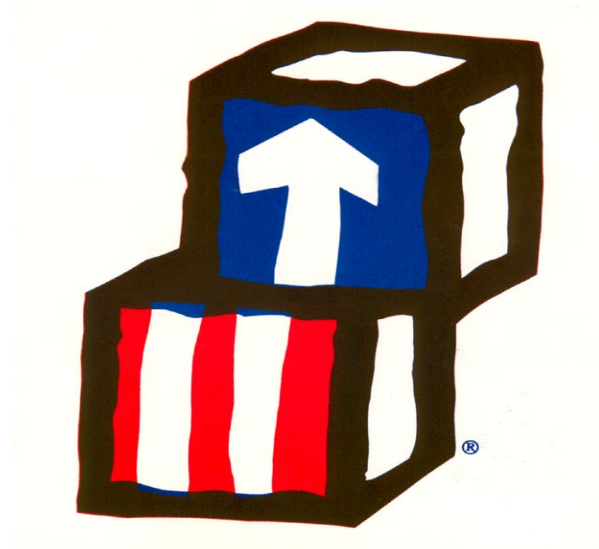


HACAP Head Start Family Handbook 2026-2027



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. **Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start** are 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 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 child's classroom activities and scheduled days of operation, please refer to your center's calendar.

We hope this handbook answers your questions about Head Start Preschool 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

Matt Majeski
HACAP Chief Executive Officer

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Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/hacap

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/weareHACAP

Webpage: 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 Preschool & Early Head Start Mission

The overall goal of Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start 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 of one child and one family at a time.

What is Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start?

Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start is a federal program for low-income families with young children Birth to age 5 and pregnant women. HACAP Head Start 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 with children with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start 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 Head Start 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 from birth to five participating in the Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start 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 children. HACAP Head Start Preschool 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 HACAP Head Start Volunteer Program.

Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start 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 HACAP Head Start 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 Head Start staff are qualified for early childhood professionals who have met Head Start Standards and state standards. Staff employed are chosen because of their knowledge, experience and commitment to HACAP and Head Start 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. Head Start 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 Head Start mission, vision, values and policies and procedures. Ongoing observations and evaluation occur for everyone, 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 HACAP Head Start 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 3rd St SE Suite 400
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Dubuque & Jackson County

Heidi Hungate
Clinton County DHS
563-242-0573
121 6th 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 Head Start receives federal funding to operate 4 hours, five days a week, September through 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 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Linn County Early Childhood Iowa, Johnson County Early Childhood Iowa, Cedar/Jones County Early Childhood Iowa, Clinton/Jackson County Early Childhood Iowa, Better Tomorrows 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 of 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 Preschool (3 – 5yrs):

FULL DAY

5 days per week 220 days per year
8.5 - 10 hours per day

EXTENDED DAY

5 days per week 190-200 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 180-220 days per year

Monthly contacts from a Family Support Worker

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 Preschool & Early Head Start and a New Classroom

Each change in our lives is like a journey. This takes time, preparation, and planning. Transitions to a 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 Preschool & 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 Preschool & Early Head Start (0-5):

- It's normal for children to be upset when they separate 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 for 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 Preschool program begins six months before a child's third birthday. A transition team consists of teachers, supervisors, and Family Support Workers. 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 needs 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 Preschool 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 90%, 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. HACAP Head Start staff will work with families to outline a plan for consistent attendance.

Arrival / Pick-Up

Arrival, pick-up and time 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, 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; they must be written 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 for 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 Preschool & Early Head Start sites will remain open during the scheduled operating hours of the center. 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.

In the case of school cancellations, school delays, and early dismissals due to inclement winter weather (ice, snow, blizzards, winter storms), HACAP Head Start will follow local school districts' decision. If the local school district announces cancellation of the school due to inclement weather, the local HACAP Head Start will close as well. HACAP Head Start will open one hour later when the local school district announces a school delay due to inclement winter weather. HACAP Head Start will close one hour early when the local school district announces early dismissal due to inclement weather.

HACAP Head Start will remain open when local schools cancel, have a late start or an early dismissal due to cold temperatures and/or fog. Due to family needs and the staffing structure at a center, there must be a certain amount of individual decision making at each HACAP Head Start facility.

