

**HACAP Head Start  
Family Handbook  
2024-2025**



Head Start promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services.

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We want to personally welcome you and your child to HACAP Head Start Early Head Start (HS/EHS). **Head Start and Early Head Start** is a comprehensive early childhood development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. As a child-focused program, we have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children. Our goal is to provide a high-quality early learning environment meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. This is an opportunity for all children to take part in a well-designed environment to enhance their social/emotional, cognitive, language development, and large/small motor skills.

Head Start's philosophy is that parents are the most important and primary educators of their children. Families have primary responsibility for their children's physical, mental, social and values development. We also believe that a good working relationship between the parent and the HS/EHS team is necessary for a successful experience for your child. We are always open to your recommendations and strongly encourage your participation in the program's development.

This Family Handbook was designed to give you information about our program and the important part parents play in it. The handbook has outlined information about the HS/EHS Program. For a complete listing of your classroom's activities and scheduled days of operation, please refer to your center calendar.

We hope this handbook answers your questions about Head Start and Early Head Start services and that your participation in this year's program will result in personal growth and achievement for your family.

Sincerely,

Christi Regan  
HACAP Early Childhood Programs Director

Jane Drapeaux  
HACAP Chief Executive Officer

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Webpage: [www.hacap.org](http://www.hacap.org)

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

It is the Policy of HACAP that no person will be discriminated against in employment because of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap.

It is also the Policy of HACAP that no person shall be excluded from participation in or be denied the services of any program or activity of HACAP because of race, creed, national origin, age, sex or handicap.

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## **HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start Mission**

The overall goal of HS/EHS is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in young children. Social competence refers to the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his and her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. It considers the interrelatedness of cognitive and intellectual development, physical and mental health, and nutritional needs.

Key Principles of Head Start including the following:

- Comprehensive services
- Parent Involvement and family focus
- Community partnerships and community-based services

We undertake this mission, in coordination and cooperation with other human service agencies, with the understanding that we reach our goal one child and one family at a time.

## **What is Head Start/Early Head Start?**

Head Start/Early Head Start is a federal program for low-income families with young children Birth to age 5 and pregnant women. HACAP HS/EHS programs are offered throughout the nine county service areas in Benton, Delaware, Dubuque, Iowa, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington counties. Program options vary according to the county and funding options. Families with age eligible children may apply by contacting the HACAP Corporate Office phone number 319-739-0087 or 1-800-469-2211 for further information. Slots are offered throughout the year based on the approved enrollment criteria and the needs of the family. Families that have children with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

HS/EHS School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. HACAP HS/EHS is committed to establishing school readiness goals that promote children's status and progress across the domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness goals for kindergarten goals. School Readiness Goals will appropriately reflect the ages of children birth to five participating in the HS/EHS program. HACAP views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child. HS/EHS recognizes that parents are their children's primary teachers and advocates. Parents are welcome to be at the center to observe, participate in activities and share preplanned activities of their making by participating in the HS/EHS Volunteer Program.

HS/EHS offers you a sense of belonging, support services, and a chance to be involved in activities that help your whole family. You are invited to take part in training offered to HS/EHS teaching staff. You can become a volunteer in or out of the classroom and can have a voice in program decision-making.

### **About the Employees:**

Children thrive when their teachers are nurturing and committed to each other. HACAP HS/EHS staff are qualified early childhood professionals who have met HS/EHS Standards and state standards. Staff employed are chosen because of their knowledge, experience and commitment to HACAP and HS/EHS mission, vision and values.

All staff must pass a thorough background check, criminal and child abuse record check, fingerprints and health examination. Rechecks are completed as required by federal and/or state requirements. HS/EHS staff are trained in first aid, CPR certified, universal precautions, mandatory reporting of child abuse and early childhood development courses. Re-certification is completed as required.

New staff are provided with a full on-boarding orientation session that shares HACAP and HS/EHS mission, vision, values and policies and procedures. Ongoing observation and evaluation occur for each individual and recommendations and training offered to better care for the children in our care.

Staff members are expected to maintain professionalism, including, but not limited to the following tasks:

- Care for every child entrusted to them with understanding and respect
- Respect and promote unique identity of each child and family
- Use positive methods of child guidance
- Having good communication and listening skills
- Being patient
- Face conflict constructively

### **State Child Care Licensing:**

Each of our HS/EHS Early Learning programs are licensed and regulated by Iowa's Department of Human Services. Maintaining a license in good status indicates that a program meets or exceeds guidelines in many areas including personnel, health and safety, nutrition, environments and administration. If you ever have serious concerns about the care your child is being provided, please contact your local Department of Human Services Office:

#### **Delaware, Jones & Linn County**

Amy Lyons  
Linn County DHS  
319-892-6827  
411 3<sup>rd</sup> St SE Suite 400  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

#### **Dubuque & Jackson County**

Heidi Hungate  
Clinton County DHS  
563-242-0573  
121 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. S PO BOX 1180  
Clinton, IA 52733-1180

Johnson County  
Heidi Brown  
Muscatine County DHS  
563-263-9302  
315 Iowa Ave Suite 2  
Muscatine, IA 52761

Benton County  
Becky Frost  
Black Hawk County DHS  
319-292-2429  
1407 Independence Ave  
Waterloo, IA 50704

Iowa & Washington County  
Jill Seibert  
Wapello County DHS  
641-684-3949  
120 E. Main St  
Ottumwa, IA 52501

**Program Options and Funding:**

HACAP HS/EHS receives federal funding to operate 4 hours, five days a week, September thru May. HACAP depends on additional federal, state and local wraparound funds to offer full day, extended day and school day program options. Wraparound funding includes DHS Wraparound, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Shared Visions (IA State Dept. of Education), Linn County Early Childhood Iowa, Johnson County Early Childhood Iowa, Cedar/Jones County Early Childhood Iowa, Clinton/Jackson County Early Childhood Iowa, United Way of East Central Iowa, United Way Johnson Washington County, City of Iowa City, Johnson County Board of Supervisors, City of Coralville and Jones County Board of Supervisors. The awarded Wraparound funding sources have established compliance guidelines for the use of funds. All wraparound funds stipulate that the family is working and/or going to school full time to be eligible for the full day care.

All programs emphasize parents actively participating in the growth and development of their child, their family, and in the operation of the program. All options include educational and supportive home visits where the staff and parents work as a team.

