

# KIRPC Head Start Parent Handbook 2021-2022



*Mission Statement:* KIRPC Head Start is dedicated to empowering today's children and families for tomorrow's world through high quality individualized education and supportive services.

*Vision Statement:* KIRPC Head Start will strive to be a high quality early education agency preparing children for successful lifelong learning and ensuring families have a stronger foundation for self-sufficiency by providing comprehensive services.

## **FULL DAY/DURATION CLASSROOMS IMPORTANT DATES**

Class Days: Monday – Thursday

Class Times: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

<b>August 16, 2021</b>	<b>First Day of Class First half of Children</b>
<b>August 18, 2021</b>	<b>First Day of Class Second half of Children</b>
September 6	Labor Day – No School
October 11	Columbus Day – No School
October 13	Dad's Day at School
October 18	North Jasper Fall Break
October 25	Roselawn Fall Break – Fall Break-No School
November 4	Data Day Prep for Staff – No School
November 11	Veteran's Day – No School
November 18	Mom's Day at School
November 25	Thanksgiving Break – No School
December 20	Winter Break Begins – No School
<b>January 4, 2022</b>	<b>Return to School</b>
January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday - No School
February 3	Data Day Prep for Staff – No School
February 17	Dad's Day at School
February 21	President's Day – No School
March 21-25	North Jasper & Roselawn Spring Break – No School
April 13	Mom's Day at School
April 18	Easter Monday-No School
May 5	Data Day Prep for Staff – No School
May 30	Memorial Day – No School
<b>June 28, 2022</b>	<b>Last Day of School</b>

## **PART DAY CLASSROOMS IMPORTANT DATES**

Class Days: Monday – Thursday

Class Times: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

<b>August 23, 2021</b>	<b>First Day of Class First half of Children</b>
<b>August 25, 2021</b>	<b>First Day of Class Second half of Children</b>
September 6	Labor Day – No School
October 11	Columbus Day – No School
October 13	Dad's Day at School
October 18	Winamac Fall Break – No School
October 25	West Central/Rensselaer – No School
November 1	Goodland– Fall Break-No School
November 4	Data Day Prep for Staff – No School
November 11	Veteran's Day – No School
November 18	Mom's Day at School
November 24-25	Thanksgiving Break – No School
December 20	Winter Break Begins – No School
<b>January 4, 2022</b>	<b>Return to School</b>
January 17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday - No School
February 3	Data Day Prep for Staff– No School
February 17	Dad's Day at School
February 21	President's Day – No School
March 21-25	Spring Break – No School
April 13	Mom's Day at School
April 18	Easter Monday-No School
May 5	Data Day Prep for Staff – No School
<b>May 19, 2022</b>	<b>Last Day of School</b>

*\*Dates follow public schools as close as possible. But please be aware some dates we may be in session and they may not or vice versa. Please be sure to call Head Start if your child will not be present because of the public school schedule. Your child will not be excused unless you call Head Start. If school is closed due to weather, please note that Fridays may be used as make up days.*

## Attendance

**Your child's attendance plays a very important role in his or her education. Regular attendance is a habit that will help your child be successful in life. However, children do become sick and other unforeseen circumstances will occur that prohibits them from attending school. Therefore, parents must call the office or send a note to let us know the reason for each day your child is absent. If other arrangements for calling in are needed, then you must speak with your FES or Teacher.**

1. Education Manager sends perfect attendance notes to children monthly.
2. Teachers highlight children and families with perfect attendance in the classroom newsletter sent after data day.
3. Director will put all children with perfect monthly attendance in a drawing for a prize and will announce winner on Facebook.
4. After each data period, the education manager sends a book to children with perfect attendance for the quarter.
5. If your child is absent without contact from the family, staff will contact you within one hour of class start time.
6. After three (3) unexplained consecutive absences the teacher and FES will conduct a home visit.
7. If a child is absent 10% or more for the month (excused or unexcused), the education manager sends a letter stating the importance of attendance.
8. When a child misses 15% or more of the month for any two months within the school year (excluding diagnosed medical conditions with documentation from a physician and noted in child plus attendance notes), FES and teacher will meet in person with the parent/guardian to develop an Attendance Support Plan. Specific action steps will be set **in the attendance support plan** and the document will be signed by all family and staff present. Parents will be informed that if the action plan is not agreed to and completed successfully within the given time frame, the child may be removed from the program and placed on the waiting list.
9. When a child misses 20% or more of the month for any three or more months within the school year and without progress, a letter may be sent home explaining that your child has been removed from the program and placed on the waiting list.
10. When a child misses 30% or more of the month (excluding diagnosed medical conditions with documentation from a physician and noted in child plus attendance notes) for any three months within the school year, a letter will be sent home and the child will be placed on the waiting list.

## Tardiness Policy

1. A child is considered tardy if he/she arrives 10 minutes or more after the class start time.
2. Staff and parents must communicate as often as possible concerning tardies. Parents must call the site if the child will be tardy.
3. Parents must also call transportation. Transportation may be revoked after multiple attempts of no one coming to the bus or communicating a tardy.
4. Parents must communicate the reason for tardiness on the sign-in sheet. Excusable tardies include inclement weather and Medical/Dental appointments/emergencies.
5. Parents must sign your child in and walk him/her into the classroom and assure that the staff have seen your child enter the room.
6. After 4 unexcused tardies, staff will make contact with the family and schedule a parent-teacher conference to complete an Attendance Support Plan to determine solutions for the tardiness. If tardiness continues after the parent-teacher conference then a letter will be sent home as follow up. Additional parent-teacher conferences may also be scheduled.

### **Leaving Early:**

1. Any child leaving school before the end of class time should be signed out by the authorized adult and the reason must be noted on the. Child Pick-up Drop-off Sheet.
2. After 4 unexcused times of leaving early, staff will make contact with the family and schedule a parent-teacher conference to determine solutions for leaving early. Excusable leave early reasons include inclement weather, Medical/Dental appointments/emergencies, or preapproved family situations.

### **Late Pick-Up:**

After 4 times of being picked up late or when a family member is not at the bus stop at drop-off, a Family Support Plan will be implemented.

### **Transferring Classrooms:**

Parents who wish to transfer their child to another class must submit a written statement of the reasons why. The reason for transfer will be reviewed for the grantee office for approval. Enrollment priorities will be given first to homeless and foster children.

## **School Readiness**

### **The Creative Curriculum**

KIRPC Head Start Staff/Policy Council has chosen *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition* for use in all classrooms. Because children learn through play and their daily interactions with the environment, various materials are provided to enhance learning and teaching, and meet the developmental needs of young children. The outlined interest areas include:

- |                   |                   |                    |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Blocks         | 5. Music/Movement | 9. Library         |
| 2. Dramatic Play  | 6. Computers      | 10. Discovery      |
| 3. Toys/Games     | 7. Outdoors       | 11. Writing Center |
| 4. Sand and Water | 8. Art            |                    |

### **Teaching Strategies**

Teachers use the Teaching Strategies Gold online to determine where each child is developmentally, track each child's progress, and plan appropriate learning experiences. Families will be offered the opportunity at the beginning of the year to submit their email address to be given access to the Teaching Strategies GOLD family site. Teachers will then share observations **and learning activities that support the individual goals** of each child with their family.

**Zoophonics** is used as a supplemental curriculum to enhance letter and sound recognition. Zoophonics puts the emphasis on letter sounds before letter names. Each letter is also associated with an animal. Each week will focus on a different letter/animal, which can be found on the monthly calendar sent home.

**Second Step** child protection program is a series of 5 weekly themes as well as a review week that teaches children life safety skills. Topics covered are ways to stay safe, always ask first rule, safe and unsafe touches, the touching rule, and practicing staying safe. These are presented throughout the year.

## **School Readiness Plan**

With the help of the local elementary schools, **school readiness** goals were created within the 7 areas of the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The plan defines each goal and key teaching practices to achieve the goals. The complete School Readiness Plan can be found on the Parent Board.

