The mission of OLHSA’s Early Childhood Program is helping young children fulfill their potential.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter from our Director</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Overview</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Philosophy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Policy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fee Policy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Policy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal Policy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Policy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Card</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custody Issues</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Closures</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Routine</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medication</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Discrimination Statement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance Procedure</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening and Assessment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Emotional Health</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely Challenging Behavior</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunification</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality of Records</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest Management</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing Notebook</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSRP Program Measurements</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Family,

Welcome to the Early Childhood Programs offered by OLHSA, A Community Action Agency! These programs include the federally funded Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) programs as well as the state of Michigan funded Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). We are so glad you chose OLHSA as your child’s school readiness partner and we are so happy to have you here!

Since your child was born you have been their most important teacher and our program is designed to help you continue that teaching! The HS/GSRP programs provide a special place where your child can learn in a special way. Every day while playing with their friends your child will learn how to navigate relationships, make new friends, solve problems and become a strong thinker. They will get to paint, build, jump and play – and through it all, learn!

Here at OLHSA there is nothing we want more than to work alongside you to make the dreams you have for your child’s future come true. Our programs are committed to working with your entire family to set important goals, identify your strengths, and work with you to make your wishes come true. Just like your child is important to us, so are you and your successes.

We’d like to briefly introduce you to some of initiatives and opportunities coming our way in 2018-2019.

Our presence in Oakland County in growing. EHS/HS/GSRP classrooms are located at several locations in Pontiac including OLHSA, Great Lakes Academy, Pontiac School District and Lighthouse of Oakland County. We have classrooms located throughout Oakland County.

A grant from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan was awarded to OLHSA to implement an initiative that helps young children, and the adults who care for them, calmly navigate life’s challenges by combining practical strategies, hands-on tools and coping strategies. We will work to improve the emotional resilience in the classroom and will also offer parent activities to help you use these tools at home.

OLHSA’s main office is becoming even more convenient for you and your child! Oakland Integrated Health Network (OIHN) and WIC are now located right inside our main office in Pontiac! OIHN’s JumpStart clinic can see your entire family for well-baby check-ups, physicals, sick visits and more. OIHN accepts most insurances (including Medicaid) and offers sliding fee services. OLHSA WIC has locations all throughout Oakland County, including inside OLHSA’s Pontiac office. Visit us to see how WIC is quick at OLHSA with appointments taking 30 minutes or less.

This handbook will explain our basic philosophy, goals, rules and policies. Please read through this handbook and contact us if you have any questions or concerns. Whether this is your child’s first or fifth year with OLHSA, this is a big step! There are so many people and places that will play an important role in your child’s life, and we are proud to be one of them. Thank you for letting us be a part of your family this year!

Janice Smith
Director, Early Childhood Services

Elizabeth Gebs
Chair, Parent Policy Council
LOCATIONS

OLHSA Early Childhood Programs
Administration Office
196 Cesar E. Chavez • Pontiac, MI 48342 • (248) 209-2600

Head Start / Great Start Readiness Program Centers (ages 3-5 years)

Auburn Hills Head Start
Rogers Elementary School
2600 Dexter Rd
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Brandon Head Start
Harvey-Swanson Elementary
209 Varsity
Ortonville, MI 48462

Hazel Park Head Start
Webster Elementary School
431 W. Jarvis
Hazel Park, MI 48030

Huron Valley Head Start
Apollo Early Childhood Center
2029 North Milford Road
Highland, MI 48357

Oak Park Head Start
Einstein Elementary School
14001 Northend
Oak Park, MI 48237

Pontiac Head Start
OLHSA
196 Cesar E. Chavez
Pontiac, MI 48342

Great Lakes Academy
46312 Woodward Avenue
Pontiac, MI 48342

ROchester Head Start
Hamlin Elementary
270 West Hamlin Road
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Royal Oak Head Start
Churchill Community Center
800 Devillen
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Troy Head Start
Hill Elementary School
4600 Forsyth Drive
Troy, MI 48085

Early Head Start Program Centers (ages 0-3 years)

Pontiac Early Head Start
OLHSA
196 Cesar E. Chavez
Pontiac, MI 48342

Lighthouse
130 Center St
Pontiac, MI 48342

Hazel Park Early Head Start
Webster Elementary School
431 W. Jarvis
Hazel Park, MI 48030

New Bethel Church
174 Branch St
Pontiac, MI 48341
OLHSA offers different programs through our Early Childhood Division:

- Head Start/Early Head Start is a program of the United States Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.