**Head Start (3 – 5yrs):**

**FULL DAY**

5 days per week                      12 months per year  
8.5 - 10 hours per day

**EXTENDED DAY**

5 days per week                      190-220 days per year  
8-10 hours per day

**SCHOOL DAY**

4-5 days per week                      160 days per year  
6-8 hours per day

**PART DAY**

4-5 days per week                      160 days per year  
3.5-4 hours per day

## **Early Head Start (0 – 3yrs) Dubuque, Johnson, Jones, Linn and Washington County:**

### **Early Head Start – Center Base**

7-10 hours per day                      175-230 days per year  
Monthly contacts from a Family Support Worker

### **Early Head Start – Home Base**

Pregnant women and children birth to three years of age  
Weekly in-home visits  
Bi-monthly socialization experiences for families

## **Cell Phones**

We ask that when dropping off/picking up your child that you refrain from using cell phones in the building and classroom. This will help to avoid distraction and provide the opportunity to talk with your child and your child's teachers.

## **Transition Into Head Start/Early Head Start and a New Classroom**

Each change in our lives is like a journey. This takes time, preparation and planning. Transitions to new setting offer children and families many new experiences and opportunities. Children, not knowing what to expect, need time to adjust to these new experiences. The Head Start/Early Head Start team helps children make a smooth transition into the classroom.

Here are some tips to help you the first few days of Head Start/Early Head Start (0-5):

- It's normal for children to be upset when separating from their parents. Be patient, give encouragement, changes will come.
- Allow the child time to settle in. Take off their jacket and help them get involved in the activity in progress. Allow the infant a short time to bond with the caregiver as you are giving important daily information to teachers.
- Visit the center beforehand, if possible. Read stories about "the first day of school". Look around for familiar items. Read schedules and posters together. Become involved in your child's new classroom. When you feel comfortable, your child will be less anxious too. Ask how you can participate in activities.
- Transitioning from Early Start is a process, not a single event. Transition planning for children moving from the Early Head Start program to the Head Start program begins six months before a child's third birthday. A transition team consists of teachers, supervisor and home visitor if applicable. Parents are active members of the transition plan and help provide important information necessary to ensure a successful transition.
- The team will need to have transition conversations to discuss the child's health status, developmental assessments and progress in the program and at home. The family's home situation is also an important part of making the transition from program to program. Our primary goal is to meet each child's need and support the family.
- Parents will need to be prepared as a child moves from one program to the next, to complete a new application and provide income verification.

- The classroom staff will work with families who will transition from Head Start to Kindergarten. This process typically starts at the beginning of the school year by signing consents for information exchange with the school district the child will be attending the next fall and will be discussed throughout the program year at home visits and conferences.

## **Attendance**

Consistent / Regular attendance is very important for your child. Frequent absences make it hard for children to feel comfortable with the group and for routines to be established. If your child must be absent for part of the day, please try to schedule appointments so they don't occur during our core part of the day when children are actively involved in learning. Our part day classrooms have limited hours to work with your child; prompt and consistent attendance is especially important.

**If your child cannot be at the center for any reason, please call the center before the start of class so the staff can complete an attendance form, which states the reason for absence.**

Federal guidelines mandate that we insist upon regular participation. A conference may be called if there are more than 3 absences within a month. If a child's attendance drops below 85%, families will be required to complete an *attendance support plan*. The *attendance support plan* will outline the agreed upon expectations for the child's regular attendance. HS/EHS staff will work with families to outline a plan for consistent attendance.

## **Arrival / Pick-Up**

Arrival, pick-up and times spent at the center build relationships between parent, child and staff and ease transitions between home and school. We kindly ask that you not use cell phones when at the center – this is a time to focus on child/staff/parent interactions. Siblings should not be left in cars nor cars left idling in parking lots during arrival and pick-up times, this is a health and safety precaution.

Teacher hours are scheduled based on children arriving and being picked up at specific times. We ask that if you are late dropping off or picking up your child, you tell us. We realize that things come up, but communication is key. Extreme or chronic problems will result in corrective action being taken by the program.

All children must have an emergency card completed at enrollment and updated as changes are made. Information required on Child Emergency Cards include Doctor, Dentist, Insurance, Hospital of Choice and who is authorized to pick up a child. We suggest you talk with the individual(s) before listing them on the emergency card and ensure they can pick up your child if you are unable. Pick up persons must provide a picture ID at the time of pick up. NO phone authorizations will be allowed, it must be in writing on the child's emergency card.

## **EARLY ARRIVALS AND LATE PICK-UPS CANNOT BE PERMITTED!**

If an emergency prevents you from being on time to pick up your child, you must call the center immediately to explain the problem and the steps you are taking to see that your child is picked up prior to closing time. A Late Pick-Up Goal Plan meeting will be scheduled to address late pick-ups of children.



Each site has steps they take when a child remains at the center after class is over. In some cases, the police or the Iowa Department of Human Services may be contacted.

Individuals picking up a child must have a picture ID available upon request of staff. No child will be released if there is no written authorization.

### **Guidelines for Unscheduled Closing of Centers:**

Head Start Early Head Start sites will remain open during the scheduled operating hours of the center. In the case of inclement winter weather, school delays and closings. HACAP's Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms will operate as usual. The exception to this would be if it would cause a health or safety issue for the children.

Severe weather conditions or emergencies may warrant sudden or early closing of a site. If the site is closed for weather or emergency reasons, announcements will be sent to the local media stations. Parents will be contacted if a site needs to close during the classroom day.

Due to the families' needs and the staffing structure at a center, there must be a certain amount of individual decision-making at each Head Start/Early Head Start facility.

**Parents must update any changes in work/home phone numbers and emergency contact numbers so staff can contact parents.**

### **Emergency Transportation:**

**Emergency Situations Only: If Emergency Situation requires evacuation of the building, children will be removed safely, including using staff vehicles.**

### **Children's Clothing:**

Children's clothing should be comfortable, and suitable for the weather and messy play. Save special outfits for your own special times. Shoes should be suitable for running and climbing. Tennis shoes keep children from slipping. Boots are needed for rainy and snowy days. On days that boots are worn, please send shoes for indoor use. A warm coat, mittens, snow pants, and a hat are needed for cold or chilly weather. Please label all clothing / boots / shoes etc. with your child's name.

An extra set of clothes is helpful in case of spills, accidents or after wet play.

At Head Start/Early Head Start, we plan an outdoor experience every day. Fresh air and a chance to explore outdoors are important to the Head Start/Early Head Start experience. Make sure your child has clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.

### **Field Trips:**

At HACAP Head Start programs, field trips may be used to enhance our regular classroom curriculum. Whether it's a nature walk or a trip to the grocery store, field trips help children explore and learn more about the world around them.

At enrollment, you will be asked to fill out the Parent Authorizations form, which designates whether your child may participate in field trips. Teachers will prepare notices informing you of upcoming field trips. HACAP may utilize public transportation and walking as modes of transportation for field trips. Early Head Start will travel via walking only close to the center. Infants and young toddlers will not participate in field trips or leave the premises of the HS/EHS Center.

### **Holidays and Celebrations:**

Nationally, the Head Start/Early Head Start program respects diversity and equal opportunity for all people. Therefore, it is the policy of HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start that any/all holiday activities will be planned by the center's parent group and will happen after the core hours of the Head Start/Early Head Start day. No financial burden will be placed on families.

### **Program Files**

Child and Family files are confidential. HACAP does not share information in the files with other agencies or people not affiliated with HACAP without written permission from a parent or guardian. Some officials (i.e. center licensing consultants, auditors, funders etc.) do have the right to review files to ensure that regulations are being met.

Files include child development information, family contact information, enrollment forms and reports that document injuries, accidents or other incidents involving the child. Files also include emergency information related to who to contact if a parent/guardian is unavailable, as well as authorization from the parent/guardian to obtain appropriate emergency medical and dental care for the child if needed.

**In instances where we are involved with both separated parents, three files will be created; one will concern the child and will be available for either parent to see.** The Head Start/Early Head Start information in your file is available to you by contacting the HS/EHS Compliance Officer at our Corporate Office by calling 1-800-332-5289 or 319-393-7811.

### **EDUCATION: A life-long love for learning:**

#### **In Head Start/Early Head Start your child will learn:**

- ✓ The importance of making friends, problem solving and making good choices.
- ✓ Good habits like hand washing, brushing teeth, dressing for the weather and taking good care of their bodies.
- ✓ Self-help skills, including cleaning up.

#### **Your child's Head Start classroom**

- ✓ Provides a pleasant, comfortable and trusting environment where children can explore and create while they have fun learning.
- ✓ Uses the Creative Curriculum, which includes goals that help your child get ready for school. These goals will be discussed at parent-teacher conferences and home visits.
- ✓ Strives to meet your child's individual developmental level and learning style by including experiences that will help your child grow socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually within a carefully planned environment.

**The physical setting** of each classroom is organized into interest areas to support children's engagements in activities such as:

|         |               |                |
|---------|---------------|----------------|
| Art     | Math          | Blocks         |
| Writing | Dramatic Play | Sand and Water |
| Reading | Science       | Outdoor Play   |

These areas contain a variety of easily accessible materials children can choose and use to carry out their ideas for play and add to their understanding of the world around them. The classroom staff is sensitive to the individual needs of young children. They are facilitators, supporters and observers of your child's growth.

**As a parent**, you are encouraged to be involved in planning and assisting in the classroom. Opportunities include:

### **Lesson Plans:**

Each classroom will post a lesson plan weekly to inform parents of classroom activities planned specifically for your child as well as the entire class.

Parents will be invited to become a part of the team to discuss appropriate goals and objectives individualized to your child's needs.

### **Home Visits/Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

The two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences conducted during the school year provide a special time for you to discuss the educational and developmental progress of your child. You will work with your child's teacher to identify goals for your child and monitor his/her progress in accomplishing those goals.

### **Family Literacy:**

Research shows that the single most important factor in preparing children for learning to read is listening to stories. Families are involved in literacy by a variety of activities including reading books their children bring home from their classroom and doing corresponding activities with them, by participating in center literacy projects and by volunteering to read to their child's class. Literacy information is provided through parent committee meetings, parent education training, in-services and resource library materials. Parents are also assisted in meeting their personal literacy goals through family partnership agreement and information and referrals for obtaining a GED, ESL classes, continuing education and job training services.

### **Transition:**

Parent involvement in transition activities, which includes activities coordinated with the schools, assists parents in becoming their child's advocate in transitioning into Head Start or in transitioning from Head Start to another educational agency.

### **Positive Behavior Intervention Supports:**

HS/EHS staff strive to meet the diverse needs of children with varying abilities and behaviors on a daily basis. Many researchers agree that most crucial to children's success is the establishment of a close bond with an adult early in life. For most children that will be a parent or close family member, however it can also be a teacher, neighbor or other special adult.

HS/EHS Staff support children in nurturing environments that focus on positive interactions. The classrooms are organized in learning centers that meet the needs of children in the center. Each group will have a few simple rules, consistent, scheduled routines, and transition activities so children feel competent in their environment. Adults in the room position themselves to be attentive and responsive to children, using redirection, positive directions and praise. Staff intervenes in conflict situations to protect children from being hurt and teach appropriate problem-solving skills.

Children enter the world with a few basic instincts and little knowledge of the world around them. Adults teach them basic things such as eating, talking, toileting and reading as children are ready. We also teach them to behave in socially acceptable ways. Using books, songs, games, and role-plays, children learn about feelings, friendship skills and anger management.

Sometimes children's behavior is not socially appropriate. If behavior becomes a concern, a Behavior Support Plan is written. The child's strengths as well as personal, medical, and environmental factors are considered. In most cases, there is a reason for a child's behavior. The child might need or want something such as a snack, a toy, or more activity. He/she might be trying to avoid something such as noise, picking up materials or another person. Some children do not understand verbal directions, so pictures or signals are helpful. Teachers observe children and talk with parents and other classroom staff to attempt to understand the child's behavior. Classroom schedules, room arrangement and additional activities are planned to ensure a nurturing, engaging environment for children.

#### **Extreme and/or Violent Behavior Guidance:**

Children exhibiting extreme and/or violent behaviors that pose a safety threat to themselves and/or others may be suspended. The supervisor will call Area Manager and/or MH/Disability liaison for guidance. If suspension is agreed upon, the Area Manager and/or MH/Disability liaison will contact the HS/EHS Director for final approval on suspension.

Continued violent behavior that is unresponsive to behavior plan written and implemented with fidelity may result in temporary restriction of hours and/or home-based services. Placement of children into home based will be the decision of the HS/EHS Director after review of all documentation.

#### **Biting Policy**

Biting is very common in group settings, especially among younger children, yet whenever it happens it is always disturbing to adults. Biting can happen for a number of different reasons with different children under different circumstances. Understanding the reason for the biting is the first step to changing the child's behavior. It is important to explore the reasons when biting occurs. Staff will work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin the functional assessment process to determine the function (reason) of the biting. Staff will work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Parents of both children will be notified of the incident so they can determine if they'd like to seek medical attention.

The biting policy is posted on the parent board in your child's classroom.

### **Disabilities:**

Head Start / Early Head Start welcome children with disabilities. A child will not be excluded from participation in HS/EHS solely on the basis of his/her disability. Prior to enrolling a child with disabilities, a staffing will be held to determine the appropriateness of a HS/EHS placement and to identify any accommodations needed in the schedule or the environment that will ensure success on the child's first day of class.

### **Mental Health**

Mental Health Consultants from the local Area Education Agencies will visit the classroom two times during the year to observe and share ideas with staff on ways to promote good social/emotional and mental health for all children. A copy of the observation form will be sent home for parents.

The Mental Health Consultants will assist parents to locate providers for additional mental health concerns should the need arise.

### **Nutrition**

The nutrition program of Head Start/Early Head Start works to promote and develop a healthy lifestyle of eating. In addition to serving nutritious meals that introduce children to a variety of healthy foods, our program provides nutrition education on a variety of topics for both children and families.

### **Mealtime Information:**

Head Start children are served meals and snacks according to their classroom's daily schedule.

#### **OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT MEALTIMES:**

- We do not serve desserts or other high sugar foods.
- We attempt to limit high salt foods and do not have salt or pepper shakers on the table.
- Typically, all meals are served family style; children serving themselves. During times of high risk for illness outbreak, our program will follow CDC and DHS recommendations regarding family style meal service.
- Children are encouraged to try all foods offered. However, children are never required to eat any food or to clean their plate or drink their milk.
- Parents/persons picking up children need to be aware of the classroom's mealtimes. Families are strongly encouraged not to pick up their children before the scheduled mealtime is over. This will allow your child the time to eat and enjoy his/her meal and social time with classmates. Valuable learning occurs during mealtime interactions.

### **Sharing Nutrition Information:**

A nutrition assessment will be completed on every Head Start/Early Head Start child at enrollment or within 90 days from the child's first day of attendance. The nutrition and health staff reviews the nutrition information along with the growth data collected twice annually. Parents will receive helpful information about understanding growth data/BMI, along with the effects of good nutrition and physical activity habits. Classroom staff have regular discussions with parents about their children's eating habits. Nutrition staff is readily available to provide support and helpful nutrition information to staff and families.

### **“No Treat” Policy:**

While children are in the Head Start/Early Head Start classroom their nutritional needs will be met. Due to liability issues with potential food borne illnesses, parents are never asked or allowed to bring any foods from home. Please do not send any food with your child. We also ask that parents refrain from bringing food or drink for their own consumption into the classroom, unless medically needed.

### **Nutrition Activities:**

Nutrition activities are offered at the center to broaden your child’s food experiences. Simple cooking activities and trying new or ethnic foods are examples. If you wish to share special nutrition activities with the children, please contact the center teacher. Nutrition education and related information is also available to you. Please contact your center staff.

### **Parent’s Participation in Menu Planning:**

Parent’s ideas and comments are always welcomed in planning the Head Start/Early Head Start menu. Menus are developed considering children’s nutritional needs and include a wide variety of foods. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal patterns and feeding guidelines are followed. HACAP will not serve candy, cakes, pie, potato chips, pop or Kool-Aid, or other foods that are not creditable by CACFP nutrition standards. Monthly menus are posted at each center and may be sent home. Individual daily feeding records are kept for children under age 2 and are always available for parents to view.

### **Special Dietary Needs:**

All adults and children eat/drink the same foods at mealtimes, unless a medical note is received from the child’s/adult’s doctor. Menus will be modified for children/adults with special dietary needs. Religious food preferences are also observed.

### **Menu Requirements**

| Age     | Breakfast |           | Lunch               |           | Snack (two below)   |           |
|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1-2 yr. | Milk      | ½ cup     | Milk                | ½ cup     | Milk                | ½ cup     |
|         | Grain     | ½ serving | Vegetable           | 1/8 cup   | Vegetable           | ½ cup     |
|         | Fruit/Veg | ¼ cup     | Fruit               | 1/8 cup   | Fruit               | ½ cup     |
|         |           |           | Grain               | ½ serving | Grain               | ½ serving |
|         |           |           | Meat/meat alternate | 1 oz.     | Meat/meat alternate | ½ oz.     |
| 3-5 yr. | Milk      | ¾ cup     | Milk                | ¾ cup     | Milk                | ½ cup     |
|         | Grain     | ½ serving | Vegetable           | ¼ cup     | Vegetable           | ½ cup     |
|         | Fruit/Veg | ½ cup     | Fruit               | ¼ cup     | Fruit               | ½ cup     |
|         |           |           | Grain               | ½ serving | Grain               | ½ serving |
|         |           |           | Meat/meat alternate | 1 ½ oz.   | Meat/meat alternate | ½ oz.     |

### **Sample Menu**

| <b>Breakfast</b>  | <b>Lunch</b>  | <b>Snack</b>                             |
|---|---|--|
| Milk<br>W.W. French Toast<br>Strawberries                 | Milk<br>W.W. Bread<br>Green Beans<br>Fruit Cocktail<br>Lasagna          | Milk<br>Whole Wheat Crackers             |
| Milk<br>Life Cereal<br>Orange Juice                       | Milk<br>Breadstick<br>Lettuce Salad/Dressing<br>Apricots<br>Cod Nuggets | Fresh Fruit<br>W.W. PB Sandwich<br>Water |
| Milk<br>Apple Cinnamon Bagel<br>w/ cream cheese<br>Banana | Milk<br>Corn<br>Kiwi<br>Deli Sandwich/WW Bun                            | Pineapple<br>Cottage Cheese<br>Water     |
| Milk<br>W.W. English Muffin<br>w/Jelly<br>Apple Juice     | Milk<br>Rice<br>Tropical Fruit<br>Stir-fry<br>Vegetables and Chicken    | Milk<br>Fresh Veggies/Dip                |

### **Meal Time Information for Infants:**

The center will work closely with you, as parents, during your baby's first year to provide for your baby's changing nutritional needs. We will provide a standard milk-based or soy based formula, unless the parent provides breast milk. Space is available for mothers who choose to come to the center to breast-feed their child.

We will provide other types of formula if medically necessary. We will provide solid foods, including baby cereal and baby foods when your child is ready for them. Any uneaten portion will be discarded after the meal. Frequent communication between staff and parents is particularly important during this time so that we may coordinate what your child is being fed while at the center with what he/she is eating at home. New foods will only be offered at the center after they have already been introduced at home.