## **CLASS**

Classroom Assessment Scoring System is an observation instrument developed to assess classroom quality in preschool through third grade. Managers use this tool three times a year to monitor the teacher-child interactions.

### **Child Development Philosophy**

1. Children need to feel safe when separated from their family.
2. Children need to learn how to handle their feelings in an acceptable, appropriate way. Children need to be encouraged to make their own decisions.
3. Children need clear, age-appropriate expectations for their behavior. Children need to know that it is “ok” to make mistakes, explore their surroundings, and take risks.
4. Children learn by observing and interacting with the world around them.
5. Children need to develop language and concept understanding to build the foundation for reading and writing.
6. Children need to be given many opportunities and encouraged to try new skills over and over again.
7. Children’s learning begins with experiences from the children’s family.
8. Children need to be prepared socially and academically for Kindergarten.

### **Home Visits**

- Two educational home visits are required for each enrolled Head Start family. One will be scheduled prior to the first day of class and the other will be held at the end of the school year (May/June). Additional visits will be scheduled as needed or requested.
- Home visits are a time to discuss your child’s education and to set individualized goals for your child. The teacher and teacher assistant will be present at the first home visit and the Family Engagement Specialist and teacher will be present at the second home visit. We encourage that both parents be in attendance at home visits. Separate home visits may be scheduled as needed for parents from two separate households.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

- Two parent/teacher conferences are required for each enrolled Head Start family. Conferences are held at the site mid-year (November) and the other will be mid-year (February/March).
- Parent/teacher conferences are a time to review your child’s progress in Head Start and for the Family Engagement Specialist to meet with you. Both teachers and parents will work together to set/update individual educational goals for the child at each conference time. We encourage that both parents be in attendance at Parent/Teacher Conferences. Separate conferences may be scheduled as needed for parents from two separate households.

**Every home visit and conference missed must be made up!**

## **Disability Services**

All children will receive a Dial 4 screening. This includes motor, concepts, and language skills. You and the teacher will both complete a self-help and social/emotional questionnaire about your child. The information obtained will reveal your child's strengths, areas of concern and help your staff member identify areas to focus on with you and your child. The screening, coupled with parent and staff observations, allows us to determine whether or not a referral for more in-depth evaluation should be considered. If staff and parents agree a referral is warranted, we will offer support throughout the evaluation process.

If services are needed, children may receive speech therapy, physical therapy, and/or occupational therapy along with their educational activities. Other services may be provided as identified. Eastern Pulaski Elementary School (EPES) and CSS (Cooperative School Services) provide these services as needed. All Head Start services, including full participation in center activities and field trips, are made available to children regardless of their special needs.

## **Positive Behavior Guidance Policy**

The KIRPC Head Start program requires the use of positive methods of discipline. The key to effective guidance involves the relationship between children and adults. Adults will establish an atmosphere that is open and accepting of children and that strives to build each child's self-concept. Children who feel important and respected by adults will want to please those adults through their words and actions.

Staff use Conscious Discipline as the framework for classroom and behavior management. One of the main concepts with Conscious Discipline is the belief that discipline is not something you do to a child, but rather it is what you instill in a child.

## **General Rules for Positive Behavior Guidance**

1. All Head Start staff will help individual children develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their own acts.
2. Simple understandable rules with reasons shall be established in writing for both children and staff. These rules include **Inside Voices, Walking Feet, Hands to Ourselves, Listening Ears, Show Respect, and Be Good Helpers (Share/Clean-up)**.
3. Staff will never discuss a child's behavior in the presence of other children or with a parent of another child.
4. Positive behavior guidance shall be the responsibility of the Head Start staff that has an ongoing relationship with the child.
5. Consequences for hurtful behaviors will offer opportunities to learn. The three types of consequences are as follows:
6. Natural Consequences happen naturally and are the most effective types of consequences for motivating children to learn a new behavior or use an existing skill. Allow children to experience the discomfort of natural consequences when it is safe to do so, and then follow up with empathy.
  - a. Problem Solving – Problem solving requires a calm state from both the adult and the child. It involves children in becoming part of the solution. The Conscious Discipline Time Machine can be used to “go back in time” to redo hurtful actions in a helpful way. Simplified Time Machine Steps are:
    1. **Be a S.T.A.R.** Everyone Smiles, Takes a deep breath, And Relaxes three times to calm both body and mind.
  - b. **“I don't like it when you \_\_\_\_.”** Coach the victim to speak first, saying, “I don't like it when you \_\_\_\_.” Example: “I don't like it when you push me.”

- c. “**Next time \_\_\_\_\_.**” Then help the victim teach the other child how he wants to be treated. Most children will say, “Stop it.” Reframe to what the child wants. (“Next time, say, ‘Move Please.’”)
  - d. **Check for understanding and willingness.** Ask the other child, “Are you willing to do that? Let’s practice now.”
  - e. **Connect.** Ask the children to show there are no hard feelings by doing a simple connection like a handshake, hug or high-five.
7. Logical Consequences – This type of consequences only works with children who are connected and have mastered the expected behavior. Staff will set the consequence and ask the child to repeat back what will happen. Logical consequences will be:
- a. **Related** to the child’s behavior.
  - b. The consequence and the way it’s delivered are **respectful**.
  - c. The consequence is **reasonable**, meaning it’s something the child can do and that makes sense.
  - d. The staff will follow up with **empathy**. Empathy helps children reflect, own the action and choose to change the behavior.
  - e. Staff will **explain** the consequence and **ask for understanding**.
8. Food or outside time will never be used for rewarding or disciplining children.

**NO CHILD SHALL BE SUBJECTED, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT INFLICTED IN ANY MANNER UPON THE BODY OR TO VERBAL ABUSE, OR BE DEPRIVED OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEALS OR ANY PART OF MEALS AS PUNISHMENT, OR PUNISHED FOR TOILET ACCIDENT.**

- 1. Direct behavior management techniques that may be used with preschool children include:
- 2. Positive Reinforcement – We will verbally acknowledge the children when they are being helpful, kind, and safe to help them feel special about themselves and their work. (“You did it! You \_\_\_\_\_ so \_\_\_\_\_! That was helpful/safe/kind!”)
- 3. Ignoring – We will ignore inappropriate behavior that isn’t hurting another person or damaging materials.
- 4. Demonstrating – We will tell and show the children what we want them to do.
- 5. Redirecting – We will help children find alternate activities that will still satisfy his/her needs.
- 6. Problem Solving – We will help children to consider positive methods of resolving problems or conflicts when they arise.
- 7. Providing Choices or Alternatives – Children who can make their own choices are more likely to follow through on that decision than one imposed by the adult.
- 8. Safe Place represents an individual space where children are instructed, encouraged, and supported in attending to their own emotional needs through self-regulating activities. It is a voluntary structure they are free to use as needed, and can use as long as needed.
- 9. Restraints – Staff who are trained may hold a child if necessary to keep them and/or other children safe.
- 10. For children who exhibit chronic behavior challenges, we use Conscious Discipline as the blueprint for the intervention process that also include parent and teacher input to create an individualized child safety plan. Examples of chronic behavior challenges include:
  - a. Hurting others or self (biting, spitting, scratching, and kicking).
  - b. Destruction of material or equipment.
  - c. Intentional defiance and failure to follow classroom rules.
  - d. Leaving the classroom without permission.

## **Child Supervision**

1. Classroom staff follow active supervision procedures such as:
2. Positioning of Staff: Staff create specific zones in the classroom and playground to ensure children are within close sight and sound to a staff member.
3. Scanning and Counting: Staff complete attendance forms multiple times throughout the day to ensure all children are accounted for.
4. Listening: Bells and/or alarms are placed on all classroom doors to signal when a child attempts to leave the room.

