum, that staff must not:

(A) Use corporal punishment;

(B) Use isolation to discipline a child;

(C) Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth;

(D) Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward;

(E) Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;

(F) Use any form of emotional abuse, including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child;

(G) Physically abuse a child;

(H) Use any form of verbal abuse, including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or child's family; or,

(I) Use physical activity or outdoor time as a punishment or reward;

(iii) Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;

(iv) Require staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws; and,

(v) Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised by staff, consultants, contractors, or volunteers while under their care. (See page 19 of this document.)

PARENT CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Sensitive information about Head Start families and staff is respected by limiting access to only those having a legitimate reason to know. Maintaining respect for one another is an important issue throughout our program. Some examples of sensitive information that may not be shared are as follows:

- Children's records
- Family information
- Private conversations
- Medical information
- Interview information
- ISD/center and Head Start issues

PARENTAL RIGHTS (HSPPS 1303.23)

1. Parents have the right to inspect their own child's record.
2. Parents have the right to amend their child's record.
3. Parents have the right to request a hearing regarding the information contained within their child's record.
4. The program must provide a parent, free of charge, an initial copy of child records disclosed to third parties with parental consent.
5. Parents have the right to review any written agreements with third parties.

ANNUAL NOTICE (HSPPS 1303.22)

Disclosure with Parental Consent

1. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) may be released with written parental consent.
 - a. PII is any information that could identify a specific individual, including but not limited to a child's name, name of a child's family member, street address of the child, social security number, or other information that is linked or linkable to the child.
2. Parents have the right to refuse the release of Personally Identifiable Information.

Disclosure *without* Parental Consent

1. Personally Identifiable Information may be released WITHOUT parental consent to
 - a. Consultants acting in the role of an employee of the program,
 - b. Federal or State officials in connection with an audit or evaluation of education or child development programs,
 - c. Federal or State officials in connection with a study of child and family outcomes, including improving the quality of programs,
 - d. Appropriate parties in order to address a disaster, health or safety emergency or a serious health and safety risk such as a serious food allergy, if the program determines that disclosing the PII from child records is necessary to protect the health or safety of children or other persons,
 - e. Comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, provided the program makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent about all such subpoenas and court orders, unless:
 - i. A court has ordered that neither the subpoena, its contents, nor the information provided in response be disclosed,
 - ii. The disclosure is in compliance with an ex parte court order obtained by the United States Attorney General (or designee not lower than an Assistant Attorney General) concerning investigations or prosecutions of an offense listed in 18 U.S.C. 2332b(g)(5)(B) or an act of domestic or international terrorism as defined in 18 U.S.C. 2331,
 - iii. A parent is a party to a court proceeding directly involving child abuse and neglect (as defined in section 3 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101)) or dependency matters, and the order is issued in the context of that proceeding, additional notice to the parent by the program is not required; or,
 - iv. A program initiates legal action against a parent or a parent initiates legal action against a program, then a program may disclose to the court, also without a court order or subpoena, the child records relevant for the program to act as plaintiff or defendant.
 - f. The Secretary of Agriculture or an authorized representative from the Food and Nutrition Service to conduct program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program;
 - g. A caseworker or other representative from a state, local, or tribal child welfare agency, who has the right to access a case plan for a child who is in foster care placement, when such agency is legally responsible for the child's care and protection, under state or tribal law, if the agency agrees in writing to protect PII, to use information from the child's case plan for specific purposes intended of addressing the child's needs, and to destroy information that is no longer needed for those purposes;
 - h. Appropriate parties in order to address suspected or known child maltreatment and is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws on reporting child abuse and neglect.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Texas law requires that all adults, school teachers, social workers, health professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement and other professionals report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or law enforcement. Please call 1-800-252-5400 to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.

- Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it
- If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency
- You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected

ACTIVE SUPERVISION

What is Active Supervision?

Active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times. Educators (all Head Start staff who care for children) position themselves so that they can observe all of the children: watching, counting, and listening at all times. They also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what he/she will do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely.

Strategies to Put Active Supervision in Place

The following strategies allow children to explore their environments safely. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers must be directly supervised at all times. This includes daily routines such as sleeping, eating, and changing diapers or using the bathroom. Programs that use active supervision take advantage of all available learning opportunities and never leave children unattended.

Set Up the Environment

Educators set up the environment so that they can supervise children at all times. When activities are grouped together and furniture is at waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children. Small spaces are kept clutter free and big spaces are set up so that children have clear play spaces that educators can observe.

Position Staff

Educators carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent children from harm. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all of the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Educators stay close to children who may need additional support. Their location helps them provide support, if necessary.

Scan and Count

Educators are always able to account for the children in their care. They continually scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing.

They count the children frequently. This is especially important during transitions, when children are moving from one location to another.

Listen

Specific sounds or the absence of them may signify reason for concern. Educators who are listening closely to children immediately identify signs of potential danger. Programs that think systemically implement additional strategies to safeguard children. For example, bells added to doors help alert educators when a child leaves or enters the room.

Anticipate Children's Behavior

Educators use what they know about each child's individual interests and skills to predict what he/she will do. They create challenges that children are ready for and support them in succeeding. But they also recognize when children might wander, get upset, or take a dangerous risk. Information from the daily health check (e.g., illness, allergies, lack of sleep or food, etc.) informs educators' observations and helps them anticipate children's behavior. Educators who know what to expect are better able to protect children from harm.