- The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for four-year-old children with factors which may place them at risk of educational failure. The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Great Start.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The goal of the Head Start, Early Head Start and GSRP programs is to provide every child with the best educational opportunities through child-centered, hands-on curriculum set in a rich learning environment which is created through our families, community and professional staff.

We believe that young children learn to the best of their ability when given:

- A safe, healthy, nurturing environment.
- Development of strong teacher-child relationships in combination with strong family teacher relationships in which all are valued.
- Many opportunities for play and learning through play experiences.
- Families are involved and we work together to help your child.
- The activities are geared toward your child’s current skills and interests.

Decisions are made from a child-centered focus which includes looking at the early childhood standards of quality preschool, the curriculum, assessment information, feedback from parents and the diverse social, economic, cultural and family needs that exist within the classroom.
ENROLLMENT POLICY

All families must meet age (0 – 5 years old) and income eligibility. Homeless children and those in foster care are eligible. Income determination is based on 100% of poverty per federal income guidelines or receipt of public assistance (SSI or TANF). 10% of funded enrollment slots can be made available for over income children with diagnosed disabilities and/or families with high risk criteria.

For Early Head Start a child must be 0-3 years old. For Head Start a child must turn 3 years old before or on September 1. For GRSP Blend a child must turn 4 years old before or on September 1 or 5 after December 1.

Families are prioritized based on their criteria score for risk factors.

Children not accepted into the program at the beginning of the year will be placed on an active waiting list. As openings occur, parents will be notified in the same manner as original enrollees.

A current physical exam within 30 days of enrollment and up to date im-

NO FEE POLICY

No fee will be charged to enrolled Students and families for any activities that take place in the classroom. This includes off-site field trips or events.

OLHSA EHS/Head Start will not enroll other non-head start families to the extent allowed by any other applicable federal, state or local funding sources and charge fees to private pay families.
ATTENDANCE

In order for the OLHSA Early Head Start/Head Start/GSRP Blend to maintain a high quality program, we rely on regular attendance. It is important that children arrive to class on time every day. Tardiness interrupts the classroom and interferes with the learning environment for all students. Each student must maintain an 85% or above Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at all times.

- If necessary, call your classroom’s teacher or your family advocate if your child will be absent for the day
- If your child is not in school within one hour of the program’s start time, and the center has not been notified, the Family advocate will attempt to reach you and confirm you and your child are safe.
- If absences are a result of an illness and are well documented or if absences are the results of other factor including temporary family problems that affect a child’s attendance, the Family Advocate will initiate appropriate family support procedures
- Excessive unexcused or chronic absences may result in your child being placed on the waitlist.
- Your Family Advocate will work with your family to overcome any barriers that prevent you from getting your child to school – let us know if you are struggling. Children learn best when they are in school each day.

WITHDRAWAL

Parents/Guardians may choose to withdraw their child(ren) from the program at any time. Parents must let child’s teacher or her family advocate know as soon as possible following their decision to withdraw from the program. If a family leaves the program to attend another early childhood or Head Start program and wishes for any portion of their child’s file to be copied for their receiving program, they must first sign a release of information.
LATE PICK-UP PROCEDURE

The OLHSA Early Head Start/Head Start/GRSP Blend Program’s mission is to assist each family toward self-sufficiency. Our late procedure for picking up children was developed in an effort to assist parents in fulfilling this mission.

Ensuring children arrive to school on time each day is very important. Along with this, it is important that children are picked up on time each day at dismissal time. We understand and recognize that unforeseen conditions arise which may cause you to be late to pick up your child and will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

By licensing standards and OLHSA policy, we are allowed to call only those people you designate on your emergency card and those people must be 18 years or older and show valid identification for pick up. For the safety of your child, there will be NO EXCEPTIONS.

In the event we are not able to reach you and your child is not picked up within 30 minutes of the session's end, the authorities (Sheriff’s department/Police) will be contacted. Your children worry when you are not on time. We do not have the security or staff to keep your child past this time.

There will be a five minute window for pick up, but it is preferable to arrive at the stated time. Refrain from picking your child up earlier. After five minutes of dismissal time, it is considered late pick up. If your child has more than five late pickups, the Sheriff’s department/Police will be called when class has ended by the Center Manager.

If anyone on the emergency card other than the parent or guardian picks up the child, a copy of the written notification or of the late pick-up will be mailed to the parent/guardian the next school day by the Family Advocate as a courtesy.
EMERGENCY CARDS

Michigan Child Care License requires that each child enrolled in our program have a completed emergency card on file at all times. This is very important because it is the only way we can contact you in the event of an emergency, school-closing, other inclement weather, or in the event of a late pick-up or medical illness that requires treatment. **Your child may only be picked up by those persons listed on the emergency card. They must be 18 years or older.** We suggest that you update your child’s emergency card frequently. We encourage you to list as many contacts and individuals for pick-up as deemed necessary. **We cannot and will not release a child to anyone who is not listed on the emergency card by the parent/guardian.** It is our responsibility to ensure the safety and confidentiality of your child/children and your family, therefore, there will be no exceptions to this policy.

