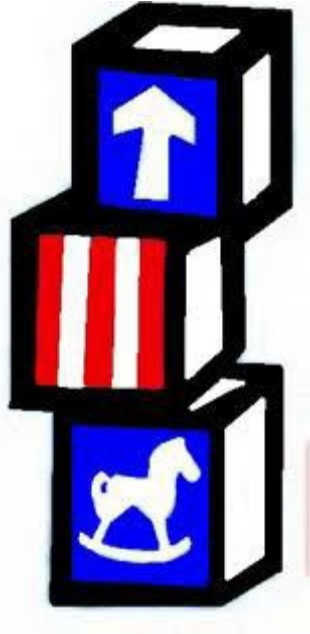




Head Start & Early Head Start 2026-2027



Parent Calendar/Handbook

Including Agency & Community Resource Information

Serving Wright County & Western Hennepin County

Items and events in the calendar/handbook are subject to change.
We will notify families of any changes as they arise. We appreciate your patience and flexibility.

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We will notify families of any changes as they arise. We appreciate your patience and flexibility.

Directory

Wright County Community Action, Inc

130 Division Street West, PO Box 787, Maple Lake, MN 55358

Phone: 320-963-6500

Fax: 320-963-5745

Email: headstart@wccaweb.com

website: www.wccaweb.com

- Dara Smida, Head Start/EHS Director Ext 228
- Lexi Peterson, Family Services Coordinator Ext 235
- Elizabeth Natale, Nutrition Specialist Ext 239

- Jennifer VandeVord, Inclusion Coordinator Ext 229
- Lisa Devitt, Education Coordinator Ext 236
- Susan Packard, Coach Mentor Ext 242

- Kimberly Zeidler, Health Coordinator Ext 234
- Erica Mielke, EHS Manager Ext 237
- Jenn Larva, ERSEA Coordinator Ext 243

Annandale Center

St. John's Lutheran Church
331 Harrison St. W.
Annandale, MN 55302
Room: 320-274-3318
Cell: 763-957-9927

annanhs@wccaweb.com

Buffalo Center

Wright Technical Center
1405 3rd Ave. NE
Buffalo, MN 55313

Buffalo 1: Room 101
Room: 763-684-0027
Cell: 763-957-9662
buffalo1hs@wccaweb.com

Buffalo 2: Room 226
Room: 763-682-1862
Cell: 763-898-9275
buffalo2hs@wccaweb.com

Delano Center

Light of Chirst Lutheran Church
3976 County Line Road
Delano, MN 55328
Room: 763-972-8120
Cell: 763-923-9949

delanohs@wccaweb.com

Howard Lake Center

St. John's Lutheran Church
625 12th Ave. South
Howard Lake, MN 55349
Room: 320-543-2955
Cell: 763-898-9242

howardlakehs@wccaweb.com

Monticello Center

Eastview Education Center
9375 Fenning Ave. NE
Monticello, MN 55362

Room 206: 763-272-2922, Cell: 763-957-9698, montihs206@wccaweb.com
Room 207: 763-272-2983, Cell: 763-898-8240, montihs207@wccaweb.com
Room 208: 763-272-2969, Cell: 763-334-8582, montihs208@wccaweb.com
Room 209: 763-272-2988, Cell: 763-923-9030, montihs209@wccaweb.com
Room 210: 763-272-2910, Cell: 763-334-8721, montihs210@wccaweb.com

Preschool Family Advocates

Annandale/Howard Lake	612-221-1871
Buffalo	763-957-9071
Delano/Montrose	763-485-9050
Monti 206/Otsego	612-490-2718
Monti 207/208/209/210	763-501-2332

Montrose Center

Montrose Early Education Building
115 2nd St. South
Montrose, MN 55363
Room: 763-682-8478
Cell: 763-923-9780

montrosehs@wccaweb.com

Otsego Center

Kaleidoscope Charter School
7525 Kalland Ave. NE
Otsego, MN 55301

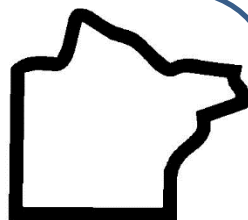
Cell: 763-923-9233

otsegohs@wccaweb.com

Early Head Start Home Visitors

EHS 1	Erica	763-614-6711
EHS 2	Jenn	763-614-6367
EHS 3	Lisa	763-614-4734
EHS 4	Martha	763-614-4678
EHS 5	Tonya	763-614-0126

WCCA Mission Statement



Working in partnership with the community to empower residents to improve their physical, social and economic well-being.



Early Head Start Mission Statement

The mission of EHS is to support healthy prenatal outcomes and enhance the intellectual, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers to promote later success in school and life.