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

Emergency Transportation:

Emergency Situations Only: If an Emergency Situation requires evacuation of the building, children will be removed safely, including using staff vehicles. If a child must be transported by ambulance, parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible, the Head Start Staff will follow behind the ambulance in the Staff's personal vehicle and Staff will remain with the child at the hospital until parent/guardian arrives.

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

Field Trips:

At HACAP Head Start, 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 HACAP Head Start Center.

Holidays and Celebrations:

Nationally, the Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start program respects diversity and equal opportunity for all people. Therefore, it is the policy of HACAP 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 Preschool & 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 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 Preschool & Early Head Start information in your file is available to you by contacting the HACAP Head Start 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 Preschool & 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 Preschool & Early Head Start classroom

- ✓ Provides a pleasant, comfortable, and trusting environment where children can explore and create while they have fun learning.

- ✓ Use 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 are 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 to learn 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 agreements and information and referrals for obtaining a GED, ESL classes, continuing education and job training services.

Transition:

Parent involvement in transition activities, which include 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:

HACAP implements PBIS and the Pyramid Model framework as our guide for promoting social emotional competence of all children, preventing social-emotional delays, and intervening with the few children who engage in ongoing, persistent challenging behavior.

It is a multi-tiered system (MTSS) of support for all children that includes 3 tiers.

- Tier 1 Universal Practices. Responsive and nurturing relationships help children feel safe and secure to learn and grow. This happens through positive time and attention, supportive conversations, positive descriptive feedback, joining children's play, and giving directions that are short and tell children WHAT you want them to do. Relationships between staff and families and staff among colleagues are also very important. Communication with each other, sharing ideas and successes, clear expectations, and giving positive feedback are some ways to support relationship building among adults. High quality, supportive environment practices are designed to promote engagement and provide structure and predictability for children. These practices include schedules and routines, environmental design, promoting engagement, transitions, and rules and expectations.
- Tier 2 Targeted Social-Emotional Supports. This includes high quality instruction for specific social skills that involves knowing what to teach, when to teach, and how to teach. Skills may include friendship, emotional literacy, and problem solving.
- Tier 3 Intensive Intervention. This tier is for children with persistent challenging behavior not responsive to practices in the first 2 tiers. It involves a functional assessment that results in a behavior support plan that will include prevention strategies, replacement skills, and new responses. All challenging behaviors have meaning and communication purposes for children. We can help them by designing the environment and using strategies that help the child learn more appropriate social skills to serve the same purpose as challenging behavior.

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 Mental Health/Disability liaison for guidance. If suspension is agreed upon, the Area Manager and/or Mental Health/Disability liaison will contact the Head Start Director for final approval of suspension.

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

HACAP Head Start welcomes children with disabilities. A child will not be excluded from participation in Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start solely based on his/her disability. Prior to enrolling a child with disabilities, a review process will be held to determine the appropriateness of a HACAP Head Start 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 health for all children. A copy of the observation form will be sent home to parents.

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

Nutrition

HACAP Head Start's nutrition program 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:

- Typically, all meals are served family style; children serve themselves. During times of high risk for an 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.
- 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.

- 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 Preschool & Early Head Start child at enrollment or within 90 days of the child’s first day of attendance. The nutrition and health staff review the nutrition information along with the growth data collected. 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. The nutrition staff is readily available to provide support and helpful nutrition information to staff and families.

“No Treat” Policy:

While children are in the HACAP 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 food 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. Helpful information about nutrition is also available to you. Please watch for information to be shared by center staff and contact them if you have a request for specific nutrition information.

Parent’s Participation in Menu Planning:

Parent’s ideas and comments are always welcomed in planning the HACAP 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 food at mealtimes, unless a medical note is received from the child’s/adult doctor. Menus will be modified for children 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

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

Mealtime 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 breastfeed their child.

We will provide other types of formula if medically necessary. We will provide solid foods, including baby cereal and baby food 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 food will only be offered at the center after it has already been introduced at home.

