Head Start/Early Head Start
Parent Handbook
2019 - 2020

Broward County Public Schools
Head Start/Early Intervention Department
The School Board of Broward County, Florida

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DISTRIBUTED POLICIES

Accidents:
In the event of an accident or illness of a student while in our care, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. Please keep emergency contact information current. A Student Accident/Illness Form will be completed and faxed to the District’s Safety Department and the Risk Management Department if an accident were to happen.

After School Programs:
Please contact your assigned elementary school to obtain information related to the After School Care Program services. Not all elementary schools offer services for preschool students.

Boundaries:
There are no requirements for children enrolled in HS/EHS to attend a school within their boundary (home school). However, it is recommended that your child attend a school that is closest to where you live or work because the program does not offer transportation services. Once children enter Kindergarten, they must attend their boundary school, which is determined by the home address.

EHS is located at 5 sites within the County: Bethune Elementary in Hollywood, Peters Elementary in Plantation, and Charles Drew Family Resource Center in Pompano Beach, Westwood Heights in Fort Lauderdale, and Gulfstream Early Learning Center in Hallandale, Florida.

Cost:
There is no cost for the program. HS/EHS serves families meeting the federal poverty guidelines.

Mandatory Reporting:
The HS/EHS Program adheres to the School Board of Broward County Policy (SBBC) 5.3 - Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and/or Child Neglect.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

History:
The District's Head Start Program began as an eight-week summer program in 1965. Although the program was being offered in the elementary public schools, the Economic Opportunity Coordinating Group, a local community action agency was the selected grantee overseeing the program. In October of 1976, The School Board of Broward County, FL became the Head Start grantee offering services to 375 families. Over the years, the program has expanded to currently serve 2,040 Head Start and 80 Early Head Start students and their families.

Purpose:
The Head Start/Early Intervention Department administers the District's Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) Program. The direct connection between the HS/EHS Program and the District streamlines the coordination of services and referrals required to meet the needs of HS/EHS children and families enrolled
in the program. Services such as speech/language evaluation, psychological referrals, and counseling are coordinated among programs to ensure families receive referrals and services in a timely manner.

**Head Start (HS):**
Head Start multi-ethnic classes are held at 53 elementary school sites. These sites are selected based on the free/reduced lunch program data and the results of the HS/EHS Community Assessment Report. HS classes follow the 180-day school calendar. The program's hours of operation adhere to each elementary school’s hours.

**Early Head Start (EHS):**
EHS is a program for families serving pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers up to the age of three. The program is a center-based program made up of 10 classrooms located in five Broward County schools. The program is designed to improve the overall developmental progress of children, with an emphasis on increasing families’ knowledge of parenting practices and strengthening the family unit. The program’s objectives are accomplished through services that include developmentally appropriate infant-toddler activities, comprehensive health care, nutrition, and social services for the children and their families. EHS services are offered year-round, with children and families receiving services throughout the summer months.

**Community Partnerships:**
Volunteers and community organizations play an important role in the successful implementation of the HS/EHS Program. Volunteers assist with classroom activities, parent education, and recruitment of other volunteers. Donations of goods, services, and time count toward the 20% non-federal share required in the HS/EHS budget. Business people, high school, college students, parents of HS/EHS children, retired senior citizens, professionals, and members of service clubs and organizations are welcomed and needed in the program. Whether in the classroom or behind the scenes, volunteers and community organizations are a vital part of the program success and to the children and families they serve.

**Disabilities:**
A child’s experiences, from the moment of birth, if not before, affect how the brain develops and their later outlook on the world, ability to learn, form healthy relationships and shape behavior. All program classrooms are fully inclusive learning environments and support the unique school readiness needs and abilities of all enrolled children and families.

**Policy Council:**
The Policy Council and their committees shall: encourage participation in the program; serve as a link to enhance communication among all components of Head Start; facilitate parents’ understanding of options, rights, responsibilities, and opportunities within the Head Start Program; help to plan, coordinate, and organize program activities for parents in conjunction with the staff; ensure the Parent Activity Funds are used to support parent activities; recruit volunteer parents, community residents, and organizations to assist with Head Start needs; assist with the mobilization of community resources; assist in resolving program complaints; work in concert with key management and the governing body to develop, review, and approve or disapprove the following policies and procedures:
✓ All funding applications and amendments,
✓ Procedures describing the implementation of shared decision-making,
✓ Procedures for program planning, philosophy, long and short-range goals and objectives of the program
✓ The composition of the Policy Council and the procedures by which members are chosen
✓ Criteria for defining recruitment selection, and enrollment priorities
✓ The annual self-assessment of programs including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit or findings from the Federal monitoring review,
✓ Program personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies, including standards of conduct of program staff, consultants and volunteers
✓ Written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures
✓ Participate in the recruitment, screening and decisions to hire or terminate the Head Start/Early Head Start Director and Head Start/Early Head Start Specialist and any person who works primarily for the Head Start program.