### **Infant Meal Pattern – fed on demand per infant's needs**

| <b>Age</b>  | <b>Breakfast</b>  | <b>Lunch</b>  | <b>Snack</b>  |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| 0-5 months  | Iron fortified formula or breast milk   | Iron fortified formula or breast milk   | Iron fortified formula or breast milk   |
| 6-11 months | Iron fortified formula or breast milk<br>Iron fortified infant cereal or meat/alt<br>Vegetable or Fruit | Iron fortified formula or breast milk<br>Iron fortified infant cereal or meat/alt<br>Vegetable or Fruit | Iron fortified formula or breast milk<br>Bread, crackers, or cereal<br>Vegetable or Fruit |

## **Parent Information: The Iowa Child and Adult Care Food Program:**

HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start is a participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a Federal program of the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The primary goal of the CACFP is to improve the diet of children 12 years of age or younger or of adults in daycare.

The CACFP gives financial assistance to licensed, non-residential daycare centers. These may include: public and private non-profit centers, outside school hours' centers, HS/EHS centers, or private, for profit centers with 25% of enrolled children receiving Title XX Social Security benefits. Registered family and group daycare homes may participate in CACFP if they are under a sponsoring organization.

Nutrition is an important part of good health. Proper nutrition is also an important part of a good child/adult care program. Children need well-balanced meals in order to meet their daily energy needs and to help them build strong bodies and minds. Through the CACFP, you can be assured that children and adults are getting balanced, nutritious meals. All of the meals must follow patterns set by USDA.

For additional information about the CACFP, you may contact the HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start Nutrition Consultant or contact the Iowa State Agency at:

Bureau of Nutrition and Transportation Services Department of Education  
Grimes Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
515-281-4760

## **Health:**

Children's health is an important part of the HS/EHS program. All HS/EHS children are required to complete age-appropriate health screenings and receive age-appropriate immunizations prior to the first day in class in HS/EHS. Health is an essential component in a child's development and learning process. Parents may request, anytime throughout the year, to review their child's health screenings or immunization record.

## **Physical Exam**

DHS licensing regulations require all children to have a current physical (within the last 12 months) **prior** to the first day of enrollment. Physical exams are a requirement of all children entering the Head Start program. A physical, within the past year, must follow EPSDT guidelines and must include:

- Age, Weight, Height,
- Head Circumference (until 24 months)
- Blood Pressure (3-5 year olds)
- Hemoglobin/Hematocrit/Lead per age requirements
- Physical Systems Exam/Medical History (allergies also)
- Developmental/Behavioral Assessment/Anticipatory Guidance; Nutrition/Obesity Prevention
- Oral Health Assessment



Sensory Screening (including vision/hearing)

Immunization status

Physical exams are required BEFORE the child can begin in the program and must be signed by the child's medical provider and include all HS/EHS physical exam requirements.

- \* Physical exams must be updated yearly for all HS children
- \* Children in Early Head Start (0-3 years) need check-ups regularly based on recommended guidelines, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 24 months (2 years), 30 months, and 36 months (3 years), and then yearly thereafter.
- \* Children should have a dental assessment done whenever they are seen for check-ups.
- \* Children need to be seen by a dentist starting at 12 months of age and then every 6 months thereafter. Children learn to brush their teeth daily at HS/EHS. We encourage parents to assist their children by brushing at home as well.

Be sure to ask Head Start/Early Head Start staff for a physical or dental form to take with you whenever taking your child to your doctor, dentist or clinic for check-ups and immunizations.

### **Health Screening:**

All children will be screened yearly for development, hearing and vision. This is done as a combined effort by Grant Wood AEA, Keystone AEA, Lion's Club, VNA, Public Health, and Head Start staff.

### **Health History:**

A health history is obtained from the parents before the child enters the program. The health history includes past health landmarks/conditions/diagnoses/allergies and record of immunizations.

### **Growth Charts:**

Your child's height and weight will be taken twice annually. The dietician or health consultant will review the growth data in addition to your child's nutrition information, as needed. Parents will receive helpful information about understanding growth data/BMI, along with the effects of good nutrition and physical activity habits.

### **Immunizations:**

Iowa State law requires proof of immunizations for all children prior to enrollment in any of our Head Start or Early Head Start programs. Immunization series must be completed according to Iowa DHS Immunization Requirements in order for children to remain eligible to attend. We must have an original Certificate of Immunization, signed by a medical professional, prior to your child's acceptance into a Head Start or Early Head Start classroom. Copies of Certificates of Immunizations will not be accepted – we must have an original copy.

Be sure to notify your center staff whenever your child receives immunizations from your doctor or clinic so that we can keep his/her immunization certificate up to date, as well as enter the dates in your child's immunization records.

### **Early Head Start Infant Immunizations:**

Infants typically begin immunizations at 2 months of age. An infant who is between 2 months of age and 5 months of age must have at least 1 DTaP, 1 Hib, 1 Polio, and 1 Pneumococcal (PCV) immunization before starting Early Head Start. The first MMR and Varicella are required for infants starting at 12 months.

Be sure to notify your center staff whenever your child receives immunizations from your doctor or clinic so that we can keep his/her immunization certificate up to date, as well as enter the dates in your child's Early Head Start records.

**If your child requires a pain reliever for soreness or fever from shots, you will need to bring in doctor's orders as well as the medication.**

\*Hepatitis B is a 3 shot series usually given starting shortly after birth. Hepatitis B is required before entry into Kindergarten.

### **Under or Unimmunized Children:**

Children who have an exemption (Medical or Religious) for some or all immunizations may be at risk of an immunization preventable illness. In the event of an outbreak of illness (such as Measles), these children will need to be excluded from attending for their protection.

### **Dental Appointments:**

Dental appointments should be made before enrollment day and be completed within 90 days. Dental exams should be done every 6 months. If you have difficulty locating a doctor or dentist, Head Start/Early Head Start staff is available to help you.

### **Prescription Medication:**

Head Start/Early Head Start classroom staff have received written guidelines and have been trained how to administer different types of medication. If your child's condition requires a staff member to administer prescribed medications or treatments, you must **bring it in the original container** from the pharmacy or doctor's office.

The emergency allergy medication (epinephrine) called Epi-Pen Jr. and/or AUVI-Q must have TWO injectable devices on-site at all times as per current (within last 12 months) allergy action plan.

