

ORGANIZED COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.

HEAD START

MISSION STATEMENT

The Organized Community Action Program Head Start is a comprehensive family services program; operating in Bullock, Butler, Coffee, Conecuh, Crenshaw, Dale, Monroe, and Pike counties, to improve the quality of life and embrace the self-esteem of the population served.

VALUE STATEMENT

The philosophy of OCAP Head Start is to have a fertile working environment. We recognize each person as an individual of worth, who is willing to learn and who is receptive to change. We will maintain cooperation and cohesiveness that leads to dedication, therefore, creating a program of excellence.

VISION STATEMENT

Within five years, the OCAP Head Start program will construct and initiate a comprehensive family also on the utilization of programmatic objectives designed to promote full parent participation and develop self-help skills, thus moving families up and out of poverty.

WHAT IS HEAD START?

Head Start is a federal program for preschool children from low incomes families. The program is operated by the Organized Community Action Program, with services in the Bullock, Butler, Conecuh, Crenshaw, Dale, Monroe, and Pike counties.

Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities. They receive dental and medical care, have healthy meals, and enjoy playing indoors and outdoors in a safe setting. Services are also offered to meet the special needs of children with disabilities.

WHAT CAN THE HEAD START PROGRAM OFFER TO YOUR CHILD?

Head Start provides children with activities that can help them grow mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. The staff recognizes that as PARENTS, you are the first and most important teachers of your children. They will welcome your involvement in Head Start activities and will work as partners with you to help your child progress.

Head Start offers your child love, acceptance, understanding, and opportunity to learn and to experience success. Head Start children of the same age socialize with each other in solving problems, having the opportunity to enhance self-confidence and to improve their listening and speaking skills.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN THE HEAD START PROGRAM

1. There is parent participation in the process of making decisions about the nature of operation of the Head Start Program. This is done through parents who are members of the Policy Council.
2. Parent participation in the Head Start center as a volunteer.
3. Parents work at home with their children in cooperation with the staff at the centers.
4. Activities are carried out that have been developed by the parents. This is accomplished through the Head Start Parent Committee at the individual Head Start center.

Although it is not that you attend parent committee meetings, it is mandatory we have a parent committee that meets regularly. A lot can be accomplished if parents take an active role as volunteers, attend meetings, and become participating members of the Policy Council.

You are an important part of the Head Start family and your participation is very important to assure the program will remain in operation. Please come and visit the centers, attend parent meetings and become a working part of the Head Start family.

Head Start is a FREE federally funded program. Parent committees will not be allowed to have activities that require parents to bring money. Donations may be accepted in the form of a check or money order to the organization (OCAP, Inc.).

PARENT PREPARATION

1. There will be no transportation to and from home; however, Head Start will provide transportation to and from dental/health care facilities when requested.
2. Parents are required to bring their children inside the center and sign them in; as well as signing their children out in the afternoons.
3. School hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
4. Parents must designate, in writing, persons who will be allowed to pick up their children.
5. In the event that you cannot reach the Head Start center before the designated closing time you should contact a person who is allowed to pick up your child. **CHILDREN NOT PICKED UP AFTER ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO REACH THE PARENT(S), WILL BE TAKEN TO THE PROPER AUTHORITIES.**
6. From time to time, conferences will be scheduled. All conferences should be scheduled during a time that is convenient for the parent. You should contact your Child Services Specialist if there is a conflict between you and the teacher concerning the conference scheduling.
7. The program will be sending newsletters home periodically. This newsletter will help to keep parents informed of the different activities that are going on at the center.
8. There will be two (2) home visits made to each child's home. Arrangements for these will be made in the fall and spring of each school year.
9. The Head Start staff will participate in the in-service training during the program year. Parents are invited to attend if at all possible. You will receive notification that your child will be out of school on these days.

ABSENTEEISM

Your child's attendance is very important to his/her development. If you do not allow your child the experience of being away from home on consistent basis, you will be hindering their total social and educational development. The teachers are concerned about your children and so please inform them if there is a problem with attendance.

- If your child is absent, please notify the center staff and state the reason for the absence.
- If your child is out three (3) or more days, due to illness we request that you bring a doctor's statement.
- If your child is absent for any other reason, please be aware that after three (3) days of unexcused absences, we may consider your child's slot vacant and enroll another child.

SPORADIC ATTENDANCE

If your child is absent for an extended period, such as 30 days or more, or attends only sporadically, for example one or two days per week, the Head Start staff will contact you to determine why this is occurring.

If there are family problems affecting the child's attendance appropriate family support procedures should be initiated. The procedures must include home visits or other direct contact with the parents.