Parent Committees:
The Parent Committee is required by the Federal government for all Head Start/Early Head Start Programs. All parents are automatically members of the Parent Committee. Parents are chosen to serve on the Policy Council from the Parent Committee(s). Parents from Head Start and Early Head Start should participate in the Parent Committee. There is a Parent Committee Cohort in eight geographical areas around the county. The Parent Committee is organized and run by parents. The Parent Committee must be comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled at the school site. Parent Educators will work together in their cohorts to assist parents with meetings.

Parent Committee Meetings are scheduled by the parents and held regularly at one of the cohort schools. Parents are expected to sign-in when attending all meetings. The meetings are to be conducted by the parents.

A parent can volunteer, report areas of improvement and success to representatives, and assist with planning activities.

The issues discussed could be center-based or program related. Parents are responsible for recording, collecting, and submitting Parent Committee Meeting Minutes to the Cohort Parent Educator.

Transportation:
Transportation is not provided for students in the HS or in the EHS Center-Based Program, as stated on the recruitment information and during the application process. Parents/guardians must make arrangements to bring their child to school and pick them up on a timely basis. To facilitate transportation to the school sites, parents may select the closest site to home, work, or any other site convenient to the parents.
ASSESSMENTS AND SCREENINGS

Screenings/Assessments used to support the HS/EHS Program are:
- BRIGANCE Preschool Screening (HS/EHS) – Developmental Screening
- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (HS/EHS) – Social Emotional Assessment
- Family Assessment (HS/EHS) – Identify and address family needs

Ongoing Assessments used to support the HS/EHS Program are:
- Teaching Strategies GOLD (HS/EHS) – On-going Assessment in Social/Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, Language, and Literacy Development
- Letters/Sounds and Concepts of Print Assessments (HS) – Early Literacy Skills
- Phonological Awareness (HS) – Early Literacy Skills

The HS/EHS Program works collaboratively with parents to identify children’s health and developmental progress. The HS/EHS Performance Standards require that children participating in the program be screened to monitor progress in the areas of development, social-emotional, hearing, vision, height/weight, and dental. These screenings, with the exception of the dental screening, shall occur within the first 45 days upon entering the HS/EHS Program.

The following tools have been selected to ensure compliance with the performance standards screening requirements:

Developmental Screening
The BRIGANCE screening measures a child’s progress over time according to the HS Child Development and Early Childhood Framework. The results enable teachers to plan developmentally appropriate lessons and individualize instruction to improve educational outcomes.

Social-Emotional Assessment
The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) is designed to measure the frequency of target behaviors and to help children develop healthy emotional and social skills. Teachers’ and parents’ DECA scores are compared to create a comprehensive social emotional picture of the child. If concerns are identified, teachers and parents collaborate to encourage further development for social and emotional strengths.

Hearing Screening
Hearing is screened using either the traditional pure tone audiometer method or the Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) Screener. During the OAE screening, a small microphone is placed in the child’s ear. This microphone makes a series of clicks or tones. A microcomputer then measures how well the inner ear is working. This technique represents an opportunity to screen children in a more effective and reliable manner.

Vision Screening
Vision is screened using the Spot Vision Screening Tool. The Spot Vision Screening Tool is a child friendly, objective, accurate vision test that ensures reliability and early detection of refractive errors.

Height/Weight Screening
The weight and height of children are measured to calculate the body mass index.

Speech/Language Screening
The speech is measured to identify any speech or language concerns. Currently the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Fourth Edition (DIAL-4) is being utilized.
Dental Screening
A dental exam is required upon entry to the program. If needed parents are referred to the Florida Department of Health for dental services.

Note: Parents have the option of denying any of the screenings described above. Please contact your child’s teacher or parent educator to complete the Denial of Consent Form.

ATTENDANCE

HS/EHS Performance Standard for Attendance:
Children are required to be in school every day, to arrive to school on time, and to be picked up promptly at dismissal. When a child is not going to be in attendance the parent must contact the school and report the child’s absence.