Your pharmacist can divide your prescription for the center if you ask. The original container must be clearly marked with the child's name, date the prescription was filled, name of medication, doctor's name, and frequency and amount to be given. Parents /guardians must complete and sign a **Monthly Medication Record** form. The Monthly Medication Record form must include the following information:

- Child's Name
- Doctors Name

- Name of Medicine or Treatment
- Dosage
- Dates and Times to be given, how many days
- Parent / Guardian signature

Attach the **Monthly Medication Record** form to the original bottle or envelope of medication. Prescriptions continuing beyond 30 days will need a new Monthly Medication Record form signed by a parent/guardian monthly or use of the Emergency Medication Administration form can be used and is valid for 12 months unless notified by parent or provider. A new form must be completed if there is a change in dosage or time given.

Please give all medication to a Head Start/Early Head Start staff member. **Children MUST NOT handle medication.** Be sure the Head Start/Early Head Start staff person understands the medicine administration directions and knows if the medication needs to be refrigerated. If a treatment is required, show the staff member how to do it. All medications are stored so they are inaccessible to children and non-authorized adults.

The center will designate one staff member and a back up to be responsible for giving medication to your child. Each time a medication is given, the person administering will indicate date, time, medication, and dosage and will sign their name on the Monthly Medication Record form. If the medication was not given to your child, the staff member will document the reason a child did not receive his/her medication and notify parent. Since Head Start part day is only 4 hours long, we ask that medications be given at home if at all possible.

### **Over the Counter (Non Prescription) Medications:**

Head Start/Early Head Start staff cannot give over-the-counter medications without orders/ instructions from the doctor or doctor's office staff. If your doctor suggests a non-prescription medication, the doctor must sign a statement including the name, dosage, and frequency of the medication to be used. Over the counter medications that need to be available at the center or are on an ongoing basis, will also require a signed statement from the doctor that gives the name, dosage, and frequency of the medication to be used.

***Please notify staff if your child was given any over-the-counter medication prior to class.*** Staff will be able to watch for any adverse reactions and monitor the child's overall health.

Over-the-counter medications needed more than 30 days, will need a new Monthly Medication Record form completed and signed by the parent every 30 days.

### **New Medication:**

Whenever your child starts a new medication, even if it is only given at home, please notify center staff and Health Coordinator so they can watch for any adverse reactions or changes in the child's behavior. The first dose of a newly prescribed medication must be given at home.

### **"As Needed" medication:**

If your child is to have medications or treatments that they have been prescribed on an "as needed" schedule, please notify staff of signs/symptoms that indicate when medication is needed. This should be noted on the Monthly Medication Record. Also, the staff should be notified of the date and time the last

dose or treatment was given. Staff can then determine if the length of time is sufficient for next treatment or dose and also if the treatment is helping.

### **Outdoor Skin Protection:**

Protection of exposed skin, while outside, is very important to prevent sunburn or other damage to the skin. HS/EHS staff will apply sunscreen to each child prior to going outside based on the weather conditions. Doctor's orders/note are not required. The Permission to Apply Sunscreen provides HS/EHS staff authorization to apply sunscreen lotions. If a parent should indicate they do not want sunscreen applied on their child, they will be asked to provide a hat, long-sleeved shirt, and pants to be worn during outside play. If these items are not available, the child may have to stay inside with another classroom while their classroom has outside play.

### **Head Lice:**

Head Start/Early Head Start will support families by emphasizing prevention and education as primary measures to control head lice. Successful management requires that families actively participate at home in prevention and treatment of head lice. All students with lice or nits must complete the treatment procedure.

Staff will privately check students with signs and symptoms of head lice. A student found to have live lice or nits would have the parent contacted. **It is expected that the parent will have treated the child for head lice before returning to school the next day.**

If your child has been treated for head lice, you and a staff person must check the child's head to be sure there are no live lice and that you have tried to comb out nits before readmitting the child to the center. Parents will be given a packet of information to follow.

### **When Your Child Is Ill:**

**ALWAYS NOTIFY STAFF IF YOUR CHILD HAS HAD AN ILLNESS OR IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS THAT HE/SHE MAY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.**

Head Start/Early Head Start staff will make every effort to caringly accommodate your child if he/she becomes ill during class time until parent/guardian arrive to take their child home or to the doctor.

**Parents must have 2 LOCAL (within 15 minutes of EHS/HS Site location) emergency backup people to notify if they cannot come to pick up a sick and/or injured child.** Your child must be picked up within ONE hour of being notified of their illness. It is extremely important to keep staff informed of any changes with names and phone numbers of local emergency contact people. A signed/dated release of information must be completed for BOTH emergency backup people.

### **The following symptoms are considered when deciding if your child is too ill to be at the center:**

- **Contagious diseases.**
- **Fever** -Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.4 F or higher.
- **Diarrhea**—runny, watery or bloody stools. 2 in 24-hour period. Stools unable to be contained in a diaper or underwear.
- **Vomiting**—2 or more times in a 24-hour period.
- **Body rash with fever.**
- **Undiagnosed skin sores-** until treatment.

- **Sore throat with fever and swollen glands.**
- **Severe coughing**—child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- **Eye discharge**—no exclusion necessary unless child develops fever or redness, swelling around the eye; or is diagnosed with Bacterial Conjunctivitis.
- **Child is irritable or lethargic**, continuously crying or requires more attention than can be provided without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.

Please notify staff if your child is exhibiting any of these symptoms for a known reason other than illness such as diarrhea from medication or fever from immunization.

Children who have been ill with elevated temperatures, vomiting, or diarrhea **cannot be sent back to class until either vomiting or diarrhea have not occurred for 24 hours/or their temperature is within normal limits without the use of a fever reducing product for 24 hours.**

Your child must also stay home for at least 12 hours after being given the first dose of a prescription medication for contagious infection such as impetigo and strep throat.

Sending a child back to class too soon after an illness and/or fever often means your child feels worse as the day progresses and you may be called to come and pick up your child.

The new edition of *Caring for Our Children* will reaffirm the three valid conditions that warrant exclusion from childcare:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the childcare provider.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the childcare staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children as determined by the child care provider
3. The child has any disease from a detailed list of contagious conditions specified in *Caring for Our Children*.

If your child comes down with a communicable disease or condition, such as COVID-19, chicken pox, impetigo, scabies or infectious diarrhea - let the center staff know ASAP. We post health alert notices to inform families of children who may have been exposed.

Children who have chronic illnesses such as asthma or serious allergies that require specific treatments or exclusions from Head Start/Early Head Start routine activities must bring a statement signed by the child's doctor specifying the type of activity the child cannot take part in. We will strive to honor these requests if the child/staff ratio is met. Situations will be discussed individually to reach a satisfactory solution. A care plan should be filled out for children with chronic illnesses or serious allergies, so staff knows what procedures to follow. A trained staff person will always be present with the child. Parents and classroom staff will review and sign off on the care plans.