CUSTODY MATTERS

According to the Michigan Department of Human Services, “Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking the child up from care.” If custody has been established, OLHSA Head Start will request a copy of the court documents to be placed in the child’s file.
Emergency School Closing

There may be conditions that could force OLHSA to dismiss children early such as a power failure, severe weather, furnace failure etc. The center has a system of calling all parents or emergency numbers before allowing children to leave. If our emergency callers are not able to reach a parent or emergency designee, the child will be kept at the center until a parent or designee signs the child out.

Inclement Weather

OLHSA Head Start/GSRP Centers will close as follows due to inclement weather:

- Brandon – Follow Brandon School District closings
- Great Lakes Academy – Follow Great Lakes Academy closings
- Hazel Park – Follow Hazel Park School District closings
- Huron Valley – Follow Huron Valley School District closings
- Lighthouse - Follow Pontiac School District closings
- New Bethel - Follow Pontiac School District closings
- Oak Park – Follow Oak Park School District closings
- OLHSA Pontiac - Follow Pontiac School District closings
- Rochester – Follow Rochester School District closings
- Rogers - Follow Pontiac School District closings
- Royal Oak – Follow Royal Oak School District closings
- Troy – Follow Troy School District closings
- WHRC - Follow Pontiac School District closings

Watch your local news stations for information regarding school closures due to inclement weather or building emergencies.
EDUCATION

Our EHS, Head Start, and GSRP classrooms use a play-based curriculum, in which children develop the necessary skills in the five developmental domains: cognitive, language and literacy, physical, and social/emotional to successfully enter kindergarten. OLHSA uses the High/Scope curriculum in the classroom. Our classrooms are set up in centers where children learn through interactions with other children, teachers and the materials.

School Readiness

Teaching staff work with children, families and local schools to prepare children for kindergarten. Our program school readiness goals begin with our youngest children in Early Head Start and continue on with Head Start/GSRP children. Our school readiness goals were developed with staff and parent input and align with Head Start’s Early Learning Outcomes Framework which describes what young children should know and be able to do during their early years.

Pretend Play

Helps children learn language development, to create new ideas, abstract thinking, develop social

Outdoor Play

Safety & Cooperation
Risk taking and limits
Science Concepts
Building Strength

Block Area – Gateway to STEM,
Problem Solving; Building & Tinkering; Engineering & Science

Pretend Play

Helps children learn language development, to create new ideas, abstract thinking, develop social
WHAT TO EXPECT AT:

Home Visits
Home Visits are a valuable part of your Early Head Start/Head Start or GSRP experience as they:
- Make connections between the home and classroom
- Learn more about your child in classroom
- Share ideas and learning opportunities in your home

Classroom teachers meet with families in their homes at least two (2) times during the school year, at the beginning of the year and the end of the school year. These visits are held to discuss the strengths of your child and keep you up to date on the many ways your child is growing.

Parent Teacher Conferences
Two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the program year. The first conference is in the fall, the second in the spring.

During the fall conference, the teacher will explain the basics High/Scope, the results of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and policies and procedures relating to the Head Start program. The teacher and parent will work together to set appropriate goals for the child.

During the spring conference, the teacher and the child will present selected pieces from the child's portfolio to share with the parent, demonstrating the child’s progress. The parent and teacher will review the child’s progress using the portfolio information, observations from the COR assessment, and other pertinent data throughout the program year. Parents are encouraged to ask questions regarding their child’s school experience.
Behavior Guidance

Supporting positive child and adult relationships, creating an engaging classroom and providing concrete teaching strategies helps promote healthy social and emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors for young children. Teachers focus on teaching social skills, appropriate interactions and natural consequences.

How Adults Support Children in Resolving Conflicts

Six steps for problem-solving:

- Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions or language
- Acknowledge feelings
- Gather Information
- Restate the problem
- Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
- Give follow-up support as needed

If a persistent challenging behavior occurs, teachers will work with parents and other staff to create an individualized behavior plan to help the child be successful in the classroom. Please see the Severely Challenging Behavior Policy in this handbook for more information. Children are never denied their basic needs, rest or necessary toilet use.