All contacts and services offered and provided will be documented. If these efforts are not successful, and chronic absenteeism continues, the agency will determine whether it is able to provide the child with appropriate services in another program option. If that is not feasible, the agency may, after informing the family, designate the slot as an enrollment vacancy and proceed to enroll an eligible child from their waiting list.

The family and Community Partnerships Director will review all documentation to determine if the situation substantiates termination of enrollment.

THE HEAD START DAY

Working and playing together: Each child chooses an activity from a variety of activities, which include: looking at books, listening to records, building with blocks, playing at home experiences in the family area, drawing, painting at the easel, modeling with clay, using finger paint, free-hand cutting, pasting, caring for growing things and pets and working with puzzles.

Cleaning up: There is a specific place for all materials and equipment in Head Start. After their use, they are to be put back in their places. Each child assumes responsibility for putting away materials they used and cleaning up the area in which they have worked.

Developing physically: Using playground equipment and playing games aid in physical development.

Resting: The children rest on cots covered with sheets or towels, which we ask you to provide. Rest time is for relaxation. Periods of activity are alternated with periods of quietness.

Eating Together: Eating together gives the child opportunities to learn desirable table manners, good food habits, and give and take conversation. Each child is provided with two well balanced meals and a snack each day.

Sharing group experiences: Singing songs, listening to music, responding to rhythms, taking nature walks, going on excursions, listening to stories, talking together and playing; all contribute to making Head Start a happy place.

PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR THE FIRST DAY HOW YOU CAN HELP?

1. Make sure your child gets enough sleep and rest.
2. Be sure that your child gets to school on time.
3. Send no food or money with your child.
4. Send extra clothing and please label your child's extra clothing. (Clothing needs to be changed for each season.)
5. If your child expresses fears about going to school, discuss these fears but be reassuring.
6. Send two towels: one to cover up and the other to cover the child's cot. (For safety of your child please do not bring items in plastic bags.)
7. Show continued interest in your child's school life. Ask, "What did you do in school today," and listen to the reply.
8. Report to the teacher any upsetting experience that you think will help the teacher understand your child.
9. Help you child look forward to the happy days of Head Start.
10. Visit the Head Start center often and attend monthly parent committee meetings.
11. Parents please come fully dressed when bringing your child to school. (No pajamas, robes, etc.)
12. Please place your cell phones on vibrate or turn them off while in the center.
13. ABOVE ALL: ALWAYS HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMERGENCY NUMBERS UPDATED IN YOUR CHILD'S FILE.

PICTURE, VIDEO, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Please be advised that parents are not allowed to take pictures or make videos on our premises that include children other than their own. This is a violation of one's privacy. Also, parents may not post pictures of activities that take place at our centers on FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, or any other social media unless it is of your own child.

Please note any posts to FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, or any other social media that is perceived as harassing, coercing, or threatening to our students or staff may exclude you from participating with our program. The agency also has the right to pursue criminal charges.

EDUCATION-EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Head Start provides education opportunities for children, families, and staff. It is our belief that each child is unique individual with his/her own special needs and background of experience. A child needs to develop to his/her greatest potential, feel safe, and accepted in an environment that is nurturing, encouraging, supportive and challenging. Our program is designed to offer children this type of environment and provide a caring place to grow.

Children learn by doing. They gain knowledge and skills from real experiences. Young children are also active and curious, yet each one grows at their pace. Head Start seeks to aid each child in developing his/her physical, emotional cognitive, social and creative skills to their fullest potential.

The developmentally sequenced skill approach to early childhood education supports the way young children learn and address the need of the whole child. It is based on sound child development principles and long term research which shows positive results for children all the way into adulthood.

Within a consistent daily routine, the interests and needs of the children are explored and supported. The major goals of the curriculum are to help children learn to 1) make choices and decisions that work, 2) solve problems effectively, 3) communicate well with others, and 4) think things through and develop solutions.

Children are allowed to explore these skills within a well-planned stimulating environment, surrounded by caring adults who facilitate and extend the children's learning. Of primary importance are the opportunities available to teach children how to learn and how to think. While following the interests as well as health, nutrition, and education within their everyday experience. We promote independence and responsibility in the children by encouraging them to do as much for themselves as possible.

CHILD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The education plan assures that children will receive a curriculum designed to promote self-esteem, and prepare them for classroom life in the following ways:

Group living: Planning, working and playing are an organized experience so that desirable habits, attitudes independence and responsibility are established.

Creative living: Self-expression through the use of plants, clay, crayons, and materials are encouraged.

Number concept: Playing games, counting objects, calendar events, learning shapes and sizes, and counting in sets are individual and group experiences.

