

# UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start

## PARENT HANDBOOK



2020-2021

*"If there is anything that we wish to change in the child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could better be changed in ourselves." Carl Jung*

**OFFICE HOURS**

**8:00 am – 4:30 pm  
Monday - Friday**

**CLASSROOM HOURS**

**7:30 am – 12:30 pm (Until further notice COVID response)**

**SCHOOL CALENDAR**

**Labor Day  
September 7**

**Fall Break  
October 12 - October 16**

**Veterans Day Holiday  
November 11**

**Thanksgiving Break  
November 25 - November 27**

**Christmas Break  
December 21 - January 1**

**MLK Day Holiday  
January 18**

**President's Day Holiday  
February 15**

**Spring Break  
March 22 - March 26**

**Good Friday Holiday  
April 2**

**HEAD START STAFF**

**Karla Hillis- Director**  
**Rita Mayfield - Mentor Coach/Education Supervisor**  
**Lindsey Beach - Health & Disability Service Specialist**  
**Hilda Starkey - Literacy Aide/Safety Coordinator**  
**TBA - Family/Community Partnership Specialist**  
**Carrie Swafford- Family Service Worker**  
**Elsie Blaylock - Lead Teacher**  
**Class A Hannah Simmons - Teacher Aide ; Audrey Haney- Teacher Aide**  
**Jamie Wood- Teacher**  
**Class B Tubelina Fails - Teacher Aide ; Ruth Ann Cunningham - Teacher Aide**  
**TBA - Custodian/Bus Monitor**

Please visit our website [www.ucvbheadstart.org](http://www.ucvbheadstart.org) for all things VBCHS.

Like and follow us on Facebook! Van Buren County Head Start.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME, PLEASE CALL US @ the Head Start CENTER 423-881-5182**

**Head Start Text Number 931-349-4957**

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!**

**Welcome to UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start**

**Your family will be embarking with us on a wonderful trip through the world of early learning. This program has been in existence since 1992 Serving young children and their families. This handbook will explain our basic philosophy, goals, rules, and policies. Please read through this handbook, and if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, feel free to contact us. We hope your family enjoys their time with us. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care.**

## **Our Response to COVID 19 Pandemic**

### **COVID 19 INSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONS**

Generally, our centers will be open for children for the hours and times noted in the center calendar. Assuming that the Center for Disease Control guidance relaxes, we will be adding hours and days of service. Many of our children will be on remote learning, because our class size is currently limited or because that is the model that their family believes is best for them. If your child does not attend regularly, we may need to place you in the remote learning group so another child can attend. If there is a need to close the center for a short period or a longer indefinite period due to a local Covid outbreak, we will offer remote learning to all the children in the classroom.

The following instructions and information will be in force until the Federal Government issues further information.

#### **Child Arrival Procedures**

##### **Center:**

Assigned staff will be at the front door awning to conduct temperature checks on parents and child/children in their vehicles. A non-contact infrared thermometer will be used according to the package directions. The designated staff will use Hand-Sanitizer prior to and between each temperature check. Anyone registering over 100- is not permitted to stay. They will need to seek COVID-19 testing for the family with the local Health Department and we will check in with the facility for results. If negative and temperature free they will be permitted to return- otherwise they will follow direction of Health department guidance such as quarantine (at which time the child would be enrolled in virtual education services until further notice). Failure to get tested- will be dropped from the program. The assigned staff will provide each family masks at the start of each week and direct them to wear it during drop off/pick up times to lessen possible transmission. The assigned staff will confirm the check via radio to additional assigned staff so that they (the staff person) can then have the parent sign the child into the program and will take the child from the parent to the classroom after having them use hand- sanitizer. The additional staff person will Lysol clipboard/pens after each use -outside so parents can see action and fumes aren't an issue.

Children will not be accepted after 8:00 at the school due to staffing requirements necessary for maintaining ratios/ensuring precautions. Unless arrangements are made prior to the day such as for attending a doctors appointment.

##### **Busses:**

One child/family at a time will be checked and signed in at a time.

Assigned staff will be responsible to conduct temperature checks on parents and child/children in their vehicles. (A non-contact infrared thermometer will be used according to the package directions. The designated staff will use Hand-Sanitizer prior to and between each temperature check. Anyone registering over 100- is not permitted to stay. They will need to seek COVID-19 testing for the family with the local Health Department and we will check in with the facility for results. If negative and temperature free they will be permitted to return- otherwise they will follow direction of Health department guidance such as quarantine (at which time the child would be enrolled in virtual education services until further notice). Failure to get tested- will be dropped from the program. The assigned staff will provide each family masks

at the start of each week and direct them to wear it during drop off/pick up times to lessen possible transmission. The Assigned staff will have the parent sign the child into the program and will take the child from the parent to the bus where the driver and aide will assist the child with seating/ buckling. The Assigned staff will Lysol clipboard/pens after each use -outside so parents can see action and fumes aren't an issue (keep wind direction in mind). Once all children are seated/buckled the aide will have each child use hand- sanitizer while roll-call is being performed.