## **Family Engagement**

Parent and family engagement in Head Start/Early Head Start is about building relationships with families. HACAP Head Start Early Head Start is committed to building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and on-going learning and development for both parents and children. HACAP Head Start Early Head Start is committed to:

- Support parents as primary educators, nurturers and advocates for their children,

- Provide every parent with opportunities for a significant experience in Head Start/Early Head Start, and
- Ensure that parents are involved in making policy and program decisions for their Head Start/Early Head Start program.

Over the school year, HS/EHS staff members will complete two Home Visits and two Parent/Teacher conferences with your family. Home Visits and Parent/Teacher Conferences allow parents and staff to share information on their child's educational and developmental progress. Staff will also talk with you about the goals that you have for yourself and your family and assist you with connecting with resources that can help you meet those goals.

A variety of interaction opportunities are provided, recognizing each family's diversity, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We welcome parents and encourage parent input related to Family Engagement activities and Parent Meetings held at your child's center over the school year. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit a center at any time during program hours, to observe and volunteer.

### **Parent Unlimited Access Policy**

DHS Childcare Licensing regulations and rules allow parents/guardians of HS/EHS children to always have unlimited access to their own child and their child's caregiver while the child is enrolled in the HS/EHS program, unless contact is in violation of a court order that states that the parent may not have contact with their child. This rule does not allow parents to have unrestricted access to other classrooms or spaces within the HS/EHS center.

Parents will be instructed as to the limits of interaction during program hours. They must remain under the center staff's direct supervision and interact with their child only. Staff will ensure parents/guardians adhere to access instructions and will consistently monitor to ensure that protocol is followed.

This parent handbook will serve as notification to parents/guardians of the HS/EHS access policy. These access parameters do not include parents/guardians who have been instructed on HS/EHS volunteer protocol and procedures and completed their criminal background checks.

### **Child Custody Arrangements**

HACAP staff cannot prevent a child from seeing a parent or leaving our site with their legal or biological parent unless we have a court order that states that the parent may not have contact with their child. Information regarding children will not be withheld from either parent. Full parent involvement and social services will be offered to both parents. We encourage both parents to be active in their child's Head Start/Early Head Start experience. Staff can make referrals to agencies that can assist with legal or custody arrangements if requested by a parent/guardian.

### **Parent Committee's and Family Engagement Events**

Parents have the chance to be involved in the Head Start/Early Head Start decision-making process through Parent Committees and Policy Council. All parents who have a child enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start are considered members of the Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Committee at the center that their child attends. Meetings are held at a location and time that is convenient to the greatest number of parents associated with a particular classroom or site. Parents and staff plan Family Engagement Events held at sites, volunteer opportunities and ideas may be discussed. One parent from each site is elected by

the Parent Committee to represent their child's center on the HS/EHS Policy Council. Policy Council representatives are responsible for sharing minutes from the previous Policy Council meeting with parents at their site. The Parent Committee meetings are informal and friendly, and all parents are encouraged to participate.

Family Engagement Events will also be planned based on input from parents. Family Engagement events are fun events that parents can do with their child at the center that focus on a variety of areas including child development, safety and cultural diversity.

Parent committee meetings can also provide onsite training planned by the Parent Committee to increase their knowledge or skills in an area of their choice. Our staff is available to share information or assist parents in contacting other speakers.

### **Policy Council**

Policy Council is the decision-making body for the Head Start/Early Head Start program and is made up of Head Start/Early Head Start parents and community representatives from the nine counties that HACAP serves. Policy Council members are elected by the Parent Committee at the site that their child attends.

Parent committees should support the person elected to represent them on the Policy Council, and this support is provided in two ways. First, the elected parent committee member shares information with Policy Council about their meetings and activities. And secondly, the Parent Committee should ask their representative to report on the policy council meeting at the monthly parent meeting.

The Policy Council is comprised of a representative from each of the Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Committees and community representatives, which may include past Head Start/Early Head Start parents. Fifty-one (51%) percent of the policy council members must be parents of currently enrolled children.

Policy Council responsibilities are:

1. Work in partnership with key management staff and governing body to develop, review and approve or disapprove program activities, according to the Head Start Performance Standards.
2. Serve as a link to the parent committees and assist parent committees by communicating with parents in the program to ensure they understand their rights, responsibilities and opportunities and to encourage participation in the program.
3. Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents and community organizations.
4. Participate in the annual program assessment.

### **Program Volunteers**

Volunteers are a vital part of the HACAP programs. Strong programs need many people working together, sharing their talents, knowledge, and energy so that our children and families receive the greatest benefit.

Program staff will provide training and direction to all volunteers to enable them to plan the volunteer activities most suited to their interest and skills. Classroom volunteers must complete the DHS criminal history and child abuse record check before volunteering in the classroom.

### *Your Time Is a Valuable Resource for Our Program*

HS/EHS is a federally funded program. The Head Start/Early Head Start Program cannot operate without in-kind contributions. As a requirement of the grant, HACAP is required to obtain a 25% local match. This is called in-kind. This portion of the grant may be a donation of volunteer time by parents or community volunteers; services; mileage or donations of materials.

When you volunteer your time at the HS/EHS center, assist with classroom activities or when you attend Parent Committee meetings or Policy Council, our program can count your contributions as in-kind.

Your volunteer time at our centers is a win-win for our program and for your family. You have an opportunity for experiences in the Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms and with our children and staff. You will see how children interact in a group setting and share ideas with the HS/EHS staff. Along with this, our program will receive the necessary in-kind contributions it needs to continue operating.

### **Career Development and Employment Opportunities**

Current and former parents are given hiring preference for jobs which they are interested in and qualified for. HACAP employment information and application information can be found on the HACAP website [www.hacap.org](http://www.hacap.org).

### **Social Services**

The HS/EHS program believes in strengthening children by strengthening families. During your child's time in the HS/EHS program, staff members will discuss and complete a Family Summary that provides a snapshot of your family's strengths and areas that may be current goals for your family. From there a Family Partnership Agreement (FPA) will be developed with your family focusing on School Readiness goals for your child and Family Well Being goals related to you as an individual and your family as a whole.

During the first Parent/Teacher conference, discussions will focus on your family's individual strengths, areas of interest or goals that you are focused on and strategies for how we can assist you with achieving them. The discussion will include conversations related to School Readiness Goals that focus on child development and what you would like to see as goals for your child while they are in our care. And Family Well Being Goals that focus on your goals as an individual and a parent. Follow-up discussions about the goals you have set will occur at the second Home Visit and second Parent/Teacher conferences or as needed over the school year.