Early Head Start Program Option

We offer the Early Head Start program to families with infants and toddlers, or families expecting a baby. Early Head Start encourages the role of the parent as their child's first and most important teacher, providing strategies that help parents prepare children for school and promote their academic success.

Families receive weekly 90-minute home visits to support and strengthen parent-child relationships and develop school readiness skills. Home visitors also target health, dental, social-emotional and nutrition services; prenatal support for expectant families; and referrals to other community resources as needed. Early Head Start also recognizes the need for social development outside the home.

We offer socialization events twenty-two times a year to allow parents and children the opportunity to build relationships with other families in the program.

Head Start Preschool Mission Statement

To ensure school readiness, WCCA Head Start helps income eligible families develop social skills. Social skills refer to the child's every day effectiveness in dealing with both his/her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. They take into account the interrelatedness of cognitive and intellectual development, physical and mental health, and nutritional needs.

Key principles of Head Start include the following:

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



You can review the center's Child Care Program Plan by asking your child's teacher.

Head Start Preschool Program (Children 3-5 years old)

<u>Location</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>License Capacity</u>
Annandale	Monday-Thursday	8:30 am-2:30 pm	20
Buffalo	Monday-Friday	8:00 am-2:30 pm	20 per classroom
Delano	Monday-Thursday	8:30 am-2:30 pm	18
Howard Lake	Monday-Thursday	8:30 am-2:30 pm	20
Monticello	Monday-Friday	8:00 am-2:10 pm	17-20 per classroom
Montrose	Monday-Thursday	8:30 am-2:30 pm	20
Otsego	Monday-Thursday	8:00 am-2:00 pm	20

WCCA HEAD START 2026–2027 SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

WCCA Head Start and Early Head Start school readiness goals are designed to help children and their families prepare for success in school. The school readiness goals align with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF): Ages Birth to Five, the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) and the local school districts' expectations for children entering kindergarten. WCCA Head Start's school readiness goals are organized by the five broad domains within the ELOF.

Children will improve their readiness for kindergarten and demonstrate age-appropriate progress across the domain of language and literacy.

Children will improve their readiness for kindergarten and demonstrate age-appropriate progress across the domain of cognition.

Children will improve their readiness for kindergarten and demonstrate age-appropriate progress across the domain of approaches to learning.

Children will improve their readiness for kindergarten and demonstrate age-appropriate progress across the domain of perceptual, motor and physical development.

Children will improve their readiness for kindergarten and demonstrate age-appropriate progress across the domain of social-emotional development.

Child Development/IDEA Statement

We continually monitor the development of all children in our care through ongoing observation and recording and we want the best outcomes for all children. We are a primary referral source for early intervention under federal IDEA special education law. We are required to refer a child in our program who has been identified as having developmental concerns or a risk factor that warrants a referral as soon as possible, but in no case more than seven days after the identification. While this is a mandate, we want to keep open communication with parents and caregivers about their child and any concerns we have before a referral is made. We can assist the parent with the referral or partner with them in the referral process.

September/septiembre 2026

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Head Start Preschool: School Readiness & Education



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is important for your child's learning and success. We expect all children to attend class every day. If your child will be absent for any reason, please send a message through the Learning Genie app explaining the reason for the absence. If we do not receive notification, a staff member will contact your family each day your child is absent. If we do not hear from you for two consecutive days, a staff member will attempt a home visit to check in with your family. Please note that if a child does not attend Head Start for 30 consecutive calendar days, their enrollment slot will be considered vacant and will be offered to another child.



DAILY SCHEDULE

A typical day includes time for individual, small-group, and large-group activities. Children explore learning centers, practice social skills, and learn classroom routines. The class will go outside daily, weather permitting. The schedule also includes time for meals, snack, tooth brushing, and rest. By engaging in learning activities and meaningful play, your child will get the skills needed to be successful in kindergarten.



COMMUNICATION

Head Start uses the **Learning Genie** app to communicate with families. Through the app, you can receive newsletters, flyers, messages, and important updates. The app also allows you to log your in-kind volunteer hours. You may also contact your child's classroom or Family Advocate by phone if you have questions or need assistance. Staff may communicate with families by email or by sending information home in your child's backpack. Please be sure your child's teachers and Family Advocate always have your current phone number and email address, so you don't miss important information.



HOME VISITS & CONFERENCES

Your child's teacher will make at least 2 visits to your home during the program year and you will attend 2 conferences at the center. These will give you a chance to discuss your child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. Family Advocates will check-in at least twice a month and will conduct home visits and conferences as needed. Please feel free to call anytime if you have questions or concerns.