## **Parent role in Child Supervision:**

1. During arrival and dismissal, please hold your child's hand when crossing the parking lot, in the building and at bus stops.
2. If arriving late to school, it is important to ensure you make eye contact with a classroom staff member and that your child is greeted by staff.
3. If accompanying your child on a field trip, you will need to be actively engaged with your child. We ask that cell phones only be used in an emergency. No siblings are allowed on field trips so that you can be focused on your Head Start child.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

It is the policy of K-IRPC Head Start to comply with Indiana Statute, Duty to Report Child Abuse or Neglect (31-33-5-1, P.L. 1-1997, sec. 16) regarding the protection of children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized by physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse.

As mandated by this statute, all K-IRPC Head Start employees who have reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect will make a report. Staff are trained annually on procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

## **Procedures for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

1. If a child is in immediate danger, call the local police or law enforcement agency in at 911.
2. Give your name, position, and name of the Head Start center you are calling from.
3. Provide specific information regarding the child's name, age, location, parent's name and address, and reasons for the call including the name of any or all individuals suspected as being a perpetrator(s) of the abuse or neglect.
4. Call **Child Protective Services (800-800-5556)** and provide them with the same information given to the local authorities.
5. Provide clear, concise, and specific information regarding the child's name, age, location, parent's name and address, and reasons for the call including the name of any individual suspected as being a perpetrator of the abuse or neglect. Explain what happened to the child and when. Is this firsthand knowledge or has the child or other individuals made statements indicating abuse or neglect? Where is the child now? Is the child in danger now?
6. All KIRPC Head Start employees will provide full cooperation in any investigation by the proper authorities regarding child abuse or neglect. All law enforcement agencies and Indiana Child Protective Services personnel, after giving proper identification, will be given access to any child involved in a situation that is being investigated.
7. If staff are aware that there is already an open DCS case then the local office/caseworker will also be contacted.



8. Any additional documentation regarding the child will remain confidential and be secured in a confidential file locked in a filing cabinet.
9. Staff will notify the Head Start Director via email immediately following contact with the local authorities.

### **Signs & Symptoms of Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

<b>Type of Abuse or Neglect</b>	<b>Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Behavioral Indicators</b>
<b>All Types of Abuse or Neglect</b>	Increase in stomachaches Changes in daily life patterns: Eating Sleeping Bedwetting Soiling or wetting underwear Injuries to self	Has sudden change in behavior Shows extreme behaviors: Strong anxiety (clinging, nightmares) Depression (frequent crying, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts or actions) Withdrawal (can seem distant or distracted) Extreme anger (tantrums, aggression) Has learning problems or difficulty concentrating
<b>Sexual Abuse</b> Engaging a child in sexual acts, such as fondling, rape, and exposing a child to other sexual activities.	Has frequent urinary or yeast infections Wears a lot of clothes, often in layers Has put on or lost a very large amount of weight	Plays in sexual ways that are not appropriate Knows more about sex and sexual language than a typical child of his or her age Feels threatened by physical closeness Writes, draws, or dreams of sexual things Talks about a new, older friend Runs away (especially for teens) Reports sexual abuse
<b>Physical Abuse</b> Using intentional physical force, such as hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or other show of force against a child.	Has bruises, cuts, burns, and injuries unlikely to have happened when playing Has injuries that repeatedly occur during weekends or other absences Has several bruises or other injuries in different stages of healing Wears clothes that cover the body, even when it is hot	Complains of being sore and looks uncomfortable when moving Explains how injuries happened in ways that seem unlikely, vague, or conflicting Seems concerned about having contact with adults Is afraid of his or her parent(s) and cries when it is time to go home Reports injury by a parent or caregiver
<b>Emotional Abuse</b> Harming a child's self-worth or emotional well-being. Examples are name-calling, shaming, rejecting, withholding love, and threatening.	Has difficulty speaking clearly Has delayed physical development Has ulcers, asthma, or severe allergies Abuses alcohol or other drugs (especially for teens)	Has a behavior he or she always does and has trouble stopping (such as sucking, rocking, biting) Stays away from or does not play with others Has developmental delays Behaves in delinquent ways (especially for teens) Reports not caring about the parent(s)
<b>Neglect</b> Failing to meet a child's basic needs. Such as housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care	Has unmet medical needs Is often left alone Is not getting good enough nutrition: Is always hungry Has a swollen abdomen Is too thin Wears dirty/wrong kind of clothes Has strong body odor	Regularly is tired, has no energy, or falls asleep in class Steals food or begs food from classmates Frequently is absent or late to school Seems extremely lonely Frequently seeks affection Reports no one is home to provide care

## **Family Engagement**

Head Start recognizes you as your child's first, and most important, teacher. Positive parent-child relationships provide the foundation for children's learning. When parents are sensitive, responsive, and provide predictable care, young children develop the skills they need to succeed in life.

When family members take the lead and make decisions about their children's learning, they are truly engaged. Positive goal-directed relationships between families and Head Start staff are essential to engagement and children's school readiness.

### **Family Assessment – Family Map**

The FES will complete the Family Map with your family at the beginning of the year at the classroom and then again mid-year at the 2<sup>nd</sup> parent conference. The Family Map gathers information about your family and your home environment. The Family Map is used to identify areas of strengths for your family and areas where you might like more information or resources. From this assessment, we will develop a family plan.

### **Parent Gauge**

Parent and family engagement are a very important element of Head Start. The Parent Gauge is an online survey that you will complete twice a year. The survey will ask you questions about your experiences in Head Start, relationships with Head Start staff, parenting & child development and health & nutrition.

### **Conscious Discipline Parent Curriculum**

You will have the opportunity to participate in the Conscious Discipline parenting curriculum. The goal is to meet your child's needs from daily care to academic learning to social-emotional growth. All people, including children learn and show more compassion and feel better about themselves when they are in an environment that is caring, connected and safe. Conscious Discipline is based on safety, connection and problem solving.

1. Safety – Children and adult's brains function best when they feel safe. Our priority is to keep your child physically and emotionally safe. We will be teaching your child skills to help them calm themselves when they are upset, which is called self-regulation. Self-regulation is the #1 predictor of life success. Safety requires adults who can self-regulate and take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings and actions.
2. Connection – Humans have a social brain that develops through relationships. Connected families are healthy families who support their child's brain development. We develop connections by building a compassionate classroom called a "School Family." These connections encourage motivation to cooperate, be helpful and learn new social skills.
3. Problem Solving – Problem solving in children and adults only happens when we feel safe and connected. Our goal is always to create a safe and connected environment so your child can thrive and learn.

There will be a Conscious Discipline Open House in August/September, followed by a series of 7 trainings that will be held each month. You will learn tools to use for yourself and your child. You will receive take away materials to use at home from each of the sessions.

## **Volunteer Expectations**

Studies continually show that children are most successful in school and life when parents are involved. Participating as a volunteer in the program is one of the many positive things you can do for your child, yourself, and your family. By volunteering, you provide support and a link from Head Start to your home.

Volunteering keeps you informed and involved as to what is happening at Head Start.

Volunteering helps you and your child learn ways to keep the benefits of the program continuing at home.

Volunteering not only benefits your child and family it also helps our program meet our non-federal share requirement. KIRPC Head Start receives its funds from the federal government. Head Start must raise \$.25 for every \$1 given to us by The Federal Government, which equals out to **\$388,506**. Non-federal share is the donation of time, space or materials used in the program. There is a dollar amount assigned to every time you volunteer, complete activities, attend meetings, to meet this match.

**We encourage all families to have the goal of volunteering at least 5 hours per month.**

## **Family Engagement Experiences**

Head Start has an **open door policy**. Sharing your experiences can mean a lot to your children, the program, and you. You are always welcome in the classroom. **Virtual opportunities may also be available to participate in, if you are unable to attend in person.**

Volunteer Calendar - Teaching staff will send home a monthly volunteer calendar that provides you with the opportunity to sign-up to volunteer/visit the classroom on days that are best for you.

Celebration of Learning Days –At the end of each study, teachers plan a special day designed for special guests in the child’s life to visit the classroom and participate in engagement activities related to the monthly study. Teaching staff will display documentation of learning that also relates to the study. These days are marked on the monthly calendars.

Parent Committee – Congratulations and Welcome as a parent committee member!

1. Help staff plan activities, field trips, and special events
2. Make recommendations to the Policy Council.
3. Meet every other month.
4. Express your opinions and feedback to ensure staff are providing a quality experience for children and families.

Policy Council – This committee is composed of community representatives, professionals, and parents.

1. Election to Policy Council is required and parents are elected by their peers. At least one parent from each site is necessary. An alternate from each site is also preferred to attend meetings when the representative cannot.
2. The committee meets monthly September through June with the Head start Director and Fiscal Manager. Attendance at meetings is mandatory.
3. This committee makes the decisions regarding policies, personnel, program changes, and spending funds within the program.

4. It is the parent Policy Council representatives' duties to present information from Policy Council to the site Parent Committee Meetings.
5. Mileage and child care expenses are reimbursed as requested by parents participating in Policy Council.

Health Services Advisory Committee – This committee consists of parents, health care professionals, volunteers, and staff which meets 2 times per year. This committee discusses health, mental health, and nutrition content areas.

Family Engagement Activities (FEA) – These activities will be sent home and can be accomplished with your child at home to be counted for volunteer time. These activities will focus on our study, daily reading with your child, Zoophonics, and/or healthy/active living and your child's individual academic goals.

Curriculum Feedback Surveys – Parents are provided a Curriculum Feedback survey at the 1<sup>st</sup> home visit to provide suggestions for activities for the class. Your input is extremely important to us. It can be simple suggestions such as giving us your child's favorite book title to read in class.

Janitorial/Maintenance – Help with light cleaning and minor repairs.

Program Design – Assist teachers with classroom preparation tasks that can be completed in your home.

Lending Library - These materials are sent home on a rotation with children and are to be sent back to school with all materials returned.

1. Fatherhood Toolbox – Your child will get the chance to bring this toolbox home a minimum of once during the school year for one week. The toolbox contains activities and books for children and their fathers or other male role models to increase positive father/child interactions. In the absence of a male role model, any adult in the child's life can complete these activities.
2. School Readiness Backpack – Your child will receive a backpack of school supplies/activities to take home at the beginning of the year to keep at home for the year. Backpacks may be referenced on FEAs and during virtual learning.
3. Books – staff will send home one book per week with children to read at home. Staff will send home a new book when the previous book has been returned to school.

## Communication

There are several ways in which the program maintains communication between staff and Head Start parents:

1. One of the main ways that Head Start will communicate with you is by notes/mail that may be sent home in a red folder in your child's backpack. Please check your child's backpack each day. Many times the notes are permission slips for your child to go on field trips and require your signature allowing your child to attend. **Please respond to all notes requiring a response as quickly as possible. This will help us avoid follow-up visits for information, etc.**

2. A second way of communication is the monthly classroom calendar and quarterly newsletter, which will be sent home in your child's red folder. Each calendar will list upcoming events, classroom activities, Policy Council and Parent Committee meeting information, and other resources for your family.
3. Your Family Engagement Specialist will also make at least a monthly contact with you. This will be a time to update family services information.
4. Staff may use Child Plus to send you a text or email for various notifications. These messages will appear from School Message. Please be aware that there may be times that messages are sent but not received by all families.
5. You may call the site at any time to speak to staff. Please do not be alarmed if the answering machine picks up during class hours as staff's priority will be with the children at that time. All phone messages will be checked prior to the dismissal.
6. Each site has a site specific Facebook group for currently enrolled families to stay up to day on classroom events, closings, parent training opportunities, and virtual learning. KIRPC Head Start also has a Facebook page where closings, delays and other information may be posted.
7. FACEBOOK is open to everyone. Please recognize that there is no privacy in this means of communication and refrain from talking about children, staff, other parents, or the organization. Speak directly to the staff if there is a problem. No photos other than your child's own photo are allowed to be posted.
8. **We ask that all parents refrain from using cell phones while at Head Start; this includes drop-off and pick-up time.**
9. The staff support communication among families including non-custodial parents. Teaching staff will send non-custodial parents a Welcome Letter upon receiving their contact information.
10. Please be aware that children model adults. Foul language is inappropriate anytime but especially around young, impressionable children.

## **Parent Volunteer Training**

### **Definition of a Regular Volunteer**

Any person (Parents, non-parents, and community members) spending 8 hours or more in the classroom per month. Regular volunteers must apply to become a regular volunteer at the KIRPC Head Start program, seeking approval from the Head Start Director.

### **Age**

All volunteers shall be 16 years old or older unless the volunteer is under the direct supervision of the person in charge (example high school students volunteering at any age under supervision of High School teacher on site).

### **Health**

Regular volunteers will be required to provide evidence of having completed a tuberculin skin test, physical, drug test, and fingerprint background test. Proof must be on site prior to volunteers working over 8 hours in a month.

### **Tracking**

All volunteers will be required to track their time on a Volunteer Service Record and contributions on an Inkind form. These forms are located in a binder in each classroom behind

each child's name. Please document the date, time and your initials for each visit. This is crucial to our agency, and will also be used for recognition purposes. **Volunteers are required, per licensing regulations, to complete a series of webinars on the state ILEAD website.**

### **Volunteer Training**

Volunteers are not required to have any special education, training, or skills. If a volunteer has any special talents, we will encourage them to utilize them in any way possible. In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, volunteers will be given the opportunity and encouraged to attend staff trainings and workshops.

### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers are not permitted to access client records. All information concerning participating children and information shared by families is confidential. Information will not be given to others without written consent from the parent or legal guardian. It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the program. This is a safeguard for each family's privacy. As a volunteer, you will be asked to sign a statement saying you understand and will abide by the confidentiality policy. This means that under no circumstance can you discuss families or children that you come in contact with at the center or the home with anyone but the staff working with the child. Volunteers in classrooms are never allowed to be alone with a child or a group of children.

### **Authorization/Emergency Contact Forms**

Only staff are allowed to release children from the program. Volunteers are not allowed to release children under any circumstances. Volunteers are never given sole responsibility for the supervision of children.

### **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Prohibition Against Acceptance of Gifts or Gratuities

1. Any volunteer of this program is prohibited from accepting gifts of money, goods, services, or gratuities which are of any significant material value, from any person who received benefits or services from the organization, who may be doing direct contracting with any of the activities or functions of the organization, or who is otherwise in a position to benefit directly or indirectly, from any action or decision by a volunteer of this program.
2. Prohibition Against Physical Threats
3. Any volunteer of this organization is prohibited from threatening or intimidating management, supervisors or fellow workers.
4. Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability;

### **Survival Tips for New Volunteers**

#### **Do's**

1. Remember that you are an important role model for the child; be positive and appropriate.
2. Communicate any problems, questions, concerns or personal observations to the person in charge in the classroom, whether you are observing or interacting with the children.
3. When you have serious doubts about a procedure say to the child, "Let's ask the teacher in charge."
4. This is a learning experience for you as well as the children and staff. Please, ask if you have questions and be sure to share your ideas.
5. Always keep the children safe. That's our number one priority.
6. Follow the teacher's example. Watch how the teaching staff handles activities.

7. Use a calm, quiet speaking voice.
8. Let staff know when you need to leave the room for a break.
9. Turn cell phones to vibrate or silent, and only text or take calls on breaks away from children.
10. Model good eating habits. Suggest but don't force children to try all foods offered. Model appropriate table manners as well.

### **Don'ts**

1. Don't take any child except your own to the bathroom or out of the classroom. **Always let staff know when you are taking your child out of the classroom.**
2. Do not ask about or make statements about children in front of other children or parents. Remember, all information about children and families is confidential.
3. Don't interrupt when staff are leading an activity or talking to a child.

### **Guiding Children**

1. Children need comfort, attention and support, but do not "smother" them with attention. Learning to be independent and how to do things on their own is an important part of growing up.
2. Direct children in a positive way by telling them what you want them to do instead of what you don't want them to do. For example, instead of saying, "Don't stand on the chair," say "Please put your feet on the floor."
3. Encourage teamwork rather than competition between children.
4. Stop children quickly if something looks dangerous. If you're not sure, ask staff.
5. Help children learn by letting them try different things. Encourage their efforts, help them if they get frustrated, and let them do as much on their own as they are able.
6. Redirect children by suggesting another activity.
7. Respect individual differences.
8. All children's pictures have value, no matter what they look like. Ask children to tell you about their picture rather than asking what it is.
9. A quiet child should be as valued as an active one.
10. Give children choices whenever you can. It helps them develop independence and decision making skills.
11. If children do not have a choice, don't give them one. If you say, "It's time to clean up, OK?" to a child, the added "OK" makes it a choice.
12. Get down on children's eye level. Sit, squat or kneel whenever you can.
13. Help children learn the rules of the classroom by reminding them and showing them the list of rules posted in the classroom.
14. Praise children's efforts. Trying is more important than "doing it right."

### All adults must wash hands:

1. upon arrival;
2. before and after handling foods (cooking activities, eating and serving);
3. after toileting self, children, and diaper changing;
4. after coming in contact with body fluids (mucus, blood, saliva or urine);
5. before and after handling any medications;
6. after attending to an ill child;
7. after handling, feeding or cleaning up after animals;
8. after outdoor play; and
9. after smoking.

**If you are a parent volunteer:**

Expect that your child may act differently, and perhaps inappropriately, when you are volunteering. It is often best to let the teacher work with your child when this happens. Do not feel bad if your child gets angry when you pay attention to other children instead of just him or her. This is a normal part of development. Children are used to having you to themselves. You can help your child by talking with them about what to expect when you visit. Let them know that you will be talking and playing with all of the children, but that you will play with them, too. They will naturally be excited that you are coming, so talk about what you'll do when you are there.

**Emergency Procedures**

1. A staff member must remain with the children at all times. Staff are responsible for administering first aid. Whenever necessary, 911 will be called. Staff complete the Health & Safety Incident Reports.
2. An injured volunteer will receive first aid by staff. With help from staff, the volunteer will complete the Incident Report.
3. All volunteers must be aware of the evacuation route posted in the classroom and participate in fire, tornado, and lock down drills when present.
4. Each classroom has an Emergency Plan posted. Please find this document and review.

**Child Health Services**

Increased health and wellness leads to increased school readiness! The Head Start goal is to provide preventive health care practices throughout the year to children and families. Health care is a life-long process, not just a "physical" examination. Parents will be made aware of the community resources that can provide health care services.

Your child is required to have a physical exam, with lead and hemoglobin screenings and a dental exam. **KIRPC Head Start follows state licensing regulations, therefore you must be current on your child's physical and immunizations. You will be given a 30 day grace period beyond the physical's expiration date to provide the updated physical to Head Start. If the updated physical is not received, your child will be withdrawn.**

**Immunizations**

All children enrolled in Head Start must be up to date with their immunizations or have an exemption form on file.

The county Health Nurses in each county review each child's immunization records to ensure they are all up to date and parents will be notified if immunizations are not up to date. Head Start will either provide the health department a copy of your child's immunization record or your child's name and birthdate for the health department to access through the state.

You will be given a 30 day grace period to provide the updated record to Head Start. If the updated immunization record is not received, your child will be withdrawn.



The County Health Nurse in Newton, Jasper, and Pulaski Counties is available for your immunization questions.

<b>Jasper County Health Department</b>	<b>219-866-4917</b>
<b>Newton County Health Department</b>	<b>219-285-2052</b>
<b>Pulaski County Health Department</b>	<b>574-946-6080</b>

All children born outside of the United States will be required to have a TB Mantoux unless they have had the BCG immunization.

### **On site Screenings**

1. Vision screenings are completed on site for all children. Screenings are completed by either the local Lions Club or by the Director using the Plus Optix Vision Screener. All results are sent home to families to identify if children passed the screening or if follow up is needed with an optometrist.
2. Hearing screenings are completed on site for all children. Screenings are completed by Cooperative School Services or EPES. All results are sent home to families to identify if children passed the screening or if follow up is needed.
3. Speech screenings are completed on site for all children using the DIAL 4 screening by Cooperative School Services or EPES. Results are discussed at parent/teacher conferences.

### **Growth Assessments**

Head Start is required to obtain a growth assessment (height and weight) for all children. We will use the information that is on your child's physical exam to meet this requirement. If it has been determined that your child is not at a healthy weight we will complete an additional growth assessment in January and April.

### **Follow up Visits Medical and Dental**

If your child needs a follow up visit for either medical, dental, hearing or vision, you need to provide the paperwork to Head Start to ensure the child's medical file is up to date and complete.

The Head Start health performance standards require that all children obtain their follow up visits, if needed, before the end of the program year. Medical, dental, hearing and vision follow up assure a healthier child who is ready for kindergarten.

### **Medical Neglect**

Medical Neglect is one aspect of abuse and neglect that does not receive a lot of attention. Medical neglect is defined as the failure of a parent or guardian to seek or follow through with treatment to ensure a level of health essential for adequate function and freedom from pain and infection. Head Start is here to support families overcome barriers to healthcare. The point at which to consider a parent negligent and to begin intervention occurs after the parent has been properly informed about the nature and extent of the child's condition, the treatment needed, and the method of assessing the necessary treatment.

### **Health Communication**

Teaching staff inform parents of any health and safety incidents regarding their child on the day of occurrence with the Health and Safety Incident Report. If an incident occurs at the very end of the day, staff will notify you in person or by phone and send the Health and Safety Incident Report home the following school day.

1. When an injury involves the head OR any amount of blood more than a paper cut then staff call the parent immediately to notify them. This doesn't mean the child needs to go home. This is only to communicate the injury to the parent and let them decide what they do next.
2. When a child is bitten, the staff must notify the parent verbally on the same day of the incident in addition to sending the incident report home.
3. If the injury is more severe, staff will call 911 first then the parent next when a staff member and telephone are available.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Head Start classroom staff is trained in First Aid and CPR. If a medical emergency should arise, the staff will care for the child and contact 911 first. The parent/guardian will be contacted next as soon as a staff member and telephone are available. A staff member will stay with the child until a parent/guardian arrives at the classroom or hospital.

1. Fire and Tornado Drills are practiced monthly in the classrooms.
2. Lock Down drills are practiced 5 times throughout the year to teach the children what to do in case of an intruder in the community or in the building. Parents will be notified via the monthly calendar. In the event of a real lock down, staff will not release children to parents until the lock down has been lifted. KIRPC Code Red signifies there is an intruder in the building. KIRPC Code Orange signifies there has been a threat made to the Head Start site or a potential threat is in route to the site. KIRPC Code Yellow signifies there is no threat specifically to the Head Start site but there is a threat within the community.
3. Bus evacuation drills are practiced 3 times throughout the year to teach children what to do in case of a bus emergency.
4. Each classroom has posted the KIRPC Head Start Emergency Plan detailing how to handle all emergency situations.

### **Nutrition**

1. Meals are served family style and children are encouraged to serve portions of the meal to themselves. Children are encouraged to try new foods and are introduced to the food groups.
2. KIRPC Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Due to this participation, **parents may not send any food to the program on or off site.**
3. The child will receive at least ½ of the recommended USDA dietary requirements during the Head Start day. Breakfast and lunch are provided and the menus are sent home monthly.
4. The USDA and Indiana Department of Education prohibit discrimination in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability. The USDA and IDOE are equal opportunity providers and employers.

### **Mental Health**

All children will be observed by a professional mental health consultant. Parents are given the opportunity to express any social/behavioral concerns through the Dial parent questionnaire at the first home visit. Mental health trainings may be provided to parents at parent meetings.

### **Medication Administration Policy**

1. Medications prescribed for an individual child shall be kept in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label showing the prescription number, name of medication, date filled and date expires, physician's name, direction for use (dosage and frequency), method for administration, and the child's name. When no longer needed, medication shall be returned to the parents.