Staff, parents and volunteers are prohibited from using the following as a means of guidance/discipline or punishment:

- Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, slapping, spanking, yanking or inflicting any forms of corporal punishment
- Time out is not used
- No one will be allowed to yell at, put down, or call a child an inappropriate name
- Restricting a child’s movement by binding or tying child
- Mental or emotional cruelty, such as humiliation, shaming or frightening a child

Transitions

Transition means change. Changes that are planned for are the most positive ones. Transitions are viewed as opportunities for learning and growth. Transition addresses all changes occurring as a family moves from one setting to another from home to classroom, within a program or between programs.

You will become aware of just how important you are when planning for the many transitions you, your child and family will experience. You have firsthand knowledge about your children and family to provide to staff. This information will be useful in guiding your family’s next steps.

As your child’s first teacher, you are the key to successful early transitions when you:

- Prepare and support your child before and during transitions
- Understand the importance of effective transitions in the lives of your child and family
- Advocate for your child
DAILY ROUTINE

Following a consistent routine day after day gives children the sense of security they need to make choices and take risks, which opens the door to exciting learning opportunities. Each classroom creates their own daily schedule that works for them. The following components of the daily routine are always included:

**Arrival/Breakfast/Free Play**
Children start their day and are greeted by teachers/classmates. Children have choices about whether to eat, spend time with books, or interact with adults and one another. Once all children have arrived, adults share the daily announcements.

**Greeting/Message Board**
Message board is used to alert students of changes in the daily routine, introduce new items in interest areas, and to wish their absent friends well.

**Planning time**
Children have the opportunity to plan or choose what they will do during work time. Children may share their plan verbally, draw pictures, use objects, and more! This may be done individually, in a small group, or even pairs.

**Work time**
Children freely choose to carry out their plans (the area to visit, materials to use and friends to play with). Children make many choices about where and how to use the materials in the classroom. Teachers are involved in the child initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

**Clean up time**
Children and adults clean up together keeping the spirit of play and problem solving alive. Children make many choices during clean up. Adults accept children’s level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.

**Recall time**
Children recall plans they carried out or changed during work time. This completes the "plan-do-review" cycle, which is preschool goal-setting. It also encourages conversation and language development.
**Daily Routine (Cont’)**

**Small-group time**
Teacher plan an activity based on children’s interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials and talk about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.

**Large-group time**
All the children and the teachers come together for movement and music activities, interactive storytelling, and other shared experiences. Children have many opportunities to make choices and play the role of leader.

**Outside time**
Children go outside every day. The outdoors is an extension of the classroom where children are able to get exercise, play with other children and develop skills. Classrooms go outside every day unless it is not safe to do so such as extreme heat or cold.

**Transition times (including arrival and departure)**
These times are important for children. Children anticipate and need consistency in their daily routine. If at all possible, the same person who drops off should pick up and around the same time daily. If you are unable to do so, establish a routine before you leave the house to help them feel safe and secure. Teachers plan meaningful learning experiences for these times which keeps children engaged and lessens any disruptions.

**Eating and rest times**
Both are important to your child’s day. Nutritious meals and getting proper rest is essential to brain development. Meals are served family style and encourage independence, the development of self-help skills (serve themselves, pour milk, wipe up spills), as well as language. Teachers eat and have meaningful conversations with children. All children will be provided with a crib, cot, or mat on which to rest. Families are welcome to provide their child with a small blanket. A large blanket or pillow should NOT be sent. Talk with your child’s teacher if you would like to bring other rest items for your child. Please remember to label all items sent to school. Rest items provided by families will be sent home at the end of each week for washing. Rest time is for napping or quiet, solitary activities. If a child is not sleepy, they are offered a quiet time activity like reading or puzzles.
Parents/Guardians: You are your child’s first teacher and caregiver; you play a major role in your child’s health. A healthy child is a child ready for learning.

Physical Exam/Well Baby Exam

A parent/guardian must provide a copy of the child’s last exam signed and dated by the physician/nurse practitioner within the first thirty days of attendance. The exam must be appropriate to the child’s age as recommended by the EPSDT guidelines (see chart below):

<table>
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<th>1-2 weeks exam</th>
<th>2 month exam</th>
<th>4 month exam</th>
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<td>36 month exam</td>
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Parents/guardians must follow the Medicaid guidelines for continued physical exams/baby well exams and turn in completed paperwork to the Family Advocate/Family Educator.

Immunizations (shots)

Before the child can enter the classroom or receive direct services (home visits or center based services) immunizations must be current and appropriate to the age of child. If a waiver is being sought it must be turned into the program prior to the child attending a session. Parents/guardians are to submit an updated immunizations record after each exam performed by a physician and or nurse practitioner.

Dental Exam

Dental exams are required at the age of 3 years and are recommended every 6 months. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing the program with a copy of this exam and complete all follow up appointments recommended by the dental home.