### **Child Release Procedures**

Center: No children who are center pick- up will be released until all the buses have left the premises.

Parents cannot pick their child up before 12:15pm (unless emergency). Parents are instructed to remain in their vehicle at all times. Each will need to call into the center (423-881-5182) and their child will be brought out for pickup by a Head Start Staff who will ensure that the child is signed back out by the guardian. Children will be taken out in order. Staff member will Lysol clipboard/pens after each use -outside so parents can see action and fumes aren't an issue.

Busses: Parents previously instructed to remain in their vehicle at all times. Children will be released in order of the furthest vehicle from the bus order. The child will be brought out for pickup by a Head Start Staff who will ensure that the child is signed back out by the guardian. Staff members will Lysol clipboard/pens after each use -outside so parents can see action and fumes aren't an issue.

All applicable program policies and procedures are still in effect.

### **Positive COVID-19 Cases**

We are required to report all positive cases of Covid-19 to the Tennessee Department of Childcare Licensing and the local health department. Should a child or staff test positive or for COVID 19, we will send home a letter (hand delivered or in the mail) informing parents that someone at the center has tested positive. In the event that a staff or child tests positive for Covid-19, we will follow the guidance from the local health department and the CDC.

Contact information for children and staff that have been in close contact with the individual testing positive for Covid-19 will be shared with the local health department. If a child comes in close contact with someone with Covid-19, the health department will likely ask that your child be quarantined for 14 days.

**Close contact** is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient (infected person) is isolated.

### **Cleaning and Sanitation**

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start will continue to follow the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) cleaning schedule as we have followed in the past. The schedule calls for routinely cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, especially toys and games. We will also be cleaning objects/surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, keyboards, electronic devices, and other high touch surfaces often, using Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance. We have temporarily removed carpets and soft toys that cannot be easily cleaned from classrooms. We have selected an EPA approved cleaning product that will kill the Covid-19 virus and have additional products and/or dilution schedules for bloodborne pathogens. All cleaning products are labeled and will be kept out of reach of children. It appears that COVID-19 is a real airborne danger, and fortunately is relatively easy to clean on surfaces.

### **Precautions to take at Home**

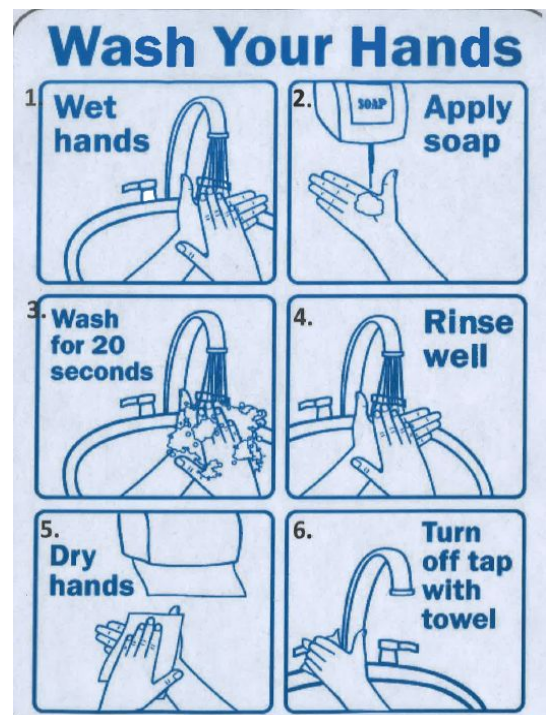
## When to wash your hands

### **Wash your hands regularly throughout the day, especially:**

- When first arriving at work and before leaving
- Before and after treating a sick person
- After touching blood or any other body fluid or substance, broken skin, or mucous membranes
- After touching an object or surface that is or may be contaminated
- Before and after eating, drinking, smoking, and after using the restroom
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose

## How to wash your hands

- Use warm water and plenty of soap. Work up a good lather by rubbing your hands together.
- Clean your whole hand, under your nails, between your fingers, and up your wrists. Wash for at least 20 seconds (CDC guidelines).
- Rinse your hands well. Let the water run off your fingertips, not up your wrists.
- Dry your hands well with clean paper towels. Or use an air dryer machine. If you can, use paper towels to turn off the faucet and open the door so you don't recontaminate your hands.
- If no sink is available, use the alcohol-based hand washing cleanser. Be sure it contains no less than 60% alcohol. These products are fast-acting and significantly reduce the number of germs on the skin. Unfortunately, they don't work on all types of germs. Wash with soap and water as soon as you can.