APPROPRIATE DRESS

Children should always wear comfortable play clothes in which they can get messy. Please send an extra set of clothes that can stay in your child's cubby. Have your child wear sturdy shoes for running (no sandals please!) If weather permits, children play outside. Make sure your child is dressed for the weather every day including coat, hat, mittens, snow pants, and boots if needed.



TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

We will help you and your child prepare for moving on to kindergarten. At school we will work on social-emotional skills, school readiness skills, and self-help skills. We will let you know your school's kindergarten registration dates and send activity ideas to do at home. You can help by making sure your child's immunizations are up to date, registering your child for kindergarten, and getting on a regular bedtime schedule.



Fieldtrips

We may take field trips or provide on-site programs, as funding allows. Staff will obtain written parental permission ahead of time. We will not have your child participate in any research, experimental procedures, or public relations activities without your permission.

October/octubre 2026

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Early Head Start



COMMUNICATION

Weekly communication between parents and home visitors will be done via text and phone calls. EHS will use the Learning Genie app to send flyers, socialization invites, Friday Facts, and to log in-kind.



SOCIALIZATION

Socialization events are offered to Early Head Start families twenty-two times per program year. Socialization serves to enhance your child's social-emotional development. Children have opportunity to explore learning activities with their parents/guardian and meet new friends. We also offer opportunities for parents to connect with guest speakers and discuss various topics.



HOME VISITS

Your family will receive weekly home visits, forty-six weeks throughout the program year. If you or your child is sick or otherwise unable to complete your home visit, please call your home visitor immediately. Any canceled visit must be re-scheduled and made-up within two weeks of the canceled visit or by the end of the program year.



TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL

Your child's move from Early Head Start to Head Start Preschool begins at 30 months. During your regular home visits, you and your home visitor will talk through key transition topics. You'll also be able to tour the preschool classroom and join a family engagement event to learn more about the program. Before your child starts Head Start Preschool, you'll meet with the Family Advocate, Preschool Teacher, and your Early Head Start Home Visitor to complete enrollment steps.

Curriculum and Assessments

HEAD START PRESCHOOL



Creative Curriculum: The Creative Curriculum is a research-based program that is hands-on. Children learn through purposeful play and deep-dive studies. Our teachers use intentional exploration to build your child's math, reading, and science skills.

Teaching Strategies Gold: Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic, ongoing assessment system that tracks your child's development through everyday classroom moments. By capturing photos, work samples, and observational notes during play, teachers map growth across 38 key developmental milestones to tailor daily learning exactly to your child's needs.



EARLY HEAD START

Partners for a Healthy Baby is a research-based home visiting curriculum that supports expectant parents and families with children from birth through age three. It focuses on the two-generation approach, combining lessons on family development, maternal & family health, caring for baby, and baby's development.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP 2025): The DRDP outlines growth from infancy through kindergarten. The DRDP is administered in the child's home environment through home visitor and parent observation and examples of children's work. Children are assessed in five areas of development, four times per year, to determine progress and growth.

November/noviembre 2026

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Weather Closing Guidelines

Occasionally, there may be weather conditions that cause WCCA Head Start Preschool locations to close for the day, start late, or close early.

When temperature, wind chill or road conditions are of concern, WCCA will follow local school district closings and delays whenever possible.

In the case of a center closing, late start or early release due to weather, you will receive notification via Learning Genie, text, e-mail, or a call from your child's teacher. Information will also be posted at:

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/school-closings/>



Announcements of closings and cancellations are listed as WCCA HEAD START on:

WEB: <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/school-closings/>

TELEVISION: [WCCO 4 News](#)

RADIO: [WCCO 830 AM](#)

If the Governor calls a statewide weather-related school closing, all Head Start locations **will be closed for the day.**



We urge parents and caregivers to have back-up childcare arrangements in place when severe weather is threatening, as your child may arrive home earlier than usual.

December/diciembre 2026

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Transportation



WCCA provides transportation at most Head Start Preschool locations. Transportation is provided to as many children as possible, based on desired pick up/drop off locations and bus routes. Unfortunately, we are not able to guarantee transportation for all families.

General Transportation Guidelines

- Notify your child's teacher or the ERSEA Coordinator as soon as possible to make requests for changes. You will need to fill out a Change in Transportation Form. Allow at least **3 days** for the changes to take effect.
- Contact your child's teacher and family advocate on Learning Genie as soon as you know your child will be absent from Head Start.
- We will only release your child to authorized individuals listed in Child Plus. If you would like to make changes to your child's Emergency Contacts, please contact your child's teacher, family advocate or the WCCA Head Start office as soon as possible to fill out a Change form.
- There can only be one pick-up or drop-off location Monday through Thursday/Friday. We cannot accommodate alternate days/locations.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

Annandale and Howard Lake Centers	Delano and Montrose Centers	Monticello Center	Buffalo Center
M & M Bus Service	Stahlke Bus Service	Hoglund Transportation	Vision Transportation
(320) 274-8313	(763) 972-3991	(763) 295-3604	(763) 682-3232

PICK-UP

1. **Pick-up will be at the same place every day.** Any change must be requested in writing at least **3 days** in advance.
2. Watch for the bus. Have your child ready at least **10 to 15 minutes** before your scheduled arrival time, as the route time may fluctuate from day to day based on children's attendance. **The bus driver will wait at least 30 seconds and a maximum of 1 minute.**
3. All pick-ups are made in driveway or curbside of your home.
4. A caregiver must accompany their child to the bus. The bus monitor will help the child into their safety harness.
5. Your child must be signed onto the bus each day.
6. If your child misses the bus, a caregiver must provide transportation to the center, walk with the child into the center and sign the child in.

DROP-OFF

1. **Drop-off will be at the same place every day.**
2. All drop-offs are made in the driveway or curbside of your home.
3. Caregivers must be home at drop-off time and meet the bus. **The bus driver will wait at least 30 seconds and a maximum of 1 minute.**
4. A caregiver must come out to the bus to meet the child.
5. Your child must be signed off the bus each day.
6. If the authorized caregiver is not at the drop-off location, the child will be returned to the center. **If we are unable to make arrangements with anyone listed on the Child Emergency Contacts & Authorization form, staff will contact child protection or law enforcement.**

BASIC SAFETY RULES ON THE BUS

To ensure safety, the bus driver, bus monitor and/or teacher will take the following steps to address behavior concerns:

1. Ask the child to stop the inappropriate behavior.
2. Let the parent(s) know about the behavior concern.
3. Involve parent(s) in setting up a plan to help their child ride the bus safely.
4. If a child is unable to ride the bus safely, parents will be asked to make alternative transportation arrangements.

Bus evacuation drills are completed three times per year at each Head Start classroom.



January/enero 2027

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Parent and family engagement in Head Start is about building relationships with families that support family well-being; supporting strong relationships between parents and their children; and nurturing ongoing learning and development for both parent and children. This results in children who are healthy and ready for school.



Head Start Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes	
Family Well-Being	Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.
Positive Parent-Child Relationships	Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.
Families as Lifelong Educators	Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
Families as Learners	Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.
Family Engagement in Transitions	Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including Early Head Start to Head Start, Head Start to other learning environments, and Head Start to kindergarten through elementary school.
Family Connections to Peers & Community	Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal and informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.
Families as Advocates and Leaders	Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

- Each Head Start Preschool family receives at least two home visits and two conferences throughout the year with their child's teacher. Family Advocates will also complete a minimum of 4 home visits or conferences with families throughout the program year.
- Early Head Start families receive a home visit each week. During these visits, you will have the opportunity to discuss your family's strengths and needs, and to complete an assessment designed to measure the outcomes described above. We use this information to design our services to help all families achieve growth in the above areas.
- Through our family partnership process, our staff will spend some time with each family to discuss their hopes and dreams for the future and provide resources and/or referrals to assist in achieving those hopes and dreams.
- We offer parent meetings and family engagement events each month for all families. These events give you the opportunity to connect with local resources and make decisions about your child's program.
- We offer parents the opportunity to learn about the Conscious Discipline parenting curriculum. This curriculum helps improve parenting knowledge and skills, increase parents' ability to manage their own emotions and respond to children's challenging behaviors, and improve emotional management and behavior in children.
- WCCA has a Policy Council made up of elected Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start parents. The Policy Council meets once a month to review program reports, receive updates on individual classrooms and programs, and make decisions that impact the Head program. This is a great chance for parents to develop leadership skills, network with other parents, advocate for children, and represent the voice of the children and parents in the program.

February/febrero 2027

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Parent, Family, and Community Engagement



WCCA Head Start has always recognized the importance of parent engagement in the success of our program. After all, parents are their children's first and most important teachers. We encourage all family members to GET INVOLVED in the WCCA Head Start program.

Volunteers are always needed at Head Start. We have a variety of ways you can be involved in the program through volunteering your time and talents! Whether you have a few minutes or a few hours, the value you can bring to the WCCA Head Start program and the families we serve is immeasurable!

Whenever you volunteer your time or donate materials to Head Start, be sure to fill out a Family Engagement Record, or record your time in the Learning Genie app. Your time is a valuable contribution to our program; we get credit for matching our volunteer hours to federal funding. Your child's teacher, family advocate or home visitor can explain in-kind in more detail.

Children are learning all the time, not only through active instruction, but also at home and in the community, interacting with family and friends.