Science concepts: Caring for pets and plants, learning to observe closely and listen carefully, learning to collect objects from nature walks and other activities stimulating curiosity and exploration.

Field Trips: Visiting points of interest in the community helps establish appreciation of people who contribute to their life.

Language experience: Enjoying stories, verse conversation, and dramatization are daily activities.

Music Experience: Responding rhythmically to songs, singing, and listening to music are everyday activities.

Health and safety: Learning good health habits and acquiring an intelligent understanding of safety rules, prepare the child for responsible living.

Relaxation: Indoor and outdoor play and rest are a part of the daily schedule.

Culture experience: Learning songs and dances, hearing stories, eating food and dressing in costumes from other cultures broaden the child's and parent's understanding of others.

HEALTH

The Health Plan of Head Start provides comprehensive health services (including medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition) to the children, promotes preventative health services and early intervention and promotes the families with the skills, insight, and knowledge of services necessary to continue comprehensive health services after the children leave the Head Start Program. All enrolled children are required to have a dental examination done within the first 45 calendar days of entrance into the program.

NUTRITION

The Head Start Nutrition program promotes child wellness by providing nutritional services that supplement and complement those of the home and community. A well-nourished child has a better chance to learn. We strive to help each child established a good eating habit which will lay a good foundation for a healthy body. Good nutrition affects many parts of a child's life, their bodies grow stronger, which enables them to work and play, and they learn through the process of eating, such as socialization. In Head Start, a child learns about the looks, tastes, and smell of different multicultural foods. Children learn that eating is a pleasant experience in a family style setting. In

addition, children are served two balanced meals and a snack each day which are contracted through a catering service.

All meals will be contracted out and will ensure that nutritious meals are served. We do not have individual birthday parties or serve candy to the children in observation of holidays.

OCAP/HEAD START

Medication administration policy

PART 1304 – PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR THE OPERATION OF HEAD START PROGRAMS BY GRANTEE AND DELEGATE AGENCIES.

SUBPART B – EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH SERVICES

No individual employed by the OCAP/Head Start program may administer over-the-counter medications or prescription medications without the express written permission of the Head Start Director. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination.

Our program does not discourage any children from Head Start centers who have to take prescribed medications from doing so. However, we request that parents arrange a time schedule so that the parents can administer medication to their children themselves.

Special arrangements will be made from children with prescription Medication if the parents are unable to administer medication.

All written prescribed medications will only be administered by a designated staff member (selected by the child Service Specialist from each Head Start center) with written authorization from the Head Start Director.

All center staff members will be trained on the administration of medication. In the event all designates staff members are absent, the staff will notify the Central Office immediately. The Central Office will designate another center staff member.

(EMERGENCY BASIS ONLY)

THESE ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN P.S.1304.22 (C)

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

1. All medication will be labeled, stored under lock and key and refrigerated if necessary
2. When a child requires medication, all center staff members will be trained, and designed staff person and alternates will be responsible for administering, handling and storing child medications, with written authorization by the Head Start Director to do so.
3. A physician's instruction and written parent or guardian authorization will be obtained for all medications administered by the staff.
4. Designated staff members will maintain individual record of all medications dispensed, and will review these records with the child's parent(s).
5. Designated staff members will record changes in the child's behavior that have implications for drug dosage or type, and will assist parents in communicating with their physician regarding the effect of the medication has on the child.
6. Designated staff members will demonstrate proper techniques for administering, handling and storing medication, including the use of any necessary equipment to administer medication.

THE HEAD START HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR WILL ASSESS THE CHILD'S CONDITION, AND MAKE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATION ON THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. There is written consent from the parent or guardian.
2. Written instructions from the child's physician.
3. The medication is in the original prescription container, properly labeled by a registered pharmacist as prescribed by law.

X

Harriet Renorda McFarlin
Head Start Director

X

Peggy Lane
Health Services Director

OCAP HEAD START ILLNESS POLICY:

1. A child shall not attend the Head Start Center if he/she:
 - a. Has a temperature of 101 degrees or above.
 - b. Has a communicable disease. (If unsure, see school nurse).
 - c. Has vomited or had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
 - d. Feels too unwell to participate in daily activities.
2. A child may return to the Head Start Center when:
 - a. Fever has been absent for 24 hours.
 - b. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea has subsided for 12 hours.
 - c. Stage for contagion for special communicable disease has passed.
 - d. Four doses of penicillin (antibiotic) over 24 hours have been given for known strep infection.
 - e. Child has been under a doctor's care and the doctor has given written permission for the child to return to the center.
 - f. Local health department has given written permission for the child to return to the center.
 - g. Child feels well enough to participate in activities at the center.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Disabled children receive the full range of services as all Head Start children. Disabled children are actively recruited for enrollment and are mainstreamed in the regular classrooms with all other children. They are entitled to special services as required to meet their unique needs, developmental potential and family circumstances. Although Head Start makes available ten percent of its funded enrollment for children with disabilities, the Head Start eligibility requirements must be met for enrollment consideration. Children are accepted for enrollment consideration from other agencies such as, Early Intervention & Easter Seals. Parents, teachers, physicians and other professionals can also make referrals. Head Start will obtain a signed written consent from the parent in order to proceed with the process. Children who are referred will complete the referral process within 60 days. This process includes an evaluation by either the LEA or another professional entity. If a child is accepted for evaluation by a multidisciplinary team, an eligibility decision will be made and the parents will be informed of this decision. If the child qualifies for services, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be created and implemented within the classroom lesson plan within 30 days of the decision.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION

The major focus is working with the family to engage and stimulate parent participation in the center's program and related activities. This includes the encouragement, motivation and assistance provided to the family in efforts to improve the conditions and quality of life.

Additional responsibilities include the screening of new children done in June. Parents are made aware of community services and resources as well as how to use them. To ensure engagement of these services, Head Start provides the parents with a community resources list and initiates contact with these resources and trainings or services needed from the as requested.

Parent engagement is year round with the screening of new children done in June. Parents are made aware of community services and resources as well as how often to use them. To ensure engagement of these services, Head Start provides the parents with a community resources list and initiates contact with these resources and trainings or services needed from them as requested.

Parent engagement is a process of community action that enriches the total Head Start Program. It provides parents, staff and communities with opportunities to work as a team to ensure their child's growth and development. Parent engagement enables parent to participate (1) in making policy decisions that affect their child's growth and development; and (2) in developing and sustaining programs that assist parents in carrying out their parental responsibilities their personal goals.

MALE ENGAGEMENT

To ensure our children's healthy growth and development, we strongly encourage male engagement in the Head Start experience. Parent engagement includes male engagement. Statistics have shown that children who do not have the active participation of their father in their lives are more likely to grow up with behavioral problems.

Children from fatherless homes are:

- 20 times more likely to end up in prison
- 10 times more likely to abuse drugs
- 9 times more likely to drop out of school
- 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders
- 5 times more likely to commit suicide

We strongly support mothers to encourage fathers to become more active in the Head Start Experience with their child. Fathers are encouraged and welcomed to attend meetings to help make decisions, help children with school work, participate in center activities and volunteer at the center.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Staff & parent training/ education will be an on-going endeavor. In the centers resources will be provided to assist staff and parents with decisions about furthering their careers while lending monetary assistance to attend institutions and classes. GED classes will be offered to parents at local centers or coordinated with local institutions. Literacy improvement will be a priority in each center.

There will be an evaluation system to determine if the Head Start Program is providing staff and parents with skilled related to program tasks and to upgrade quality, especially determining the strengths and weaknesses of the Center Development Plan.

GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR COMMUNITY & PARENT COMPLAINTS

1. Policy

It is the Policy of the OCAP Head Start Program to provide its parents with the best possible service. Employees are expected to treat all parents, suppliers, and general public in a courteous, respectful manner at all times. Employees should always remember that the program's parents come first and that each one is entitled to the same thoughtful treatment that the employee would like to receive. Parents should not be treated in a condescending or impolite manner.

When a parent approaches an employee with a question or complaint, the employee should give that matter immediate attention. If a parent or supplier becomes abusive or argumentative and the employee cannot properly handle the situation, the parent should be referred to the employee's supervisor.

2. Grievance Definition

A grievance is a claim or complaint based upon an event or condition, which affects the operation of the Head Start Program.

A grievance might involve alleged safety or health hazards, unsatisfactory physical facilities, surroundings, materials or equipment, unjust treatment or any other event or circumstance related to the operation of the Head Start Program.

3. Grievance Procedure

Step One: A parent, volunteer or community member shall present the matter in writing to the Center's Child Service Specialist (CSC), provided the Child Service Specialist did not instigate the grievance. The CCS can assist in transcribing an oral complaint for the parent if needed.

If the grievance is against the CSS, the grievance should be presented to the Family & Community Partnership Division Director (F&CP Division Director)*

If the complaint is not against the Division Director, he/she will fully investigate the complaint involving other appropriate persons as necessary. After a full investigation of all the facts relating to the incident, the F&CP Division Director shall give an answer within five (5) working days.