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

Age	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
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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 Iron fortified infant cereal or meat/alt Vegetable or Fruit	Iron fortified formula or breast milk Iron fortified infant cereal or meat/alt Vegetable or Fruit	Iron fortified formula or breast milk Bread, crackers, or cereal Vegetable or Fruit

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

HACAP 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, nonresidential 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 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 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:

A child’s health is an important part of the HACAP Head Start program. All Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start children are required to complete age-appropriate health screenings and receive age-appropriate immunizations prior to the first day of class. 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 records.

Physical Exam

The State of Iowa HHS 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 for all children entering

the HACAP Head Start program. A physical, within the past 12 months, 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
Review of Systems Exam/Medical History (allergies, medications, and medical conditions 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/dated by the child's medical provider and include all Head Start physical exam requirements.

- * Physical exams must be updated annually for all Head Start Preschool 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, 36 months (3 years), and then annually 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 them at home as well.

Be sure to ask HACAP 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, Dubuque Visiting Nurse Association, Public Health, and/or Head Start staff.

Health History:

A health history is obtained from the parents (at enrollment) before the child enters the program. The history of health includes past health landmarks, surgeries, medical conditions, medications, diagnoses, allergies, and record of immunizations.

Growth Charts:

Your child's height and weight will be completed annually (completed at a well-child exam in the Fall and by Head Start Staff in the Spring). The nutrition or health manager 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:

In accordance with State of Iowa requirements, each child enrolled must have ONE of the following on file prior to acceptance into a HACAP Head Start classroom:

- Current Iowa Certificate of Immunization
- Provisional Certificate of Immunization
- Certificate of Immunization Exemption (Medical)
- Certificate of Immunization Exemption (Religious)

Only official State of Iowa forms signed/dated by a medical provider will be accepted. All immunization, provisional, and exemption forms will be kept confidential within the child's file and available for review by licensing or regulatory authorities as required.

Documentation of a valid Certificate of Immunization Exemption (Religious or Medical) or Provisional Certificate of Immunization may be submitted in lieu of a Certificate of Immunization.

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.

Early Head Start Infant Immunizations:

Infants typically begin immunizations at 2 or 4 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 and must be received by 18 months, 30 days.

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 due to immunization shots, you will need to bring in a doctor's note requiring this as well as the medication.

*Hepatitis B is a 3-shot series usually given starting shortly after birth. Hepatitis B is required before entering kindergarten.

Under or Unimmunized Children:

Children who have a medical or religious exemption for some/all immunizations may be at risk of an immunization preventable illness. In the event of an outbreak of illness (such as Measles), these children may be excluded from attending for their protection for an extended period.

Iowa has a new state immunization law requiring centers to notify families that immunization exemptions are an option: House File 299-Aan Act Relating to the Provision of Information Relating to Immunization Exemptions. This was signed by Governor Reynolds on May 27, 2025, with an effective date of July 1, 2025. Enrolled kids have the option of having either a Religious Exemption (completed by parent/guardian) or a Medical Exemption (completed by medical provider), that would not require their

child to receive immunizations (unimmunized) or be under immunized and are still able to attend the center while unimmunized or under immunized.

Dental Appointments:

Dental appointments should be made before enrollment day and completed within 90 days. Dental exams should be done every 6 months after the age of 12 months or earlier if there are dental/oral concerns. If you have difficulty locating a doctor or dentist, HACAP Head Start staff are available to assist you with finding a provider.

Prescription Medication:

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

The emergency allergy medication (epinephrine) called Epi-Pen Jr. and AUVI-Q must have TWO injectable devices on-site at all times as per current (within the last 12 months) allergy action plan. The emergency allergy medication called Neffy (epinephrine nasal spray) must have 2 nasal sprays on-site at all times. The emergency rectal seizure medication called Diastat (generic name is diazepam rectal) must have 2 rectal medication devices on-site at all times. The emergency nasal seizure medication called Valtoco (generic name is diazepam nasal) must have 2 nasal sprays on-site unless the provider indicates otherwise.