Activities you do at home with your child are important to help connect what we learn in Head Start with what you do at home. Families will receive a monthly newsletter to give you some ideas of things you can do at home with your child to support his/her learning.



Use the Learning Genie app to document time you spend working with your child at home that supports goals you and the teacher or home visitor set for your child and your family.



Don't forget to exercise your right to vote in local, state and national elections!

- You may register to vote in Minnesota if you are 18 years or older, a citizen of the United States, and have lived in Minnesota at least 20 days immediately prior to the election.
- If you are not registered to vote prior to election day, you can register at your polling place on election day. Visit www.sos.mn.gov for a list of items to bring with you for proof of residence.

For more information on voting and elections:

Minnesota Secretary of State	651-215-1440	www.sos.mn.gov
Wright County	763-682-7873	www.wrightcountymn.gov
Hennepin County	612-348-3000	www.hennepincounty.gov

March/marzo 2027

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NUTRITION



The food we choose to fuel our bodies and the activity we get affects how we feel today and in the future. Your children are no different! At Head Start, good nutrition and physical activity contribute to a healthy learning environment. Your Head Start child will learn to try new foods, learn where their food comes from, learn how to eat family style, learn about proper table manners, and learn how to socialize during meals.

HEAD START PARTICIPATES IN CACFP

When your child comes to the Head Start preschool center or Early Head Start socialization, they will receive healthy foods provided by the CACFP program. CACFP stands for the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides WCCA with reimbursement for meals and snacks. CACFP also requires that we follow their meal pattern requirements to assure that children receive nutritious foods. This includes 1% milk, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and meat/meat alternatives. CACFP is a government-funded program that does not discriminate.

Standard/Full Civil Rights Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

April/abril 2027

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Health Requirements:

- **Well Child Physical Exam** is **required** to be turned in within **30 days** of starting the program and annually thereafter. This includes blood pressure, height, weight, hearing and vision screening, and lead level documentation.
- **Head Start preschool (age 3-5)** requires an annual exam. **Early Head Start (birth –3)** follows the Minnesota EPSDT Schedule (2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24 & 30 months)
- **Immunizations** are **required to be turned in before** the child starts the program. Required immunizations are based on age. Head Start can access immunizations through the Minnesota Immunization Information Connection (MIIC) database. Notify Head Start if you object to this.
- A **Dental Exam** is **required** to be turned in within **90 days** of starting the program.

Health Services:

- WCCA has MNSure navigators on staff to assist families in applying for health insurance through MNSure.
- Dental Days with Children's Dental Services are offered multiple times during the year to complete dental exams and treatment.
- Tooth brushing and oral health education are provided daily at the centers, and regularly on EHS home visits.

Medication:

- Prescription medication prescribed by a doctor or dentist will be administered at Head Start only when necessary and only with a completed Permission to Administer Medication form on file.

Pets:

- Head Start teachers may choose to have pets as part of the learning environment. You will be informed if your child's classroom has a pet and what type of animal it is. Please let your child's teacher know if your child has an animal allergy.

Ill Children:

- Ill children will be excluded from Head Start.
- If your child becomes ill at Head Start, he/she will rest on a cot with a blanket, isolated from the other children until picked up. You or the designated contact person will be called to pick the child up.
- Please let your home visitor know if you or your child is ill. For the protection of the home visitor and other children, the visit will be rescheduled.
- If your child has been exposed to a diagnosed contagious illness or condition in the classroom, an infectious disease notice will be sent home with your child and posted in the classroom.
- For respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, please refer to the Respiratory Illness Plan.

Safety and Medical Emergencies:

- All WCCA Head Start center staff are currently certified in First Aid, Infant/Child CPR, Obstructed Airways, and AED use.
- Emergency Procedures and numbers are posted in all centers.
- In situations requiring emergency medical attention, your child (accompanied by a Head Start employee) will be taken by ambulance to the nearest medical facility. The parent(s) or designated contact person will be called.
- Head Start will report injuries at Head Start requiring emergency care to the DCYF Licensing Division at 651-431-6015.
- In case of emergency, the following limited list may be used as sources for medical care for your family:

Buffalo Hospital	763-682-1212
Centra Care Hospital, Monticello	763-295-2945
St. Cloud Hospital	320-251-2700
Ridgeview Medical Center, Waconia	952-442-2191

Safety Drills:

- Preschool classrooms are in secure buildings. Your child's teacher will give you specific information on procedures for entering the building.
- Emergency Preparedness Plans for each site are updated annually, as required by MN DCYF.
- Emergency Procedures and numbers are posted in all centers.
- Fire drills are conducted monthly.
- Tornado drills are conducted four times per year—in September, March, April and May.
- Lockdown drills are conducted every other month.
- Bus evacuation drills are conducted 3 times per year.