Step Two: If the response given to the complaint in step one is not satisfactory or if the parent shall file the complaint to the Head Start Director within three (3) working days. The Head Start Director will review the grievance, along with the Human Resources Manager, and do further investigation involving all parties if necessary, either separately or together.

Step Three: If the decision rendered by the Head Start Director is not satisfactory or if the response was not given in five (5) working days, the parent shall file a complaint to the Policy Council Chairperson, within three (3) working days.

The Chairperson shall within ten (10) working days convene a hearing with a grievance committee, and witness may attend this meeting.

Recesses or continuances may be granted by a majority vote of the Grievance Committee.

The Policy Council Grievance Committee shall make a written recommendation within three (3) working days following the completion of the hearing.

The recommendation of the Policy Council Grievance Committee, along with the Head Start Director, shall be presented to the full body of the Policy Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the Policy Council and the Head Start Director will then be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

GRADUATION

Graduation ceremonies are functions that are not supported by the Head Start Program. However, we have allowed parents to conduct these functions at a separate site. Due to the rise in irresolvable issues between the parents, graduation ceremonies will no longer be allowed for Head Start Children.

PARKING

For the safety of the Head Start children, we ask that all parents park on the front of our buildings during pick up and drop off of the children.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTHOOD

1. Thou Shalt Train Thyself

Children do not learn merely by telling; they learn by showing. Do not expect your child to act better than you act. Examples make the greatest impressions.

2. Thou Shalt Be More Concerned With Relationships Than Rules

The child who knows they are loved by their parents is less likely to rebel against the rules and authority in school and society. Your respect will nourish his respect.

3. Thou Shalt Impart The Faith In Our School

Parents have the basic responsibility for education. A school can only assist parents, not replace them. No amount of support by a teacher can substitute for the support at home. Your attitude about school will become your child's attitude.

4. Thou Shalt Learn To Listen

Listening is a real art. Listening to your child means that you acknowledge his/her worth as a person, respect them and understand their viewpoints.

5. Thy Shalt Spend Time With Thy Children

Parents must make effort to stop and enjoy life as a family. Grab on to the moment to spend time with each other. There is not enough money made to replace your time spent with your children. The family that plays together stays together.

6. Thou Shalt Acknowledge Thy Shortcomings As Parents

Parents that deny their shortcomings end up blaming their children for their own inadequacies. Change what you can change and accept what you cannot change.

7. Thou Shalt Keep A Sense Of Humor

We take ourselves too seriously. We need to learn to laugh at our mistakes. Laughter releases pent-up despair and relieves hostility. Too often, despair and hostility is taken out on our children.

8. Thou Shalt Treat Thy Children Equally

Each child is a unique individual with his/her own personality. They should be loved for who they are, not for what you want them to become. Good parents love their children despite of imperfections.

9. Thou Shalt Use Discipline

Discipline is providing means for growing up which includes protection and guidance. There is a definite relationship between love and acceptance.

10. Thou Shalt Know When To Let Go

As children grow up so do their responsibilities. Good parents want their children to be free from emotional dependency on them. If parents follow the first nine commandments the tenth will fall into place without much effort. There comes a time when each individual must be responsible for their own actions.

The ABC's of Fatherhood

“Building Blocks for Better Dads”

Arrange for some one-on-one time with your children once a week.

Be spontaneous and take time to rejuvenate yourself two or three times a month.

Check your children's homework every day.

Devote time each day to pray or meditate with your children.

Enjoy a family tradition once every month.

Forgive yourself, forgive your children, and forgive their mother daily.

Give an allowance, regardless of how small, and teach about saving once a week.

Have a long heart-to heart chat with your children once a month.

Instead of TV, pursue a common interest or hobby with your kids once a week.

Just do what you say and follow through with your children.

Kindness is something your children learn from you by example, every day.

Laugh about something with your child every day.

Make sure children complete chores once a week and reward them for doing well.

Never bypass opportunities to help your children perform an anonymous good deed.

Only a fool would avoid using these suggestions for building better relationships.

Plan a fun excursion so you can be alone with your children with your children once a month.

Question children about, “How are school, friends, and family going?” twice a month.

Review schoolwork at the end of each week and praise them for their achievement.

Say, “I love you”, read to your children and kiss them goodnight every day.

Take pictures. Review goals; reward when reached. Teach a life skill once a month.

Update house rules; adjust privileges and responsibilities once a month.

Visit a library with your children two or three times a month.

Watch out for what you are eating or drinking and make sure your kids eat right.

X-out TV viewing throughout the week while school is going on.

Your house is your castle; help kids develop self-discipline by cleaning their room.

Zoom in on becoming a better father rather than mistakes you've made.

Notes:

Notes:
