



**HEAD
START** inc.



Parent Handbook

2022-2023

Welcome to Head Start Inc.

Our goal is to provide a welcoming, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for children to learn and grow. This handbook is designed to give you basic information about our program and help ensure a successful school year for our children, families and staff. If you would like more information or have any questions please let us know!

Mission

Head Start provides comprehensive services for young children and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success

Vision

Encourage, Empower and Educate All Children

Core Values

Children First

Respect

Positivity

Empathy

Competence

Eligibility & Enrollment

Our Head Start Program provides services to enrolled families at no cost. Families are not required to pay for or provide anything to participate in our program.

Enrollment eligibility is determined through the application process and is based on child and family need.

Services Provided



Academics



Nutrition



Health/Mental
Health



Social Emotional



Family

Child Release Form

Our Child Release Form is a crucial part of keeping your child safe. The information provided on this form ensures our staff are able reach you with important information about your child, program updates, and in emergency situations.

Please keep your contact information up to date at all times.

- **We only release your child to the people listed on your form. No exceptions**
- In order to pick up a child you must be at least 18 years old and provide valid identification
- Without a court order or order from the Department of Child and Family Services we cannot restrict a biological parent from taking their child. Please bring legal documentation to your Family Advocate as soon as possible
- **Changes to your form must be done in person and may take up to 48 hours to complete**

If you or someone on your Child Release Form will be late picking up your child, please call us immediately. If we cannot get a hold of you or someone on your form we may seek assistance from Child Protective Services or local law enforcement.

Attendance

At Head Start we know attendance plays an important role in your child's growth and success. We also understand there will be days that your child won't be able to come to school. Our most up to date Health and Safety Plan, including our Sick Child Policy, can be found on our website www.billingsheadstart.org. If you have any questions or concerns please let us know.

If your child will not be at school for any reason, please let your Teacher or Family Advocate know as soon as possible.



Sick Child Policy



Children should not be in school if they are exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (100.4 or more) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Very decreased activity level
- Irritability or persistent crying
- Rash which is atypical, acute, or oozing
- Mouth sores
- Eye infections (conjunctivitis or pink eye)
- Live lice

Parents should seek medical attention for their child and follow the guidance of a medical professional. **Children who have been at home because of illness should remain at home for at least 24 hours after they are symptom-free from fever, bacterial infection, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash.** Children who have been prescribed antibiotics may return to school after being on the medication for 24 hours, if symptoms are subsided. Please reference our Sick Child with COVID-19 Policy for specific information related to COVID-19 procedures.

In the case of a COVID-19 diagnosis by a medical professional, Head Start will seek the guidance of the Public Health Department and/or your child's pediatrician to develop an individualized plan for when your child may return to school

If your child becomes ill at school we will contact you to pick them up. If symptoms are severe we may call 911.

Child Drop Off/Pick Up

- Buildings will open 10 minutes prior to their class start time and 5 minutes before classes end. Parents are responsible for transporting children to/from school
- **Please do not leave children unattended in vehicles. Reach out to your family advocate for any assistance.**
- If any further questions please reference our Health and Safety Plan or ask your family advocate.

Follow these steps each day:

1. Please take your child to the bathroom and wash their hands before entering the classroom (please do not leave child unattended)
2. Adult sanitizing stations are available throughout our buildings
3. Sign your child in/out at the classroom with their teacher

Safety

Safety is our number one priority. Here are some safety practices that help ensure safety in our program. The most up to date Health and Safety Plan can be found at www.billingsheadstart.org



Regular Fire and Lockdown Drills



Personal Safety Curriculum is taught in every classroom

All staff are CPR/First Aid Certified



Learning environments are regularly checked for safety concerns



Daily health checks



In The Classroom

Head Start individualizes our program to meet the needs of each child. While our classrooms may have some differences, all classrooms will:

- Use Creative Curriculum (Academic) and Second Step Curriculum (Social/Emotional)
- Have developmentally appropriate furniture and learning materials
- Create strength based, child-driven and play-based activities
- Follow Head Start Policies, Head Start Regulations and Montana State Childcare Licensing Regulations
- Document strengths and growth to develop individualized goals and activities



Each day we focus on:

Social & Emotional • Literacy & Language
• Mathematics • Logic & Reasoning • Science & Social Studies • Creative Arts • Music & Movement • Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Our daily schedule includes:

Bathroom/Hand Washing Breaks • Eating Healthy Meals
Outdoor Activities • Circle Time • Learning Centers
Large and Small Group Learning • Explorers Time
Music and Movement • Rest Time (full day classes only)

While our day seems to be all fun and games, we know **children learn through play!**

Positive Guidance

The goal of Positive Guidance is to encourage appropriate behavior and instill in each child a sense of self-control and self-esteem. Here are some Positive Guidance methods we may use:



Under no circumstance will any child in the care of Head Start be subjected to physical restraint or punishment, isolation, humiliation, threatening words/behavior or physical/emotional abuse. Food and/or physical activity, including outdoor time, may not be used as a form of reward or punishment.

Parent Engagement

At Head Start we know parents are their child's first and most important teacher. Parents play an important role in shaping their child's education and life long success.

We partner with parents by providing:

- Home Visiting -
- Parent/Teacher Conferences -
 - Family Goal Setting -
 - Child Goal Setting -
- Professional Support -
- Parenting Classes -
- Educational Workshops -
- Mental Health Services -
 - Parent Committee -
 - Policy Council -





Nutrition



Head Start encourages healthy food choices, trying new foods and using meal time manners. Parents receive monthly menus so they can talk with children about what they eat at school. We follow all Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. For more information on CACFP visit www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp

- All children receive two CACFP approved meals per day and full-day classrooms receive at least one snack per day
- Meals include a variety of grains, proteins, fruits/vegetables and milk.
- Meal time includes eating together, healthy conversations, using manners, and developing independence.
- If your child has allergies or cannot eat certain foods we will adjust meals to accommodate them.
- If you choose to bring treats or outside food to share in your child's classroom they must be store bought.

Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in Feeding

Adults provide healthy food at designated times and children decide how much they eat. Children may also decide they do not want to eat a certain food. This division in responsibility uses children's natural ability to eat as much as they need while giving them the ability to grow and make healthy choices. At Explorers Academy, meals are served family style meaning children serve themselves and adults partake in every meal.



Health Screenings

Your child will receive the following health screenings within their first 45 days at Head Start. These screenings help identify child strengths, individual child needs and areas where additional testing or services may be needed.

Vision

Height and Weight

Hearing



Developmental Indicators

Fine/Gross Motor

Speech and Language

Social/Emotional Development

Children with Disabilities

At Head Start, we strive to provide an inclusive learning environment for children regardless of developmental skill level. Special education, speech and language and intervention services may be provided to your child while at Head Start.





HEAD START inc.

**North Park
(Main Office)**

M-Th 8-4, F 8-3:30
615 North 19th St.
Billings, MT 59101
406-245-7233

Classroom Time

M-Th

Morning Session:

8:00am - 12:00 pm

Afternoon Session:

12:30pm - 4:30 pm

Terry Park

511 Custer Ave.
Billings, MT 59102
406-245-7233

Classroom Time

Monday-Friday

8:00am - 2:30pm

(Early out Wed @ 12:30)

Lockwood

1932 Highway 87 E.
Billings, MT 59101
406-867-6624

Classroom Time:

Monday-Friday
8:30-3:00
(Early out Wed @ 1:00pm)



A.W.A.R.E.

3242 Hesper Rd.
Billings, MT 59102
406-652-5345

Classroom Time

Monday-Friday
8:30am - 3:00 pm
(Early out Wed @ 1:00pm)

For important program updates visit our website
www.billingsheadstart.org and follow us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/billingsheadstart