WCCA Head Start's Health & Safety Policies & Procedures have been approved by our health consultant. Complete policies are available upon request at the center or the main office.

May/mayo 2027

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What is . . . Early Childhood Mental Health?



Mental Health Services

Early Childhood Mental Health is a child's ability to experience warm and responsive relationships with caregivers, create relationships with others, explore and learn, communicate in play and express and regulate emotion. Children who have healthy mental health have a positive quality of life and can function well at home, in school, and in their communities.

A Child's Physical and Mental Health are Both Very Important

Classroom Consultation:

A mental health consultant will visit each Head Start preschool classroom throughout the year. During the visit, the consultant will provide support and ideas to teaching staff on how to help your child grow socially and emotionally. The Mental Health Consultant may model strategies within the classroom for both teachers and children in order to assist children in their social/emotional development.

Early Head Start will have family check-in days three times per year. A mental health consultant will attend a socialization to observe the children, visit with parents about concerns, and answer questions about social and emotional development.

Curriculum:

Mental wellness is further enhanced in our program through **Second Step**, a fun, research-based curriculum to help instill social-emotional skills in children; and **Conscious Discipline**, a comprehensive emotional intelligence and classroom management system that integrates all domains of learning.

Staff will share more about the Conscious Discipline parent curriculum at Head Start preschool's monthly family engagement events and Early Head Start home visits and socializations.

Consultation Visit:

A mental health referral is available to your child at any time throughout the program year. Speak with your classroom teacher, family advocate or home visitor for additional information.

Confidentiality:

Your child's records are confidential, as required by law. Records cannot be released without your written consent, except if required by law.

Support for a child's physical health includes:

- Nutritious food
- Adequate shelter
- Adequate, routine sleep
- Daily Exercise
- Immunizations



Support for a child's mental health includes:

- Unconditional love from family.
- Self-confidence and high self-esteem.
- The opportunity to play with other children.
- Positive support, encouragement and guidance from family, teachers and caregivers.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health emergency call the 24-hour **Four County Crisis Response Team** at **1-800-635-8008** or **320-253-5555**. For immediate physical danger, call **911** or go to your nearest emergency room.

June/junio 2027

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Policy & Procedures for the Release of a Child from a Head Start Center

WCCA Head Start children will only be released to the child's parent or an authorized caregiver. These are the people listed as emergency contacts in Child Plus.

This is the policy for both children being released from a WCCA Head Start center or from a WCCA Head Start bus.

Head Start Center

- When a parent/authorized caregiver is picking up a child, they are required to sign the child out via ChildPlus on the Head Start classroom's cell phone or tablet.
- If the person picking up the child is not recognized by the Head Staff, they will be asked to confirm their identity with a picture I.D. (If a child 11 years or older doesn't have a school I.D. a photo of the child must be shared with WCCA Staff) and the name will be checked with authorized emergency contacts listed in Child Plus.
- If staff are unable to confirm the person attempting to pick-up a child is authorized, staff will not release the Head Start child. In this circumstance, the Head Start center staff will contact the child's parent and the Head Start office supervisor, or the ERSEA coordinator, as soon as possible.
- WCCA Head Start Staff cannot refuse to release a Head Start child to the child's parent without legal documentation restricting the parent's access to their child, unless the parents were never married, and no legal custody arrangement is in place (Minnesota Statute 257.541), in which case the mother has sole legal and physical custody.
- In circumstances where there is no authorized person available to pick up the Head Start child, Head Start center staff will continue to attempt to reach authorized emergency contacts listed in Child Plus, then contact their direct supervisor, or the ERSEA Coordinator.
- If Head Start staff are continuously unable to reach anyone to pick up the Head Start child, staff will contact law enforcement or child protective services.

Head Start Bus

- When a parent/authorized caregiver is removing a Head Start child from the Head Start bus, the caregiver is required to sign the child out via ChildPlus on the center cell phone or tablet located on the Head Start Bus.
- If the person getting the child off the bus is not recognized by the Head Staff, they will be asked to confirm their identity with a picture I.D. and the name will be checked with authorized emergency contacts listed in Child Plus.
- If the identity of the person attempting to get the child off the bus cannot be confirmed, the Head Start child will not be released. In this circumstance, the Head Start center staff will contact the child's parent and the Head Start office supervisor, or the ERSEA coordinator, as soon as possible.
- In circumstances where there is no authorized person to release the child to, the child will be returned to the Head Start center at the end of the route. Head Start center staff will attempt to reach authorized emergency contacts listed in Child Plus and contact their direct supervisor or the ERSEA Coordinator.
- WCCA Head Start Staff cannot refuse to release a Head Start child to the child's parent without legal documentation restricting the parent's access to their child, unless the parents were never married, and no legal custody arrangement is in place (Minnesota Statute 257.541), in which case the mother has sole legal and physical custody.

Unauthorized Persons

Under no circumstances will a child be released to any person not listed as an authorized person in Child Plus. If an unauthorized person attempts to remove the Head Start child from the center, the WCCA Head Start staff will:

- Call 911
- Notify the child's parent(s)
- Notify their supervisor
- Document the incident in Child Plus, complete an Incident Report and submit the report to the WCCA Head Start Office.

Incapacitated or Abusive Persons

- If an authorized person who is incapacitated (due to substance use, or any other reason) attempts to pick up a child, he/she will be informed that the child cannot be released.
- If the person becomes belligerent, staff will call law enforcement.
- Staff will contact the parent, or other authorized caregiver and inform them of the situation, and arrangements will be made for the safe release of the child.
- If no authorized person is available, staff will call law enforcement, and a report will be made to Child Protective Services, if warranted.
- Staff will notify their supervisor following the incident. In addition, staff will document the incident in Child Plus and on a WCCA Incident Report form.

July/julio 2027

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Reporting Policy for Programs Providing Services to Children—Wright and Western Hennepin Counties

The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the childcare program and must be made available upon request.

What to Report

- Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03.
- Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

Who Must Report

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work in a licensed facility, you are a “mandated reporter” and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.

Where To Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, should be made to the DCYF Central Intake line at 651-539-8222.
- Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, in a child foster residence setting, or in a child foster care home, should be reported to the local county social services agency at 763-682-7449 (Wright County) or 612-348-3552 (Hennepin County) or local law enforcement at 763-682-1162 (Wright County) or 952-258-5321 (Hennepin County).

When To Report

- Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours).

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at): an employee for making a report in good faith; or a child who is the subject of the report. If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

August/agosto 2027

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Behavior Guidance Policy and Procedure

Behavior guidance at Head Start has two primary goals. First, we strive to help children develop self-control, regulate their behavior and emotions, recognize consequences and discover alternative solutions and outcomes. This is an important step toward being prepared to enter kindergarten. Second, we want to find an immediate solution to challenging behaviors. We want to protect the safety of children and staff. To accomplish these goals, we use the following techniques on a daily basis:

I. Modeling Appropriate Behavior

All Head Start staff will demonstrate appropriate communication and behavior towards children.

II. Meeting Children's Developmental Needs

Teachers will plan developmentally appropriate activities for young children.

III. Arranging Classroom Environments

The physical environment provides the setting in which children can thrive and learn. A thoughtful environment can help reinforce the learning goals for the children as well as allow teaching staff to interact, observe, and support the children.

IV. Proactive Supervision

The best way to avoid conflict in the classroom is to provide appropriate supervision and proactive strategies.

V. Setting Limits

Staff will create a safe and calm environment within their classroom by setting limits.

VI. Redirection

Staff will redirect children away from conflicts and guide them toward more acceptable choices.

VII. Intervention/Methods to Calm Children

Staff will provide methods and teach children to use techniques in order to help them remain calm in the classroom.

VIII. Behavior Incident Reports & Documentation

In order to analyze children's patterns of behavior, incidents must be documented and shared with the parents.

IX. Separation

Protecting the safety of children and staff is very important. If attempts to guide the child's behavior and help them calm have been unsuccessful and the child's behavior *threatens the safety and well-being of others*, "separation from the group" may be used. *Before* a child is separated from the group, less intrusive methods must be tried, and those methods must prove to be ineffective.



X. Physical Restraint

At times, it may become necessary to physically restrain a child to prevent them from harming themselves or others. Physical restraint will be used as a last resort and will not be done using artificial or mechanical restraints. The goal is for the child to walk away from the crisis feeling good about themselves.

XI. Prohibited Practices

Head Start believes in the philosophy of positive guidance for young children and prohibits any physical punishment or punishment that is humiliating or frightening to a child. This includes:

- A. Corporal punishment: rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, and spanking;
- B. Emotional abuse: name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child;
- C. Separations from the group, except as specified in Part IX (Separation);
- D. Punishment for lapses in toilet habits;
- E. Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior;
- F. The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child when containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm;
- G. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying;
- H. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or national origin.

XII. Acceptable Alternatives

Staff will use techniques listed in parts I-VII to positively guide children's behavior. If these techniques are unsuccessful and undesirable behavior continues, a *Behavior Support Plan* may be implemented.

Guidance Summary

It is critical to document all efforts to work with the child and their family. Each step taken in the Behavior Guidance process must also be implemented over a reasonable period of time. The process cannot be sped up to attain a desired expectation. Changes in behavior often takes time to evolve and every effort should be made to have the patience required to affect the desired change.

If a child is a danger to themselves or others, WCCA Head Start reserves the right to send the child home for aggressive behavior. If a child is uncontrollable, highly aggressive, or displaying dangerous behavior requiring a higher adult-to-child ratio, WCCA reserves the right to contact the child's parent/guardian to request their assistance or to send the child home for the remainder of the day.

To view the full Rule 3 Childcare Licensing Behavior Guidance policy, please see: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/9503.0055/>

Confidentiality and Data Privacy

At WCCA Head Start, we understand the importance of protecting your family's information. We are committed to maintaining the **confidentiality and privacy** of all data collected. All information on the children and families participating in WCCA Head Start is stored securely and accessed only by authorized personnel.

We share your family's information only when there is a legitimate need for it:

1. With you and the people that you provide written permission to share information with.
2. With Wright County Community Action staff members whose direct job duties require it; and
3. With state and federal auditors and funding source employees whose jobs require access to this information to ensure that you are being properly served.



If a parent is having a disagreement with any Head Start employee, the parent should meet with the employee to try to resolve the dispute informally. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the parent may follow the Community Complaint Procedure outlined below:

Wright County Community Action Parent/Community Complaint Procedure		
Step	Item	Person/Group
1.	Person writes complaint and sends to WCCA Office.	Staff
2.	Receive written complaint.	Staff
3.	Route complaint to program manager/director. All complaints from elected public officials will be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.	Program Director
4.	Investigate/examine complaint to determine type of complaint and validity.	Program Director
5.	Determine applicability of existing agency/program policies, rules, regulations or laws.	Program Director
6.	Prepare written response to complaint to include any needed explanation and/or any planned action or corrective measures.	Program Director
7.	Route complaint and written response to Executive Director for review/approval before mailing response.	Program Director
8.	Approve written response and/or planned action or corrective measures.	Program Director
9.	Send response to complainant.	Executive Director
10.	Where resolution requires a change to local agency or program policy, the proposed policy change will be considered and acted on by the Board of Directors and, where applicable, the Head Start Policy Council prior to implementation.	Board of Directors/Head Start Policy Council

Programs Operated by Wright County Community Action

WIC (WOMEN INFANTS & CHILDREN): WIC focuses on providing nutrition education and care. This includes supplemental foods for women, infants and children who are income eligible and have a nutritional need. Priority service is given to pregnant women, breast feeding mothers and infants.

EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START: The WCCA Head Start Program provides child and family development programming for income eligible pregnant women and families with children ages 0-5, living in Wright and Western Hennepin Counties.

HOME WEATHERIZATION: The Home Weatherization Program reduces fuel costs by providing a variety of energy conservation services to income eligible households. Elderly persons with disabilities and high fuel consumers are a priority for service.

HOUSING STABILITY: WCCA assists individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in locating housing and providing services that help support long-term housing stability.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION COUNSELING: WCCA's Foreclosure Counseling Program assists homeowners to understand their mortgage, and consider the realistic options available to try to prevent foreclosure. Counselors are also able to work with homeowners and their lender to negotiate reasonable options.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: This program assists income-eligible households to meet part of the cost of home heating energy and promotes self-sufficiency through energy conservation and consumer education activities.

THRIFT SHOP: WCCA's Thrift Shop located in Waverly, MN, offers a wide selection of gently used merchandise including shoes, clothing, household items, and toys.

FOOD SHELF: The WCCA food shelf is the only food shelf in Wright County that serves all county residents, regardless of which community they call home. It's a client-choice food shelf that offers a variety of nutritious foods for families in need.

EMERGENCY FOOD BOX NETWORK: WCCA distributes 30-pound emergency food boxes to partners throughout the county to shorten the distance between people in need and food shelf resources.

MOBILE FOOD SHELF: WCCA works with rental community properties to deliver food shelf services right to your door.

TAX PREPARATION: WCCA and trained volunteers provide tax preparation assistance year-round to economically disadvantaged and elderly residents.

MNSURE NAVIGATOR: WCCA has trained MNSure navigators who can help people work through the process of applying and enrolling into health plans through the MNSure Health Insurance Exchange.

SENIOR SERVICES: Designed to help adults 60 and older manage their homes and remain independent. Services include homemaker services, chore services, assisted transportation, caregiver consulting, friendly visiting, technical help and education.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER: This program provides everyone, regardless of income, with resources and social connections. The mobile approach brings the FCRC into the community, hosting group events or individual sessions for resource navigation and peer support.