The HS/EHS Program requires that students’ Average Daily Attendance (ADA) below 85% be reported to the federal government on a monthly basis. Federal regulations and School Board’s Attendance Policy 5.5, govern the HS/EHS Program’s attendance requirements. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, the child’s seat will be considered a vacancy.

- The teacher will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) about the child’s attendance.
- The teacher will inform the PE during the weekly contact about the child’s attendance.
- Head Start staff will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the terms of The Head Start/Early Head Start Parent Certification and Involvement Agreement and to review and discuss the parents' role, responsibilities and the need for compliance to allow the child to continue in the program.
- If the problem is not resolved, the teacher and HS Family Services staff will meet with the parent/guardian and a school administrator. At that time the parent/guardian will receive an absenteeism letter, referral for counseling, referral to childcare agencies if needed. The goal is to reinforce the previous steps, revise a plan of action and/or interventions, if needed, and set time limit for compliance.
- If parent does not comply with the time limit, appropriate action will be taken, which may include:
  ➢ Absenteeism Letter #2
  ➢ Absenteeism Letter #3
  ➢ After the 3rd absenteeism letter possible removal of the child from the Head Start program

The same process will take place for late pick-ups and tardies.

Early Sign-Outs:
When students are signed out early on an ongoing basis, their educational progress may be negatively impacted. The HS/EHS Program strongly encourages parents to ensure their student is in school for the full day.

The HS/EHS Program will follow the established procedures for early release for children enrolled in elementary schools, that ensure all students are treated consistently. Students shall not be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines that it is an emergency, or the student has a medical/dental appointment that cannot be reasonably scheduled at another time.
Excused Absences:
Students must be in school unless the absence has been excused. For reasons 1-5 listed below, parents must report the absence the day before, the day of, or within two school days following the absence, or the absence will be considered unexcused. Please note that any absence is unexcused until the school receives a phone call or a note from the parent(s)/guardian(s). Some situations will require written documentation from a private physician or public health unit. Absences may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Illness of student
2. Illness of an immediate family member
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holidays of the student’s specific faith
5. Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency
6. Special event, such as important public functions, conferences, state/national competitions, as well as exceptional cases of family need (Students must get permission from the principal/designee at least five days in advance.)
7. Scheduled doctor or dentist appointments (The parent must notify the school of the date and appointment time prior to the absence/release time.)

Students having, or suspected of having, a communicable disease or infestation which can be transmitted, are to be excluded from school and are not allowed to return to school until they no longer present a health hazard (Florida Statute 1003.22). Examples of communicable diseases and infestations include, but are not limited to, fleas, head lice, ringworm, impetigo, conjunctivitis (pink eye), and scabies. For more information please see Broward Schools [https://www.browardschools.com/page/34800](https://www.browardschools.com/page/34800). Students are allowed a maximum of five days excused absence for an infestation of head lice.

Late Pick-Up:
It is important that the child be picked up promptly at the school’s dismissal time. In the event of an emergency, please notify the school as soon as possible. Young children may become anxious if their routine is disrupted. If parent(s)/guardian(s) are unable to pick up their child at time of dismissal, after school care services should be arranged.

Tardiness:
In accordance with the SBBC Attendance Policy 5.5, the HS/EHS Program will follow each school’s established procedures for admitting students who have been tardy. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and can have a negative impact on student achievement.

Student tardiness is considered excused if parents call the school, if they or an appropriate adult accompanies their child to school, or if they provide a note to the school. All other tardiness is considered unexcused unless the principal determines that there are extenuating circumstances. Excessive tardiness will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Parents of EHS Center-based students who drop off their child late will need photo identification and a Head Start staff member will escort the child to class.

Unexcused Absences:
If absences are not excused, as defined in the previous section, the absences are considered unexcused. Students without a completed Certificate of Immunization indicating compliance with the current required schedule of immunizations will not be allowed to attend classes until this document is provided or a waiver is obtained. Students who receive the first shot in a series of immunizations, but who are late obtaining
subsequent shots, will be given a three-day grace period after which they will be excluded from school and resulting absences will be considered unexcused.

When parents have difficulty meeting the terms of the Preschool Family Agreement Form and/or the SBBC Attendance Policy i.e. unexcused absences, tardiness, failure to pick up child promptly after school, the program will make an effort to support the parents to allow the child to continue in the program. The process outlined below will be followed:

The teacher will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) about the child’s unexcused absences.

The teacher will inform the Parent Educator about the child’s attendance after completion of Step 1.

The HS/EHS Parent Educator will contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the terms of The Preschool Family Agreement and review and discuss the parents' role, responsibilities and the need for compliance to allow the child to continue in the program. If the absences result from temporary family problems that affect a child’s regular attendance, the program must initiate appropriate family support procedures for all children with four or more consecutive unexcused absences. These procedures must include home visits or other direct contact with the child’s parents. Contacts with the family must emphasize the benefits of regular attendance, while at the same time remaining sensitive to any special family circumstances influencing attendance patterns. All contacts with the child’s family, as well as special family support service activities provided by program staff, must be documented. A plan of action and intervention is developed and documented on the Prekindergarten Conference Form (teacher) and in the family folder (Parent Educator).

If the problem is not resolved, the teacher and HS/EHS Family Services Staff will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and a school administrator. The goal is to reinforce the performance standard, revise plan of action and/or interventions, if needed, and set a timeline for compliance. These efforts must be documented on a Prekindergarten Conference Form and in the family folder.

If a parent does not comply with the agreed upon timeline, appropriate action will be taken. The actions may include referral for counseling, referral to childcare agencies, and/or removal of the child from the HS/EHS Program.

**CURRICULUM**

All children enrolled in the HS/EHS Program are provided with a learning environment encompassing varied complexities of experiences to help them develop socially, cognitively, physically, and emotionally in a manner appropriate to their age, individual interest, temperament, language, cultural background and stage of development.

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards provide the HS teachers, and EHS teacher assistants, with knowledge of what preschool children are expected to know and be able to do in the domains of Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge, and Physical Health and Development.

The curricula used in the HS Program to teach these skills include:

- *The Creative Curriculum System for Preschool*
- Conscious Discipline
- Feeling Buddies Self Regulation Toolkit: Conscious Discipline

The curricula used in the EHS Program to teach these skills include:
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
Academics
Head Start/Early Intervention

- Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos
- Conscious Discipline
- Parents as Teachers Curriculum (home-based)

Conferences and Home Visits:
Parents are encouraged to stay involved in their child’s learning. Teachers will conduct a minimum of two parent conferences during the school year. In addition, teachers will hold additional parent conferences at the request of a parent/guardian or as needed. Teachers are also required to make two home visits for each child, in addition to the two teacher-parent conferences required under CFR 1203.24(a)(7).

Daily Classroom Components:

HS Daily Schedule Sample
Breakfast
Group Meeting (Planning; Math, Science, & Literacy Content; Conscious Discipline activities)
Interest Areas
Read-aloud
Lunch
Outdoor Activities
Read-aloud
Rest time
Snack
Toothbrushing
Group Meeting (Shared Writing, Music and Movement, Review of the Day)
Interest Areas/Departures
Small Group (implemented throughout the day)
*Times and order may vary at each school. Please contact your child’s teacher to obtain a copy of the daily schedule with times.

EHS Daily Schedule Sample
Arrival/Toileting
Breakfast
Tooth brushing
Circle/Story Time/Toileting
Outdoor Activities
Wash-up/ Snack
Centers/ Small Group/ Toileting
Lunch/Wash-up
Rest Time
Snack/ Review/Toileting
Dismissal
*Times and order may vary at each school. Please contact your child’s teacher to obtain a copy of the daily schedule with times.
Rest Time:
A maximum of 1 hour is allocated for rest time. Rest/sleep time for infants and toddlers is individualized according to each child’s needs. Alternative activities are provided for children who wake up early and also for those who choose not to nap.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family Engagement:
The HS/EHS Program acknowledges that the parent is the most important influence in a child’s development. Therefore, the program gears its services to support families in nurturing the development of their children, to enhance their capacity to achieve their own goals and aspirations, and to influence the quality of life in their communities.

Home Visits:
Family Service staff make one home visits per year to assess family’s needs and determine how the program can best support the attainment of each family’s goals. A mid-year contact will also be made to assess if family needs have changed or additional services are required. In addition, quarterly parent group trainings are scheduled to assist parents in supporting their child’s school readiness goals related to literacy, math, and social-emotional development. Staff is available to help families throughout the year and will conduct additional home visits if necessary.