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/amount to be given. Parents/guardians must complete and sign a *Monthly Medication Record* form giving Head Start staff permission to administer as per pharmacy prescription label and corresponding health care plan. The Monthly Medication Record form must include the following information:

- Child's Name
- Doctor's Name
- Name of Medicine or Treatment
- Dosage and route
- Dates and Times to be given, how many days
- Parent/Guardian signature and date

Staff will attach the Monthly Medication Record form to the original bottle or container 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 which is valid for 12 months unless notified by parent or provider if not a controlled substance medication. A new form must be completed at any time if there is a change in medication, dosage, or time given, otherwise monthly.

Please give all medication to a HACAP Head Start staff member. Children MUST NOT handle medication. Please do not place medications in child's backpacks. Be sure the HACAP Head Start Preschool or Early Head Start staff person understands the medicine administration directions and knows if the medication needs to be refrigerated or other specific care of the medication. If treatment is required, show the staff member how to use the medical device/medication. All medications are stored, so they are inaccessible to children and non-authorized adults.

The center will designate a minimum of one staff member and a backup to be responsible for giving medication to your child. Each time a medication is given, the staff administering will indicate date, time, medication, dosage and sign/initial/date 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 5 hours long or for those medications that are prescribed to be twice daily (12 hours apart), we ask that medications be given at home, if possible. If any medication is given at home, the parent/guardian needs to notify staff of when the last dose was given, what medication was given, and for what reason the medication was given at the drop-off of child. Staff will be able to watch for any adverse reactions and monitor the child's overall health.

Over the Counter (Non-Prescription) Medications:

Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start staff cannot give over-the-counter medications without written orders/instructions from the medical provider. If your doctor suggests a non-prescription medication, the doctor must sign a statement including the child's name, dosage, reason, and frequency of the medication to be used, and parent/guardian must complete a permission to administer form. Over-the-counter medications that are needed on an on-going basis also require a signed statement from the doctor that gives the name, dosage, and frequency of the medication to be used and permission to administer form completed by parent/guardian.

Please notify staff if your child was given any over-the-counter medication at the drop-off. 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 the center staff and Health Manager so they can watch for any adverse reactions or changes in the child's behavior. The first dose of a newly prescribed medication, specifically antibiotics, 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" basis, please notify staff of signs/symptoms to indicate when medication is needed and bring in the medical note from the provider stating this medication is required while at school. This should be noted on the Monthly Medication Record. Also, the staff should be notified by parents of the date and time the last dose or treatment was given. Staff can then determine if the length of time is sufficient for the next treatment/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. HACAP Head Start staff will apply sunscreen to each child prior to going outside based on the weather conditions. A doctor's note is not required. The Permission to Apply Sunscreen Form provides 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 another classroom while their classroom has outside play.

Head Lice:

Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start will support families by emphasizing prevention and education as the primary measure of preventing and controlling 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 of a lice shampoo kit prior to returning to Head Start.

Staff will privately check students with signs and symptoms of head lice. A student found to have live lice or nits will have the parent/guardian contacted. It is expected that the parent will have treated the child for head lice with a lice shampoo kit 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 re-admitting the child to the center. Parents will be given helpful information.

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.

HACAP Head Start staff will make every effort to caringly accommodate your child if he/she becomes ill during class time until parent/guardian arrives to take their child home or to a medical provider.

Parents must have 2 LOCAL (within 15 minutes of EHS/HS Site location) as 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 in local emergency contact names and phone numbers. 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 stools in a 24-hour period. Stools are unable to be contained in a diaper or underwear.
- **Vomiting**—2 or more times in a 24-hour period.
- **Body rashes with a 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 a high-pitched whooping sound after coughing.
- **Eye discharge**—no exclusion necessary unless a 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 above symptoms for a known reason other than illness such as diarrhea from medication, change of diet, or fever because of receiving immunizations.

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

Your child must also stay home for a minimum of 24 hours after being given the first dose of a prescription medication for contagious infections 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 childcare 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 any communicable disease or condition, including but not limited to: COVID-19, chicken pox, strep, RSV, 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 Preschool & Early Head Start routine activities must bring a statement signed by the child's medical provider 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 completed by a medical provider must be filled out for children with chronic illnesses or serious allergies, so staff know what medical/emergency procedures to follow. A trained staff person will always be present with the child. Parent/guardian and classroom staff will review and sign/date on the care plans agreeing to the health care plan completed/provided by medical provider.