2. A Medication Form must be completed by your child's Physician and you to provide instructions and written parent/guardian authorization for all medications administered by staff (Rescue medication information will be required prior to child attending);
3. Medication must be on site prior to your child attending so that staff can review the medication and medication requirements.
4. Non-prescription drugs, such as cough drops, cold syrups and Tylenol must have written physician instructions and written parent/guardian authorization to be administered;
5. Changes in a child's behaviors that have implications for drug dosage or type will be recorded, and parents will be assisted in communicating with their physician regarding the effect of the medication on the child;
6. Staff accurately document all medication administration on the Medication Record. Staff regularly review the Medication Record with the parent(s) or guardian(s) at the first and second parent/teacher conference. The record will be kept with the medication.
7. Parents need to inform staff if asthma medication has been given at home prior to the child attending for the day and staff will notify you in person or by phone if asthma medication has been administered at Head Start.
8. Staff members are trained to demonstrate proper techniques for administering, handling, and storing medication, including the use of any necessary equipment to administer medication;
9. All medication must be given directly to the bus monitor by the parent or guardian as a precautionary measure and is stored in the locked red backpack.
10. Staff will document any reason medication is not administered when it was scheduled to be. Staff will immediately contact the family when they become aware a dose has not been administered. The family will instruct if the missed dose should be administered based on prescription guidelines/physician instructions for a missed dose.

### **Head Lice Policy**

Head lice can be found in any public school or preschool program. Please remember contracting head lice is not a sign of being unclean. It is a serious problem and can become epidemic in proportion if not treated immediately. The goal of this policy is to prevent the infestation of children with lice, and insure that children with head lice are treated immediately, return to the classroom within 24 hours, and do not have re-infestation of the lice.

1. The classroom staff will examine children for head lice on a monthly basis and upon returning after an extended break.
2. **If a child is found to have head lice (including nits), the child will be separated from the rest of the children immediately, and the child's parents will be notified to pick up the child within 30 minutes. The child may not return until he/she receives the appropriate treatment and is completely free from lice and nits.** There are several over-the-counter products available for treating head lice.
3. Staff will send a letter home to all parents indicating that a case of head lice has occurred in the center so that parents may take the appropriate precautions and check their child(ren) for head lice.
4. All necessary cleaning will occur the same day a child is discovered to have lice to reduce the risk of infestation. Staff will wash and dry all play clothes and hats. They will also vacuum carpets and upholstered furniture.
5. Arrangements shall be made by the parents to have the child checked within 24 hours, and ensure that the child does not miss more than one (1) additional day of Head Start classes. If the child misses more than three days, communication with the family will be made either

verbally or through a home visit. This is to further assist the family and to ensure the child's attendance in the classroom.

6. A parent or responsible adult is asked to bring the child into the classroom to be re-examined by the staff 15 minutes prior to class start time. Due to maintaining child-staff ratios, staff may ask for children arriving after class starts to come back another time to be checked. Staff will check a child's head for 15-20 minutes and may remove up to 10 nits, allowing the child to remain at school if nit free. Staff will show parents how to identify live lice and nits. If there are more than 10 nits, parents may choose to stay at the site and pick out the remainder of the nits. Staff will recheck the child's head once again but if more nits remain, the child and family will be asked to leave and complete treatment again (as directed on the box/label) before returning the next day to be rechecked again. All family members are encouraged to be treated. Communication between the staff and family members is essential during this process.
7. On the same day the child returns to the classroom, all children, staff and volunteers in the classroom will be screened for lice and nits. Children found to have head lice will be periodically re-examined by the classroom staff to ensure there is no more reoccurrence of the problem.

Staff take precautions to prevent children from becoming infested with head lice.

1. Children use individually assigned cubbies in which staff ensure no coats or backpacks touch another child's belongings.
2. Children use individually assigned cots at nap time at duration sites. Cots are sanitized weekly. Blankets are washed weekly.
3. Dramatic play clothes and hats are washed at least biweekly.

### **Communicable Disease/Exclusion Policy**

Any child in attendance who becomes ill or who is suspected of illness or contagious condition shall be immediately **separated** from the rest of the children.

The teacher will evaluate each situation individually, and will determine if the child needs to be dismissed from the classroom.

**Staff** will notify the parents, legal guardian, or other authorized individual to make the necessary arrangements for the child's release and pick up. It is essential that an emergency contact number be listed for the child in the event that a parent/guardian is unavailable.

**Temperature checks of all children will be completed prior to getting on the bus or entering the site.** Children will not be admitted that are ill upon arrival to class. Communication with the parents or authorized individual is necessary prior to exclusion. Communication is also recommended if a family member or sibling is sick so that staff can be aware of symptoms.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

1. Any fever, when accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms such as a sore throat, stiff neck, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, sluggishness, etc...The child must be fever free without the use of fever reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning.
2. A fever of 100.1 degrees or higher without other symptoms.
3. Diarrhea, two or more incidents during a classroom period, runny, watery stools.
4. Blood in the stool not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stool.
5. Vomiting with other signs of illness
6. Sore throat with fever and swollen glands or mouth sores.

7. Eye discharge, thick mucus or pus draining from the eye.
8. Abdominal pain, (continuing for more than two hours) or intermittent pain with other signs and symptoms.
9. Skin Conditions, suspected ringworm, poison ivy, poison oak/**poison oak (can return when blisters are dry and scabbed)**
10. Coughing (severe, uncontrolled, and/or productive) with or without respiratory distress.
11. Signs of possible severe illness such as irritability, unusual tiredness, or neediness. This would be a sudden onset and would compromise your ability to care for other children.

**Illnesses for Exclusion include, but are not limited to, the following (physician note required to return to school):**

1. Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment and the affected area is crusted.
2. Hepatitis A virus, for 2 weeks or as directed by the Health department.
3. Head Lice or Nits (see Head Lice Policy) (A doctor's note is not required)
4. Chickenpox (varicella-zoster), until all sores have dried and crusted (usually six days)
5. Shingles (herpes-zoster), until all sores have dried and crusted (usually six days)
6. Strep Throat
7. Whooping Cough
8. Hand, Foot, and Mouth until lesions are not seeping
9. Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until 24 hours after treatment
10. Measles
11. Mumps
12. Meningitis
13. Rosella until fever is gone for 24 hours
14. RSV until fever is gone
15. Rubella
16. Ringworm, until 24 hours after treatment and the affected area is covered.
17. Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment
18. Flu (excluded for 5 days from diagnosis)
19. Tuberculosis, until an appropriate health care provider or health official certifies that the child is in appropriate therapy and can attend Head Start.
20. Non-immunized children may need to be excluded if there is an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease.
- 21. Coronavirus – 10 days from start of symptoms**

**Any child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness, injury, or contagious condition will be required to obtain a physician's excuse before being allowed to return to the classroom. Any child who has any surgical procedure will be required to submit a physician's excuse prior to returning.**

**Conditions That Do Not Require Exclusion**

Not all conditions and illnesses require that a child be excluded from Head Start. Unless it is required by the child's health care provider, your public health department, or your licensing department, the conditions listed below do not require exclusion:

1. Low grade fever of 100 degrees or less without other symptoms.
2. Pink eyes or eye with a clear, watery discharge and without fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness.
3. Rash without fever or behavior changes.
4. Positive tuberculosis skin test in the absence of active tuberculosis disease.
5. Fifth disease in a person with a normal immune system.

In the event of a diagnosed communicable disease outbreak, the teacher will send home the Notification of Communicable Disease form to all parents. Director may close a classroom for site staff to thoroughly clean when classroom attendance falls at or below 75% for three or more days in one week due to illness/communicable disease.

### **Individualized Health Plans**

If a child has a special health condition (diagnosed by a physician) such as asthma, food or skin allergy which may require treatment during the school day, an Individualized Health Plan will be prepared by the parent and the physician or FES prior to the child's first day of school. It is your responsibility to keep the staff updated on changes in the child's condition, i.e. a child may outgrow an allergy or may develop new allergies. Communication with the staff is essential in order to be prepared in the event of an emergency.