Engage and Redirect

Educators use active supervision skills to know when to offer children support. Educators wait until children are unable to solve problems on their own to get involved. They may offer different levels of assistance or redirection depending on each individual child's needs.



Pedestrian Safety

Teaching Kids How to Walk Safely

- Teach kids at an early age to look left, right and left again before crossing the street. Then remind them to continue looking around until safely across.
- It's always best to walk on sidewalks or paths and cross at street corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.
- Teach kids to make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.
- Children under 10 need to cross the street with an adult. Every child is different, but developmentally, most kids are unable to judge the speed and distance of oncoming cars until age 10.
- Encourage kids to be especially alert for cars that are turning or backing up.
- Teach kids not to run or dart out into the street or cross between parked cars.
- If kids are walking when it's dark out, teach them to be especially alert and make sure they are visible to drivers. Have them wear light- or brightly-colored clothing and reflective gear.

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Bus Safety for Young Children

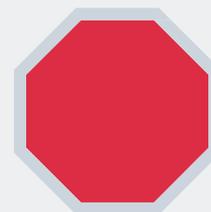
Walk with your young children to the bus stop and wait with them until it arrives. Make sure drivers can see the kids at your bus stop.



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Teach children to stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.

Teach children to wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before getting off and not to walk behind the bus.



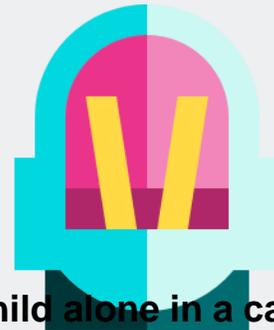
Teach children to watch for their stop and know when to get off the bus.

Young children can be taught how to stay safe on a bus or van. Teach children to speak up if they need assistance.

No child should be left on a bus or van.

Car Safety for Infants and Toddlers

Choose the right direction: **Rear facing or front facing?**
Consult your seats installation guide for information.
Children under 2 should face the rear; if you feel your child is too tall to face the rear use their height and weight as a guide and consult your car seat manual.



Never leave your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. Temperatures inside a car can be 20 degrees higher than outside and cause heatstroke in the time it takes to run into and out of a store.



Buckle up. When adults buckle up, kids will buckle up and everyone is safer for the ride.



Never use a cell phone while driving. Wait until you are stopped and all children are delivered to their destinations safely. No text is more important than the safety of a child



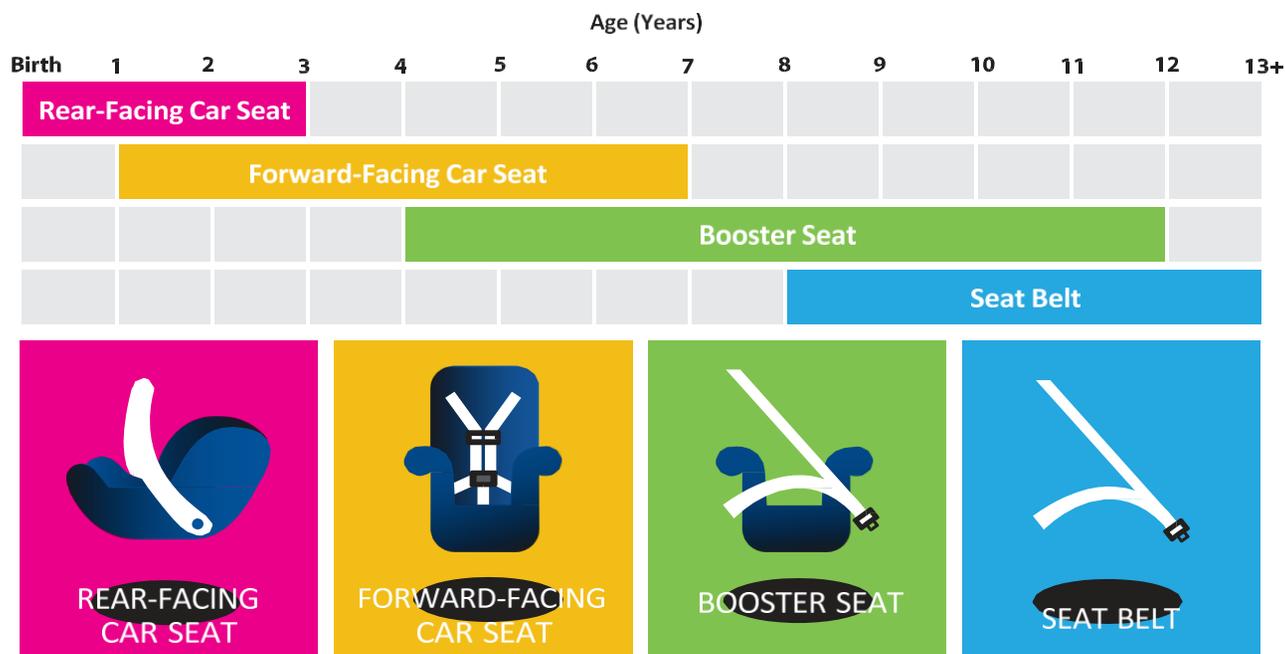
Infants and toddlers should always be buckled into an appropriately secured car seat in the back seat of the car.
Children should ride in the back until at least 12 years of age.

No child should be left alone in a car.

Region 7 Education Service Center Head Start

Car Seat Recommendations for Children

There are many car seat choices on the market. Use the information below to help you choose the type of car seat that best meets your child's needs.



- **Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it every time.**
- **Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions (check height and weight limits) and read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or lower anchors and a tether, if available.**
- **To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.**
- **Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.**