HS/EHS staff members partner with each family during these processes to assist them with referrals to needed services, to help you review your goals and celebrate your accomplishments. If your family is already working with another organization or agency related to your goals, please share that information with staff members at your site to allow us to provide additional support in reaching your goals successfully.



## **Confidentiality**

Parents must sign an “Authorization to Exchange Information” form for us to release any information related to your child or family to another agency or individual. Parents in separate households will also need to sign an authorization to provide approval for information to be shared with the other parent's household. Separate files and information are kept for each individual parent’s household to ensure confidentiality.

As further protection of confidentiality, all volunteers and visiting students sign a “Confidentiality Policy” form regarding any written, verbal or observed information on families and children. Staff are provided with training related to confidentiality and are required to uphold these standards under HACAP’s ethical policies regarding client privacy.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

HACAP is required under Section 235A of the Iowa Code to comply with the order that states that any employee of a licensed childcare center is a Mandatory Reporter and that they must make a report to the Department of Human Services when they believe child abuse or neglect is suspected. DHS staff members are responsible for determining if abuse occurred.

All children get bumps, bruises and scrapes as part of growing up. It is important that you tell your child’s teacher about any unusual injuries or conditions.

**Registered Sex Offender Policy** – A sex offender is a person who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (from Iowa Code 692A).

Any person who falls under this category *shall not* be on the property of the childcare center without the written permission of the HS/EHS Director and the DHS Licensing Consultant. A Specialized Supervision and Access Policy plan (per Iowa Code 237A.5 & IAC 109.10(16)) will be established to be compliant regarding the supervision and access policy as it relates to sex offenders who are the parent of a minor child or ward and the offender’s presence at the childcare facility. The approved plan will document the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender’s own minor child to and from the center.

**Written permission** – HS/EHS Director does not have to grant written permission for access. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with the DHS Licensing consultant.

### **Items to be included in written permission:**

- Center address/location where access is granted
- Reason for sex offender’s presence at the facility
- Duration of the sex offender’s presence.
- Description of the supervision that the center staff will provide the sex offender to ensure that no child is alone with the sex offender.
- Written permission shall be signed and dated by the center supervisor and sex offender and kept on file for review by the DHS Licensing consultant.

## **Complaint Procedure**

The written Community/Parent Complaint Procedure for program concerns is posted on the center Parent Board. A full version is provided below:

### **HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Complaint Policy/Procedure**

HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start tries to resolve problems at the level closest to the point at which they occur, while ensuring that issues are fully heard and explored. In keeping with this idea, the following complaint process is available to parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in HACAP Head Start/Early Head Start. The complaint may be brought to the next level when parents/guardians are not satisfied with the previous response.

**LEVEL 1)** When concerns involve the operation of a Head Start/Early Head Start classroom, they should be discussed with the classroom Head Start/Early Head Start TEACHER. If the complaint involves non-classroom family support services, it should be discussed with their Social Service contact. When the complaint involves Head Start/Early Head Start Health Services, it should be discussed with their Health Services contact. When an issue is identified as a formal complaint, staff should respond within 5 working days.

**LEVEL 2)** Unresolved concerns from Level 1 can be brought to the ON-SITE SUPERVISOR for this site. For this site that person is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

When an issue is identified as a formal complaint, staff should respond within 5 working days.

**LEVEL 3)** Unresolved issues from Level 2 can be brought to one of the following HS/EHS ASSISTANT DIRECTORS. That person is:

Amy Irving or Chris Juett at 319-393-7811 or 1-800-332-5289

**LEVEL 4)** Unresolved concerns from Level 3 can be brought to the HS/EHS DIRECTOR for HACAP at 319-393-7811 or 1-800-332-5289. Written complaints can be sent to:

HACAP Head Start Director, P.O. Box 490, Hiawatha, IA 52233

Please identify (verbally or in writing) the issue as a parent complaint and state the response being sought. When an issue is identified as a formal complaint, the Head Start/Early Head Start Director should respond within 5 working days.

**LEVEL 5)** Unresolved concerns from Level 4 can be brought to a joint meeting of the HACAP Head Start Policy Council Executive Committee, the Head Start/Early Head Start Director and the HACAP Executive Director. A request to meet with these individuals may be sent to:

HACAP Head Start Policy Council Executive Committee  
P.O. Box 490  
Hiawatha, IA 52233

Please identify the issue in writing as a parent complaint and state the response being sought. A response to the complaint will be made promptly. The decision of this committee will be final.

### **Head Start/Early Head Start Termination/Withdrawal Process:**

The HS/EHS school year ends in May for children enrolled in the part day or school day program. HS/EHS school year ends in August for children enrolled in the full year program. Children who are eligible to attend kindergarten (five years old on or before September 1 of that year) are no longer eligible for participation in HS and enrollment will be terminated at the end of the program year.

Due to changing family circumstances or relocation, parents may decide to end their child's participation in HS/ESH program at any time during the school year. If this does occur, parents should notify HS/EHS staff as soon as possible so children can experience a successful transition out of the HS/EHS program.

There are also times when parents may want to end their child's participation in HS/EHS due to family barriers or dissatisfaction with their child's experience in the HS/EHS program. If this does occur, we strongly encourage you to work with HS/EHS staff to identify concerns and/or barriers and develop plans of action to address the barriers and concerns.

Consistent attendance is a federal requirement for each child's continued participation in the HS/EHS program. HS/EHS staff expects children to be in class every day. HS/EHS staff also realize that children will be absent due to illness and occasional family emergencies. You must contact your child's teacher or HS/EHS site if your child will be absent. A HS/EHS staff member will contact you if we do not hear from you by 9am on the day of your child's absence.

As stated in the Attendance section of this Parent Handbook, repeated and extended child absences are difficult for children and staff and could affect your child's ongoing enrollment in HS/EHS.

Children may temporarily be suspended from attending HS/EHS if their physical exam and immunizations are not up to date. Federal and State laws require that ALL children in a HS/EHS classroom must be up to date with a physical exam and immunizations. If children are not up to date with either of these, they will temporarily be suspended from attending HS/EHS. Children can resume their attendance in HS/EHS when staff receives a current physical exam report and immunization record from the child's parent or physician.

Some children require greater support than can be provided to them in a Head Start or Early Head Start program. When a child study team, consisting of parents, GWAEA staff, teachers, HS/EHS supervisor determines the classroom to be an inappropriate placement for the child, even with intensive interventions and/or behavior supports in place, an alternative placement will be found for the child and Head Start/ Early Head Start will support the family through the transition.