## **Transportation**

### **Coats on bus**

It is the parents' choice if their child should wear a winter coat while in the 5-point harness. If parents do not want their child to wear the coat then they will bring the child to the bus in the morning wearing a thin jacket or sweatshirt only. Parents will place the child's coat in the child's backpack. Teacher will then have the coats available for outside playtime. After playtime the coat will be placed back in the backpack for the afternoon route.

### **Bus Monitors**

We are required to have a bus monitor on the bus at all times. Teacher assistants and Site Aides serves as the bus monitor on a daily basis, but other staff may substitute. The duty of the bus monitor is to escort your child on and off the bus, buckle your child into the 5-point harness, and ensure children are safe and secure while riding.

### **Bus Guidelines**

Pick up points are necessary to keep the bus ride as short as possible. **If you are assigned to a pickup point that is where your child will be picked up and dropped off only.** Changes will only be made in emergency situation. **If you are scheduled to be at a certain pick-up point you must let transportation know when you will not be there.**

Transportation to and from Head Start is a **contracted** service provided for the children enrolled in the program. Parents are notified once pick-up and drop-off points are established. **If you do not want your child to ride the bus home in the afternoon, please call 30 minutes prior to dismissal to make that change.**

1. There is no smoking in or around the buses. This policy will be enforced.
2. Parents should allow for 15 minutes before or after designated pick up or drop off time and be ready during that time.
3. If a permanent change to your child's drop off and pick up point needs to be made, a new transportation/medical emergency/child find permission form **MUST** be filled out and approved by transportation.

Beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>, after three times of failing to let transportation know, your transportation privileges may be revoked by your Community Service provider. (Jasper County Community Service provider will revoke bus service).

1. A verbal warning will be given in person or via phone call from the bus driver on the first day that the child does not ride the bus (without notification from the parent).
2. A written warning will be given by the community transportation director via postal service mail and via the child's backpack on the second day that the child does not ride the bus (without notification from the parent).
3. A final written notice will be sent upon the child's third time of not riding the bus (without notification from the parent) given by the community transportation director via postal service mail and via the child's backpack.

The children are required to follow basic bus rules:

1. Children will keep their hands and feet to themselves.
2. Children will respect other's property.
3. Children must remain in their seatbelt at all times.
4. Candy or food of any kind is not allowed on the bus.
5. Book bags with wheels are NOT ALLOWED on the buses.

The transportation privilege can be revoked due to repeated violations of the bus rules. **The process for revocation of riding privileges is as follows:**

1. Verbal warning to the child for behavior adjustment. The parent will be notified.
2. Written warning to parent(s) for behavior adjustment.
3. Conference with parent(s), teacher, bus monitor, Head Start Transportation Manager and driver to discuss riding privileges with the option of;
  - a. Parent(s) riding the bus to and from the program with the child.
  - b. Parent(s) providing transportation arrangements.

### **Bus Pick Up**

The bus driver will wait for **3 minutes** for a child to come to the bus. The parent must walk their child to the bus monitor. Parents need to practice Active Supervision at pick up points by keeping children safely in the car while waiting for the bus. We ask that parents let the bus depart the pick-up point prior to parents leaving. Children must wait until the bus stops then walk to the bus.

### **Bus Drop Off**

The bus driver will wait **for 3 minutes** for a parent or authorized designated person (16 years of age or older) to come to the bus for a child to be released from the bus. Staff reserves the right to ask for identification for anyone that a child is released to. If no adult is home, the parent will be required to pick the child up at the classroom after the remainder of the bus route is completed.

### **Parent Drop Off/Pick Up**

Any parent bringing their child to the site must walk with their child into the site while holding the child's hand. The parent must sign the child in with the time he or she arrived. Drop off is no earlier than 5 minutes prior to the beginning of class. Designated waiting areas are available for parents and children arriving more than 5 minutes early. If parents arrive more than 5 minutes early and wish to stay with their children in the parking lot, children and parents must stay in their vehicle until it is time to go into the building. Teachers will welcome children dropped off by parents upon completing attendance.

Any parent picking their child up at the classroom must come in the room and sign the child out. If another adult (16 years of age or older) who is not listed in the child's file will be picking up your child, you must update a new Transportation/Medical Emergency/Child Find Permission form prior to this. Staff reserves the right to ask for identification of any persons picking a child up and that person must be listed on the Transportation/Medical Emergency/Child Find Permission form. Pick up is no earlier than 1:30 p.m. (Part Day Sites) or 2:45 (Full Day Sites).

While staff are actively supervising children being dismissed for the day, we ask that you remain in the building if you need to talk to the teaching staff. Once staff have finished putting children on the bus they will return to the classrooms. This way they can be fully engaged in your conversation. We appreciate all the communication and sharing from our families. Thank you in advance for your patience while waiting to speak to the staff.

**Please do not leave siblings unattended in the car when dropping off/picking up your child.**

### **Child Abandonment Policy**

If a child enrolled in the KIRPC Head Start program is not picked up by an authorized adult by 3:30 p.m. and Head Start staff are unable to contact any individual listed as an emergency contact the Division of Children's Services will be contacted. In the event that the Division of Children's Services is unavailable, law enforcement will be contacted and Head Start staff will report that there is an abandoned child.

### **Impaired Person Policy**

Head Start staff will not willingly release a child to anyone who appears to be impaired due to alcohol, drugs, medications or unknown reasons. In the event that this would occur, staff will request that parent contact someone so that both parent and child remain safe. If the individual has legal rights or guardianship and demands to leave with the child, law enforcement will be notified immediately.



## **Absences**

If your child is ill or will not be attending class, you **must** contact your local transportation provider each time. If you do not notify community services when your child is not riding the bus, transportation privileges may be denied.

Listed below are numbers of these providers and the classrooms they serve.

### **Jasper County Community Services, Inc. 219-866-8071 (Trans)**

- Rensselaer 219-866-8007
- North Jasper 219-987-7075 (Classrooms)

### **Newton County Aging and Community Services, Inc. 219-285-2247 (Trans)**

- Goodland 219-297-3888
- Roselawn 219-345-2011 (Classrooms)

### **Pulaski County Human Services, Inc. 574-946-6500 (Trans)**

- Winamac 574-946-4211
- West Central 219-204-0736 (Classrooms)

## **Field Trips**

1. Adult family members may be invited to field trips if the field trip location allows extra chaperones. Parents who wish to attend will be required to provide their own transportation.
2. We cannot accommodate siblings on field trips.
3. Please dress your child according to the weather on the day of the field trip.
4. Each month a field trip permission slip will be sent home for the parent/guardian to sign and return. Many local trips to the library and park are taken on a regular basis and will be on the monthly calendar. Nature or other walks which are off school grounds will be included on the monthly permission slip. **Permission slips must be returned before the day of the field trip or your child will not be picked up for Head Start the day of the field trip.**

## **Weather/Emergency Cancellations, Delays and Early Dismissals**

In severe weather, or due to other emergencies, Head Start may choose to delay the start of class, cancel the class, or dismiss class early. These decisions are made to provide for the safety of the children, parents and staff involved in the program. Decisions are made at the Grantee level by the Head Start Director.

1. The KIRPC Head Start Director will refer to the public-school cancellations but may also choose to close Head Start if the public schools have not. It may also be decided to keep Head Start classes open even if public schools close.
2. Part Day Sites:
  - a. If the public school has a one-hour delay, Head Start will not have a delay.
  - b. If the public school has a two-hour delay, Head Start has a one-hour delay.
3. Full Day Sites:
  - a. If the public school has a one-hour delay then so does Head Start.
  - b. If the public school has a two-hour delay then so does Head Start.
4. Upon the first staff arriving at the site for the day, a text notification will be sent out to families regarding the cancellation or delay. Some phone service carriers do not accept these messages. In the event that no site staff arrive at the site on the day of closing, the first manager on site will send the Child Plus text to families. Just a reminder that Child Plus texts may not always go through. The delay/cancellation will also be posted on the site Facebook page and/or the KIRPC Head Start Facebook page.