Required Screenings

Occasionally you will receive a notice that your child will be screened. Early Head Start and Head start programs are required to track height, weight, hearing, vision and anemia. It is your responsibility as a parent/guardian to review the results for your child and follow up with any necessary referrals or appointment’s for your child as requested. Your Family Advocate/Family Educator is available to assist you with this.
CHILD HEALTH

Communicable Disease Procedure

When a child is excluded from a center based classroom for health reasons the OLHSA Head Start program will follow the guidelines established by Oakland County Health Department and your pediatrician. Based upon the recommendations of the communicable disease guidelines a child will be excluded from the center for at least 24 hours. The Head Start program REQUIRES that the child has a written permission from their physician/nurse practitioner to return to the program.

Sick Child Policy/Exclusion

Most children with mild illnesses can safely attend childcare. However, a child may be too sick to attend if:

♦ The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the daily activities.
♦ The staff cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
♦ The child exhibits or experiences any of the following symptoms:
  ♦ Vomiting, diarrhea, untreated lice, undiagnosed rash, persistent cough, inflamed throat, green or yellow discharge from the nose, redness or discharge from the eye, any draining sore, fever in the last 24 hours, and or a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher. A child may also be excluded if he/she exhibits any other conditions which may be considered contagious to others.

A child must not return until he/she is fever and or symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication or a doctors note is provided stating the child is not contagious. If your child has an undiagnosed rash a note from the medical provider is needed for the child to return to class.

Accidents/Injuries/Incidents

In the event of an incident, accident, or injuries, the following procedures will take place:

Minor Injury/Accident/incident: Immediate care will be provided to the child. OLHSA staff will notify you and a written report will be provided.

Major Injury/Accident/Incident: 9-1-1 or emergency/medical services will be called immediately to assess and transport your child to the nearest emergency room, if required. The parent/guardian will be contacted by phone once the situations is under control. If the parents cannot be reached, the next emergency contact will be called until someone is contacted. Head Start staff will accompany your child if the child needs to be transported. Within, 24 hours a call will be made to the Department of Regulatory Services Licensing Division followed by a written report within three days of the injury.
**MEDICATION**

**ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION POLICY**

In general, Head Start does not administer medication at school. Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to give medication at home, when possible. However, designated Head Start staff may administer prescription medication to a child in certain situations. These could include treatment for certain health emergencies, treatment for a chronic diagnosed health conditions or short term prescribed medication needed during school hours. The following guidelines should be followed.

- Medication, prescription or nonprescription, may be given or applied with prior written permission from the parent/guardian and physician.
- Parent/Guardian must also provide an authorization signed by the child’s physician with the name and dosage of the medication in the original container, and clearly labeled for named child. No expired medication will be given.
- The pharmacy labeled medication must indicate clear directions from the physician, including the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication. Medication will only be given according to these instructions.
- Medication must be in child-proof containers, and stored according to label directions.
- Medication must be kept out of the reach of children. Medication must be returned to the parent or destroyed when the parent determines the medication is no longer needed or it has expired.
- All medication must be kept in a locked unit in the classroom, except for EpiPens, which are to be kept out of children’s reach but easily accessible to classroom staff.
- Injections will be given **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These would include a child diagnosed with diabetes who requires Insulin to maintain normal blood glucose levels, a child with a documented insect sting allergy, or a child who exhibits a hypersensitivity and/or anaphylactic reaction due to exposure to/or ingestion of a food to which the child is known to be allergic.
- Staff will not be permitted to administer medication if it is the first time a child has been given this drug, since the child could experience an allergic reaction (except for the emergency use of EpiPen).
- If a child needs daily treatment for an ongoing medical concern (such as asthma medication with a nebulizer), this treatment will be given by a trained staff member.
- All medication administered by Head Start staff must be noted on the individual child's medication log form, and include a record of the time and dosage or amount of medication given. The signature of the caregiver administering the medication must be included.

Parent and physician authorization must be updated yearly.

Children may begin school without necessary medication on-site only after their parent signs and acknowledgement that program staff will call 9-1-1 if a child has a medical emergency.
NUTRITION

Having good nutrition improves children’s ability to grow, develop, and achieve. It also helps maintain a healthy weight as well as help children get the nutrients their bodies need to stay healthy, active, and strong. OLHSA is dedicated to providing nutrient dense and well-balanced meals and snacks for all Early Head Start/Head Start children.

Each child will receive breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack, which provides 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs as set by the USDA. OLHSA also follows the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines for the components in each meal and snack. OLHSA uses a family-style mealtime routine. Family-style meals are a great way to introduce healthy foods, model healthy behaviors, and provide chances for education and socialization. Children will be given will be sufficient time to eat their meals.

Food will not be used as a punishment or a reward for a child while in our care. Children will not be forced to eat but are encouraged to try all foods. Special diets and allergies will be clearly posted in the classroom in red ink, utilizing confidentiality procedures. The Nutrition Manager will also have this information on file. Special provisions will be made available for children with special dietary needs. We must have documentation from the child’s physician regarding special diets and allergies.

For the safety of the children and staff, there is to be no food brought into the classroom and no food is allowed to be taken out of the classroom.

BIRTHDAYS/HOLIDAYS AND FOOD

Each month we may set aside one day to celebrate children’s birthdays. We ask that parents please do not bring in food of any kind for birthdays, holidays or any other day. If you feel you have to bring something in on a designated birthday celebration day or holiday, please consider the following inexpensive items:

- Crepe paper – to decorate room.
- Crayons, pencils, markers, or friendship bracelets.
- Party hats – enough for each child and teacher in the classroom.

The purpose of the once a month birthday celebration is so each child can be included and feel special. We will be providing a designated birthday food within the guidelines of CACFP.
NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
    Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
    1400 Independence Avenue, SW
    Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR PARENT OR GUARDIAN AND COMMUNITY

Currently enrolled Head Start families and community must follow procedure when making complaints and/or grievances about Head Start staff, policies and/or procedures. See your Center Manager for a written copy of this procedure.
SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Screenings help staff identify your child’s strengths and needs in the areas of health and development and are required by all Early Head Start, Head Start and GSRP programs. If there are any concerns about your child’s screenings you will be contacted and staff will work with you to create a follow-up plan for your child.

**Mental Health:** The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) is a strength-based screening and assessment tool designed to promote resilience for infants through age 5, focusing on identifying key social and emotional strengths and assessing behavioral concerns. This tool provides strategies and tips for teachers and families and to enhance children’s social and emotional health.

**Developmental Screening:** All OLHSA’s early childhood programs use Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to help determine young children’s level of development; language, physical, and cognitive. Parents with the help of teachers fill out the questionnaire on their child usually at a home visit. The ASQ is completed within two weeks of the child’s first day of school for GSRP. For Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms, the ASQ is done within 45 days of your child starting school. All families will receive their child’s results at or before the Fall Parent Conference. Teachers and families will partner to use the information to plan for their child’s success. If further evaluation is needed, the parents will be notified and a plan of action will be developed.

Childhood Assessment is a process of gathering information about a child, reviewing the information and then using the information to plan educational activities that are at the level of the child’s development.

**Ongoing Assessment:** Child Observation Record (COR) is used to observe and assess children’s developmental progress throughout the year. The COR is an observation tool that helps tell the story of your child’s growth and development throughout the program year. Teachers share their observations and assessment results with parents twice a year. Notes are recorded and entered into all developmental areas. Families receive a Family Report at conferences and decide on goals for their child.
ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Suspected Abuse and Neglect Policy

“Child abuse” means harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child’s health that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse; sexual exploitation; or maltreatment.

“Child neglect” means harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child’s health or welfare that occurs through either of the following:
- Negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.
- Placing a child at unreasonable risk to the child’s health or welfare by failure of the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who is able to do so and has, or should have, knowledge of the risk.

Who is required to report to Child Protective Services?
All Early Head Start/Head Start staff who have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect are required to report. Staff will attend a yearly abuse and neglect training that defines “reasonable cause”. Failure of staff member to make a report could result in being found guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, failure to report is a violation of the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing regulations.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The Mental Health Coordinator works with staff, families and children to promote and support a positive social and emotional environment. Your child’s healthy social and emotional development is critical to school readiness and positive long-term outcomes. Mental Health Coordinators can assist and guide families with stressful needs and provide resources for counseling. Parents and caregivers will be invited to attend Smart Connections or other groups throughout the school year to support their child.
POSITIVE STRATEGY INTERVENTION AND SEVERELY CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Severely challenging behaviors include, but are not limited to: biting, hitting, kicking, choking, throwing objects that may cause harm, and inappropriate sexual behaviors.

POLICY:
In keeping with federal performance standards (1304.22)(b)(1) and promoting a healthy and safe environment for all children and staff, OLHSA Head Start has established a Severely Challenging Behavior Policy.

A child may be considered for alternate program options/variations if the behavior that is expressed by a child during classroom hours, is repetitive and/or endangers or threatens another child or classroom staff.