Family Engagement

Parent and family engagement in HACAP Head Start is about building relationships with families. HACAP 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 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, HACAP Head Start 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 enrolled children to always have unlimited access to their own child and their child's caregiver while the child is enrolled in the HACAP Head Start 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 HACAP Head Start 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 HACAP Head Start access policy. These access parameters do not include parents/guardians who have been instructed on volunteer protocol and procedures and completed their criminal background checks.

Child Custody Arrangements

HACAP Head Start 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 Preschool & 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 HACAP Head Start decision-making process through Parent Committees and Policy Council. All parents who have a child enrolled in Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start are considered members of the HACAP Head Start Parent Committee at the center that their child attends. Meetings are held at a location and time that is convenient for 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 HACAP Head Start 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 or in the community 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

The Policy Council is the decision-making body for the HACAP Head Start program and is made up of Head Start Preschool & 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 the 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 representatives from each of the HACAP Head Start Parent Committees and community representatives, which may include past Head Start Preschool & 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 of 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 program. 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 interests 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

Head Start is a federally funded program. The Head Start Preschool & 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 HACAP Head Start 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 to gain experience in the Head Start Preschool & 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 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.

Social Services

The HACAP Head Start program believes in strengthening children by strengthening families. During your child's time in the HACAP Head Start 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 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.

HACAP Head Start 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 Iowa Department of Health and Human Services when they believe child abuse or neglect is suspected. HHS 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 Parent Complaint Policy/Procedure

HACAP 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. 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 Preschool or Early Head Start classroom, they should be discussed with the classroom Head Start Preschool or 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 HACAP 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 the Head Start ASSISTANT DIRECTOR. That person is:

HS Assistant Director at 319-393-7811 or 1-800-332-5289

LEVEL 4) Unresolved concerns from Level 3 can be brought to the HACAP Head Start 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's complaint and state the response being sought. When an issue is identified as a formal complaint, the 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 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 Preschool & Early Head Start Termination/Withdrawal Process:

The HACAP Head Start school year end dates are indicated on individual classroom calendars. School Year end dates are determined by meeting required hours of duration and funding support for the classroom. 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 Head Start Preschool, 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 the HACAP Head Start program at any time during the school year. If this does occur, parents should notify HACAP Head Start staff as soon as possible so children can experience a successful transition out of the program.

There are also times when parents may want to end their child's participation due to family barriers or dissatisfaction with their child's experience in the HACAP Head Start program. If this does occur, we strongly encourage you to work with HACAP Head Start 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 program. HACAP Head Start staff expects children to be in class every day. Staff realize that children will be absent due to illness and occasional family emergencies. You must contact your child's teacher or the HACAP Head Start site if your child is absent. A 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 HACAP Head Start.

Children may temporarily be suspended from attending HACAP Head Start if their physical exam and immunizations are not up to date. Federal and State laws require that ALL children in a licensed classroom be up to date with physical exams and immunizations. If children are not up to date with either of these, they will temporarily be suspended from attending HACAP Head Start. Children can resume their attendance when staff receive 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 Preschool or Early Head Start program. When a child study team, consisting of parents, GWAEA staff, teachers, HACAP Head Start 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 HACAP Head Start will support the family through the transition.

Emergency Numbers:

Police: 911

Fire: 911

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

**HACAP Corporate Office
1515 Hawkeye Drive
Hiawatha, IA 52233
1-800-332-5289 OR
(319) 393-7811**

Site specific emergency response plans are posted in each center.



USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (Revised 4-2-26)

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Iowa Nondiscrimination Statement (Revised 7-1-25)

It is the policy of this CNP provider not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, or religion in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code 216.6, 216.7, and 216.9. If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by this CNP Provider, contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 6200 Park Ave, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50321; phone number 515-281-4121 or 800-457-4416; website: <https://icrc.iowa.gov/>.



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