5. The following local radio stations will report any delays, cancellations, or early dismissals. As a parent it is your responsibility to listen for these announcements.

**Jasper County**  
**WRIN AM 1560**  
**WLQI FM 97.7**

**Pulaski County:**  
**WKVI FM 99.3**  
**WNDU Channel 16**  
**TV Cable Channel12**

**Newton County**  
**WRIN AM 1560**  
**WLQI FM 97.7**  
**WIBN 98.1**

There may be occasions where transportation will be cancelled, however class will still be in session. Parents have the right to keep their child at home any time they feel it would not be safe or wise to send them to class on a particular day.

## **General Information**

### **Change of Information**

You must provide Head Start with changes in your living and/or mailing address, phone number/s, place of employment, family status, etc.

### **Court Orders**

If your child abides to a Court Order, please ensure that Head Start has a copy for your child's file. We cannot take an individual's verbal or written instruction. If the Court Order changes, please ensure that Head Start receives an updated copy. It is the parent's responsibility to notify school of any changes. Non-custodial parents may receive student information as it is allowed in court orders and must supply Head Start with a mailing address.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

No person who is registered as a sex offender is allowed at any of the KIRPC Head Start centers. This also includes people who have been charged with sexual offenses and will not be allowed at the program until proof is provided that the charges were dropped. This policy does NOT differ for registered sex offenders who are parents/guardians of a child enrolled in the program. Furthermore, a registered sex offender who is a parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the program will NOT be permitted to attend Head Start activities held off-site. Only in the event of a child illness or injury may a parent or legal guardian who is a registered sex offender be allowed on site. Staff must be notified of anyone who is registered or have charges. All other authorized adults on the Child Find must adhere to this policy. All volunteers and visitors must read and sign the Sex Offender Policy. You can access the following website to view the list of registered sex offenders. <http://www.icrimewatch.net/indiana.php>

### **Body Safety**

Body safety lessons will be presented (**Second Step**, Joey Learns the Touching Rule, guest visitor, etc.) in September or October each year. The topic will be revisited monthly through casual conversations within the classroom. Body safety lessons are to teach children and empower them to identify what is safe and unsafe. An invitation will be sent home to parents to specify when the lesson will be presented and how. Parents are also encouraged to talk about body safety and safe touches regularly at home.

### **Potty Training**

Staff and parents will work together to follow a developmentally appropriate, individualized plan that supports the successful completion of potty training. Head Start will supply pull ups and wipes as necessary.

### **Appropriate Dress for Children**

Parents are asked to have their child wear comfortable shoes, which provide good footing, such as gym shoes. Flip Flops are not permitted at school. Sandals that have a back strap that hold the foot in the shoe are acceptable. During the winter months, if the child wears boots, other shoes should be provided for wear during school. Socks will be required when wearing dress up shoes. We plan to spend a portion of each day outside, providing the temperature is 25 degrees (including wind chill) or above/heat index is not above 100 degrees. Please send your child with mittens, coats, hats, and boots that your child will be able to put on by themselves. Children should be dressed appropriately for their age. We will be painting and playing outside. Please do not send your child in clothes that you do not want to get dirty. Please send an extra set of clothes. Accidents do happen and your child may need to change.

### **Appropriate Dress for Adults**

Parents and volunteers are representatives of the Head Start program and must present a good image to the community as a whole. Parents and volunteers will dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Revealing garments do not present the image the program wants to convey to the community. Parents and volunteers should be fully dressed in appropriate attire during volunteering, home visits, and when getting children on and off the bus. Volunteers should avoid wearing flip flops when children are present to model the same policy we are asking of the children.

### **Personal Possessions**

All children enrolled in the Head Start program have a personal space called "cubbies" for their belongings. Children should not bring toys from home. Exceptions to this rule are color days and show and tell. The dates of these special days will be listed on your **classroom** calendar. No toys of violent nature will be allowed. Head Start is not responsible for lost or broken items. Please label your child's items. Volunteers are also asked to keep purses in the car, office, or a locked cabinet away from children.

### **Video Surveillance**

Cameras are installed at each site in classrooms, offices, some kitchens, and lobby areas. Cameras are only be located in public areas/not in bathrooms. Signs will be posted stating the facility is using video surveillance. The purpose of the cameras may include, but are not limited to: protecting staff when concerns arise; observing children's behaviors, observing classroom routines, observing staff in order to suggest improvements in specific areas of concern; security footage if vandalism occurs or intruders are present. The cameras are on constantly and recording video and audio 24/7. KIRPC Head Start management staff will be the only staff with access to the footage. Management staff will review footage only as needs arise. Footage will not be monitored 24/7.

### **Movies/Screen Time**

Movies/television programs/YouTube will be used minimally and, if utilized, will be used for educational purposes only & incorporated into weekly lesson plans. All programs viewed by the children MUST be age-appropriate (G-rated). Children will not be required to watch the program and staff will offer additional choices of activities. Required room lighting will be maintained at all times. Screen time will be limited to 30 minutes per week per child. Screen time includes time spent on classroom computers/tablets, YouTube &/or movies.

### **Rest Periods**

Rest periods will be offered to the full day classes for a minimum of 30 minutes. Cots and blankets will be provided. Special blankets may be brought from home if the child wishes and will be sent home weekly to be washed. Children are not required to go to sleep but should remain quiet for other children who are sleeping. Quiet activities such as books and puzzles will be provided for non-sleepers.

### **Smoke/Firearms/Drug Free**

1. Head Start strictly prohibits the use of alcohol/drugs/tobacco on program property or during program events (home visits, bus pick up/drop off).
2. Cigarette smoking is prohibited on or around the buses.
3. Head Start prohibits all weapons/firearms on the property or during program events.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. Please do not send gifts, including candy, balloons, flowers, etc. to your child at the Head Start building.
2. Do not send any food or treats to Head Start. This includes no candy at holidays. If you desire to give a gift, we recommend donating a book(s) to your child's classroom library or to the public library in your child's name.
3. The program staff promises to respect you and your child and culture. Please return this respect to the staff, family, and other children.
4. Pesticides will be sprayed when classes are not in session.

### **Confidentiality**

KIRPC Head Start maintains the policy that all records of families and children are safeguarded in locked filing cabinets to assure confidentiality. Access to records of children and families will be granted only to the following persons:

1. Staff who are directly responsible for particular records relative to child and family data.
2. Parents have the right and are encouraged to access their child's file during the time the child is enrolled in the program.
3. Officials and representatives of the Administration of Children, Youth, and Families, CACFP, licensing agents, and program auditors must be granted access to records for the purpose of monitoring, evaluating and improving the overall operation of the program.

Staff will not talk about your child or your family to any other parent, person, or with any outside agencies, without your prior knowledge. As parents, you are obligated to extend the same degree of confidentiality as is staff.

## **Grievance Procedure**

### Parent Complaint Procedures

In the event of a parent complaint, the following procedure should be implemented:

1. The parent(s), with the concern, should first contact their local Head Start program and communicate first with the individual with whom there is a concern/problem. If this brings no resolution, they should submit a written statement to the supervisor of the employee as a next step.
2. Upon receipt of the written complaint, management discuss and follow up with the site staff member involved. The staff member involved must then submit a written statement regarding the situation.
3. If there is still no resolution, a panel is convened to hear the complaint and provide a solution. This panel is comprised of the Head Start Director, the staff member's supervisor, and the Policy Council group (at the next scheduled Policy Council Meeting). If the complaint involves the Head Start Director, then the KIRPC Governing Board Chairperson will be included.
4. This panel will provide a resolution to the complaint, which is accepted by the individual(s) with the complaint.
5. If either of the parties believe the solution to be unfair or would jeopardize the safety of the children, then he/she may take their complaint to the entire KIRPC Governing Board as a final step.