PROCEDURE:

LEVEL I

When a staff identifies a concern in the areas of development, behavioral or health:

1. Notify Education Manager of specific areas of concern via email.
2. Within one week of email, Education Manager will complete a classroom observation using ABC analysis.
3. Education Manager will notify via email Center Manager, Mental Health Coordinator, Disability Coordinator or any other pertinent content area staff about concern and observations.
4. Content Area staff will provide supportive strategies if appropriate
5. Education Manager will give the teacher at least three strategies for implementation.
6. Teaching staff will consistently implement strategies for two weeks.
7. If more individual strategies are needed following two week implementation, teaching staff will complete a PSI Request form with specific information.
8. Education Manager will schedule meeting and send email to invite appropriate staff (i.e. teacher, family advocate, mental health and/or disability coordinator, teacher assistant).
9. After receiving email:
   a. Family Advocate will contact family about meeting time and reason.
   b. All other staff will complete classroom observation.
10. Team will discuss observations, assessments and strategies at the PSI.
   a. PSI Action Plan is developed at this meeting.
11. PSI facilitator will give a copy of the PSI Action Plan to the Associate Directors for Education and Mental Health & Disabilities.
12. Teachers will implement plan for two to four weeks and document behavior using ABC analysis tool.
13. The Challenging Behavior procedure will be implemented if specific behavioral problems continue and become more urgent after first PSI meeting.
14. All original PSI forms will be kept by the Education Manager.

LEVEL II

If the disruptive behavior continues the following procedure will be implemented:

1. A second follow up staffing meeting will be scheduled to review the Level I plan and its implementation. The Family Advocate will contact the parent to set up the meeting. The following questions to be considered in this meeting are:
Have strategies been implemented on a consistent basis by both parent(s) and staff?

Has there been measurable improvement in the child’s behavior since the implementation of the strategies?

Have parents and staff made a reasonable effort to follow mental health/disability recommendations, but the child’s disruptive behavior continues?

Is the behavior life-threatening or does it pose an injury risk to self?

Does the behavior seriously interfere with students’ learning or the other students’ learning?

Does the behavior hurt other children or staff or damage materials?

Has trained staff found it necessary to hold the child to keep the child and others safe?

2. Depending on the answers to the above questions, staff and parents will discuss and decide whether to continue with the Level I plan, or if it is necessary to continue to Level III.

**LEVEL III**

1. If a decision is made to move to Level III program staff and parents work together to construct an alternate program option that would best meet the needs of the child and family. The Associate Director for Mental Health/Disabilities, the Associate Director for School Readiness, and/or the Deputy Director for Early Childhood Programs will also attend this meeting. Options to be considered include:

   - A shortened school day
   - Fewer days per week
   - Home Base Option
   - Parents attending class with child

2. An Alternative Program Option Plan is written that includes input and signatures from parents/guardians and staff. The Alternative Program Option Plan is a positive plan of action which includes specific action steps, goals and time frames to improve the child’s behavior with the ultimate goal of returning the child to the original program option. Parents and staff write out specifics. The plan should include any plans for further evaluation and or counseling by external mental health staff or by public school special services professionals.

3. In the event the parent or guardian, fails, refuses or is not able to comply and cooperate with the Alternative Program Options Plan and the child’s behavior continues to present a danger, threat or concern for safety for other children or adults in the classroom, the following will be a final consideration. The child’s parent/s, Teacher, Center or Education Manager, Director and/or Deputy Director for Early Childhood Services, Family Advocate, Mental Health Coordinator, and Associate Director for Grantee Programs, will meet and consider all alternatives available for the best interest of the child and the program. It may be necessary to serve the child in the home base option.
REFERRALS FOR CHILD AND FAMILY NEEDS

We strive to meet the individual needs of all children in the program. To determine each child’s needs, the program conducts screenings within the first two weeks of the child’s first day of school to assess children’s developmental, behavioral, and language development. If these screenings - as well as information gathered from observations or provided by parents, doctors, or other specialists - result in a concern about the child’s development or functioning, we will begin a process to follow up on that concern, including further evaluation if needed.

The goal of Disabilities Services is to foster a positive environment where children with special needs are assisted in reaching their full potential. The Disabilities Coordinator will help identify, and assist the family through referrals and assess for evaluation and coordinate services to children with special needs and disabilities. Head Start/Early Head Start is a general education program, providing opportunities for all children with and without special needs to play and learn together, as well as learning to appreciate each other’s differences. The Head Start program supports the Special Education Goals for children with disabilities with the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Head Start welcomes Local Educational Agencies into the classroom to provide therapy and special services. Parents/guardians are encouraged to actively participate in the child’s assessment process to ensure that your children’s needs are addressed the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for Head Start children or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for Early Head Start children. Head Start operates under the requirement of a congressional mandate to make available, at a minimum, 10% of its enrollment opportunities to children with disabilities.