Parent Committee:
All HS/EHS Parents are members of the Parent Committee established at one of the cohort schools. The Parent Committee, in conjunction with the Teacher, and Family Services Staff, helps determine what activities will be offered at the school throughout the year. Parents are also encouraged to participate in their child’s school Parent Teacher Association (PTA)/Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Parent Participation:
Parents are encouraged to participate in the classroom and events organized by the HS/EHS Program. In addition, parents are invited to participate in the HS/EHS Parent Committee at each site. At the quarterly committee meetings parents receive program updates and provide input on program services and activities.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND NUTRITION

Emergency Procedures:

Family Health Insurance:
If your child needs health insurance, please contact the Florida KidCare program, which provides eligible uninsured children under age 19 a full array of comprehensive health benefits. You can contact them by
calling 954-467-8737 or online at https://www.floridakidcare.org/. If you have adults in your household who are in need of health insurance, please call 1-800-318-2596 or online at https://www.healthcare.gov/.

**Food Allergies:**
As per Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards, all individual child food allergies must be posted prominently where staff can view wherever food is served. Parent/Guardian permission will be obtained before posting. Children with food allergies **MUST** provide a note from their health care provider. Appropriate substitutions will be made to the menu to accommodate children with special dietary needs.

**Healthy and Nutritional Meals/Snacks:**
Head Start Performance Standard 1302.44 requires that toddlers and preschool children share the same menu. Infants’ diets and meal times are individualized according to each child’s needs. The HS/EHS Program adheres to the nutritional service guidelines followed by the School Board of Broward County in accordance with the National School Lunch Act. All meals meet the USDA meal patterns and serving size requirements. Portion sizes are measured to comply with the USDA requirements based on the age of the child. All children receive a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack. **Food from home is not permitted.**

**Medication:**
If your child is taking medication during school hours, your doctor must complete and sign the *Broward County Public Schools Authorization for Medication Form*. This includes over the counter medications. The parent/guardian must bring the medication to the school. The medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child name, the name of the medication, and amount to be given. For more information, please refer to SBBC Policy 6305.

**Required Health Documents:**
1. Original Comprehensive Medical Examination (DH Form 3040) with lead testing and including the following results within the last 12 months:
   - Unclothed Physical Examination
   - Hearing Screening
   - Height and Weight
   - Anemia Blood Testing (Hct or Hgb) with results
   - Blood Pressure
   - Health & Developmental History
   - Vision Screening
   - Developmental Assessment
2. Original up-to-date Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH Form 680)
3. Varicella Vaccine required or documentation of disease (chicken pox)
4. MMR #2 must be given prior to child entering kindergarten.
5. One Hib required if child is less than 4 years, 11 months of age.
6. Child’s Medicaid Card, if applicable

**Additional Registration Requirements:**
- Proof of Residence (2 required)
- Emergency Contact Phone Numbers (2 required)
- Proof of Dental Exam
Sick Children:
Sick children may not come to school. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be called to pick up their child immediately. The child will be isolated until the parent arrives to pick him/her up. This is for the protection of the child as well as the protection of other children and teachers. Upon recommendation of the Committee on the Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child should not be brought to school if and when any of the following exists:

- Fever (100.5 degrees and above within the last 24 hours)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Any symptoms of childhood disease, such as Scarlet fever, Measles, Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, Flu, or any infectious and contagious diseases
- Sore Throat
- Croup
- Cloudy or green runny noses, persistent cough
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection, boils, ringworms, or impetigo
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or other eye infections (all eye infections are contagious; your child must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
  - Symptoms can include any or all of the following: redness, watery eyes, itchy eyes, burning, eye discharge, and swollen eyelid
- Head lice

Please inform the school if your child has any health conditions such as:

- Allergic reaction (food, insect bites, etc.)
- Asthma
- Seizures
- Sickle Cell anemia
- Any other health conditions

Toilet Training:
Children who are enrolled in the HS/EHS Program are not required to be toilet trained to participate in the program.
Who to Contact

Main Number (754) 321-1961

For questions/concerns not listed please contact Broward County Schools Head Start Department at the number listed.

Head Start Family Services          Cherell Branch-McKenzie
Head Start Curriculum               Ivette Concepcion-Gonzalez
Early Head Start Services           Liz Glaid
Health and Nutrition                Kathryn Clark
Enrollment                          Kenia Cocco
Compliance                          Melissa Miner
Head Start/Early Head Start Program

2019 – 2020 School Year


Receipt Form

Parent Name __________________________________________ (Print name)

Parent Signature: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________

Student’s Name: __________________________________________ (Print name)

School: __________________________________________

Please complete and return to your assigned Parent Educator.