Once all information is gathered, it is reviewed with the parents. If the results recommend an IEP or IFSP, a meeting will be scheduled with parents and other personnel involved. Any additional services to be provided and who will provide such service will be determined at this meeting. Your child’s teacher, administrator, and the school district team, which may include Oakland Schools, will work together throughout the year to ensure that the IEP is being implemented with fidelity, including the use of special modifications and strategies to support your child in being a fully participating member of the classroom community.
Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. Our program provides different family’s activities to support family well being and promote children’s learning and development.

- **Volunteering in the classroom**: parents can talk with child’s teacher/Family Advocate to find out how they can volunteer in the classroom.

- **Parent committees**: this committee is offered at the center. Parents have the opportunity to share resources, meet other parents and learn activities to do with their children at home.

- **Policy Council**: is a decision making and advisory council for the program. PC is represented mainly of parents of children currently enrolled in the program. Any decision made within the program is subject to PC approval.

- **Family Engagement Goals/ needs assessment**: parents have the opportunity to set attainable goals for themselves and their family. Family advocate helps to accomplish these goals by providing community resources and follow ups.
Head Start Reunification Services is available to Head Start families impacted by incarceration. If interested in additional services including but not limited to:

- Specialized visitation at Macomb Correctional and Oakland County Jail
- Employment after release
- Expungement
- Transportation
- Staying connected during incarceration
- And Much more!
- Fill-out the referral below or speak with your Family Advocate today!

### Reunification Services Referral Form

Please return referral to Kara Ruah at karar4@olhsa.org 248-943-8885 or Linda VanderWaal at lindav@olhsa.org 248-721-0912

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring Staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Telephone No:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk Location:</td>
<td>Email address:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Client Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Tel (if client can be contacted):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>D.O.B. of child/Name:</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please identify the **relationship** and **name** of the incarcerated family member to the child

Ex. Mother, Father, Brother, Uncle, Grandfather and name.

Is a member of the family currently incarcerated? **Yes** or **No**

Where is the incarcerated family member currently being housed? Please circle:

- Macomb Correctional
- Oakland County Jail
- Wayne County Jail
- Cotton Correctional
- Parnell Correctional
- Unknown
- Other

Who is the child currently living with? (__________________________) Ex. Mom, Grandpa, foster care etc.

When is or has the incarcerated family member returned home? (__________________________)

Room number and location of child: (__________________________)

**Please list the current top 3 priorities for this family:**

Examples of reunification services offered:
Resume writing, Employment Services, Child/incarcerated parent socialization visits, Age appropriate incarceration explanation, Individualized lesson planning, Reunification planning, Bus passes, Re-entry case management, School and training counseling. Relationship Enhancement classes and more!
Out of respect for the privacy of each family in our program, all information pertaining to students and families will be kept confidential. If a student is attending a program administered by a public school, the student’s COR assessment and attendance records may be passed on to the students’ Kindergarten school building. Information may be reviewed by Oakland Schools and/or the MDE to ensure and support program compliance. The only instance in which information will be shared about a child or family without a parent’s written consent is when staff has reason to suspect the child may have experienced abuse or neglect. Some records may be kept electronically. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children’s education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records, except as provided by law. Health records on students, including immunization records, maintained by an educational agency or institution subject to FERPA are “education records” subject to FERPA.

We expect that families will also respect the rights of others when visiting the center and attending program activities.
PEST MANAGEMENT

OLHSA Head Start Programs maintain a pest management plan which is located in the licensing binder at each site. Occasionally, pesticides will be applied. Parents have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the school grounds and buildings. In the event that pesticides are applied, parents will be notified through their classroom teacher and signs will be posted at each site. Information about the pesticide will be given in advance to include: the purpose or pest, approximate location, date of the application, contact information about the center, and a toll free number the national pesticide center recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Any liquid spray or aerosol insecticide application will not be performed in a room of a child care center unless the room has been unoccupied by children for not less than 4 hours or longer, if required by the pesticide label use instructions. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but parents will be provided notice following any such application. Application schedules and licensing information is available at each site. You may contact your Center Manager for more information.

LICENSING NOTEBOOK

All OLHSA Head Start locations maintain a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans. The notebook is available for review by parents/guardians during regular business hours at each location.
GSRP PROGRAM MEASUREMENT

NOTICE OF GSRP PROGRAM MEASUREMENT

GSRP sites are required to work with the MDE to measure the effect of the state-wide GSRP. Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. If you have questions about this, contact:

Address: MDE
Office of Great Start
608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

Email: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov
Phone: 517-373-8483