Remember: When you wash your hands, the longer you wash, the more germs you'll remove. Time yourself the next time you wash your hands. It may take longer than you think to get rid of germs.

### **Parent Volunteers**



All Parent Involvement and Volunteering will be suspended until further notice. Activities and information will be sent home in place of usual training we offer parents/guardians. We hope this requirement does not last all year. We love to have our parents/guardians and volunteers visit!

**Due to the restrictions on visitors to our centers, we are encouraging alternate types of volunteering. Here are some ideas:**

- Parents can be of great help in keeping up with community resources and also in letting other parents know about our program. Please suggest postings for our social media and community resource lists.
- We hope that our parents can find volunteer opportunities with other organizations, including some that call the elderly every day or help distribute food. We had some parents and staff reaching out to each other in amazing ways, and this was so helpful during the early days of the pandemic.
  - We need participants in our parent groups and Policy Council.
  - **Remote Learning Volunteers:** Families who are in the remote learning group should fill out an In Kind form each week to track the time spent on Head Start activities. These activities can be counted as volunteer hours.



## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **English**

If you do not speak English, hard of hearing, or deaf/blind, you can have interpretation services provided for you at no charge. Tell the person helping you that you need an interpreter.

### **Spanish**

Si Ud. no habla inglés, o si es sordo, tiene dificultad para oír, o es sordo/ciego, se le podrán proporcionar servicios de interpretación sin costo. Dígale a la persona que le esté ayudando que necesita un intérprete.

UCHRA Van Buren Head Start Program is a nonprofit program for children 3 to 5 years of age. Van Buren County Head Start is licensed by the State of Tennessee.

### **Mission Statement**

Foster individual development for children, families, and staff to sustain positive transitions into the future.

## **Eligibility**

The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program actively recruits age and income eligible children regardless of race, creed, sex, color, national origin, or disabling conditions.

## **Head Start**

Project Head Start is a family and child development program serving 3 and 4 year old children from low-income families. Children must be 3 or 4 years old by August 15th of that school year to be eligible for the Head Start program. Head Start gives priority to children/families that fall below the federal poverty income guidelines (which are updated by the federal government/yearly). Children/families whose income exceeds these guidelines can be considered, upon ensuring all eligible children have been given priority and at last resort. Ten percent of the total Head Start slots must be made available for children with disabilities.

Head Start is a comprehensive program that involves parents and the community in four areas: Education, Health Services, Social Services, and Parent/Community Partnership to ensure that children and families receive needed services and develop skills and strategies needed to ensure success throughout academic lifetime. Children will attend (7:30am-2:00pm) sessions, Monday through Friday during the Van Buren County academic school year.

In the event that there are more applications than available slots, the program considers many factors besides income and age. Factors may include disabilities, family composition, foster children, and other conditions that may reflect a higher need for Head Start services. In order to determine the special needs of the family, every Head Start applicant will maintain a Family Inventory.

## **FUNDING**

### **Head Start**

Project Head Start is a federally funded program operating under annual grants from the Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Office of Head Start. The number of children UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start serves is determined by this grant and may change from year to year depending on federal money available.

### **USDA Food Program**

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start receives supplemental funds for meals served to eligible children through USDA reimbursement. In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 260-1026.

### **Non-Federal Share**

The federal government requires that the Head Start program match 20 percent of the federal grant money awarded each year with cash, donations of time, space, and materials from the community and individual volunteers which is called In-kind. The program uses In-kind as the 20 percent non-federal share required.

### **Licensing**

Van Buren County Head Start is licensed by the State of Tennessee through the Department of Human Services Division of Licensing and Regulations. The license must be renewed annually. It is a legal requirement that helps ensure the safety of the children enrolled. Van Buren County Head Start is licensed to accommodate 40 children. Head Start voluntarily participates in the STAR Licensing Program. Through this program the center receives a report card and is evaluated on quality of services. Applicants can receive 1, 2, or 3 stars. Van Buren County Head Start has maintained 3 stars since the conception of the Star Program.



## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH**

### **Philosophy**

The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs. The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program approach is based on the philosophy that: A child can benefit most from a comprehensive interdisciplinary program to foster development and remedy problems through a broad range of services; in decision making. There are other factors that enable a developmental approach, which helps children achieve social competencies. The performance standards program, the child's entire family, and the community, must be involved. The program should maximize the strengths and unique experiences of each child. The family, which is perceived as the principal influence in the child's development, is invited and encouraged to be a direct participant in the program.

### **Goals**

The overall goal of the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children. Social competence means the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and future responsibilities in school and life. Social competence objectives are:

- to enhance children's growth and development;
- to strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children;
- to provide children with educational, health, and nutritional services;
- to link children and their families to needed community services;
- to ensure well-managed programs that involve parents for the accomplishment of goals and objectives.
- develop skills and strategies needed to ensure success throughout academic lifetime.

1. The improvement of the child's health and physical abilities, including appropriate steps to correct present physical and mental issues, to enhance every child's access to an adequate diet and the improvement of the family's attitude toward the future health care and physical abilities of the child;
2. The encouragement of self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity, and self-discipline, this will assist in the development of the child's social and emotional health;
3. The enhancement of the child's mental processes and skills with particular attention paid to conceptual and communication skills;
4. The establishment of patterns and expectations of success for the child, which will create a climate of confidence for present and future learning efforts and overall development;
5. An increased ability by the child and the family to relate to one another and to others;
6. An enhanced sense of dignity and self-worth within the child and the family.

### **Head Start Outcomes Framework**

This Framework is intended to guide Head Start programs in their ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children and it enhances efforts to analyze and use data on child outcomes in program self-assessment and continuous improvement. The Framework is composed of 5 central domains, 24 subdomains, 53 goals and over 100 examples of developmental progressions and indicators specific to children's skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. The Framework is based on Head Start Program Performance Standards, Head Start Performance Measures, and provisions of the Head Start Act. The Domains, Progressions and Indicators are presented as a Framework of building blocks that are important for school success. The Framework is not an exhaustive list of everything a child should know or be able to do by the end of preschool. The Framework is intended to guide assessment of 3 to 5 year old children.

### **School Readiness**

Head Start's Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Head Start encompasses a strong, clear and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development, including physical, cognitive, social and emotional development all of which are essential to children getting ready for school. Head Start has established school readiness goals which include the

expectations of children’s status and progress across domains of language and communication, literacy development, cognition (mathematics development and scientific reasoning), approaches to learning, perceptual, motor, and physical development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten ensuring children possess the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.

For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long term, lifelong success of their child. Head Start recognizes parents as their child’s primary teacher and advocate. The program consults with parents to establish school readiness goals working together to promote school readiness and to engage school systems and families as their children make the transition to kindergarten.

The approach encompasses three major frameworks that promote an understanding of school readiness for parents and families and their children. These three frameworks provide the foundation for implementing systemic and interrogated comprehensive child development services and family engagement efforts. This framework entails: Parent/Child relationship, Families as lifelong educators, Families as Learners, Family Engagement in Transition, Family Connection to Peers and Community, Family as Advocates and Leaders. Parents are provided opportunities to supply input to the overall program wide goals.

The final report can be linked on our website [ucvbheadstart.org](http://ucvbheadstart.org) located under the tab program “Governance” and report “School Readiness”.

### **Approach**

The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program offers an educational program that utilizes an individualized, child centered, and problem solving approach to learning. Children are encouraged to learn through exploration, experimentation and active involvement. The scientific research based The Creative Curriculum, implemented to fidelity, is the vital resource used in planning the UCHRA Van Buren Head Start Education Program.

### **Gold Sneaker Initiative**

Participation in the Gold Sneaker Initiative is mandated to any licensed child care facility in Tennessee. All policies shall be stated in the individual child care program's policies and a copy shall be provided to the Department of Health for maintenance of the Gold Sneaker recognition. U.C.H.R.A. Van Buren County Head Start is a proud member of the Gold Sneaker Initiative as we strive to promote awareness of physical fitness, proper nutrition, and tobacco-free environments. U.C.H.R.A. Van Buren County Head Start shall adhere to the policies of the Gold Sneaker Initiative in correlation with Head Start Performance Standards and the U.S.D.A. /C.A.C.F.P. regulations.



The policies of the Gold Sneaker Initiative, as set by the Tennessee Department of Human Services, are as follows:

### **Physical Activity**

#### **Policy 1**

Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of the physical activity time as required by TDHS licensure rules

Physical activity for children ages three years and older must be a balance of **structured and unstructured play**, both **indoors and outdoors** (weather permitting) utilizing age appropriate activities

#### **Policy 2**

Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of **limiting screen time** according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan

#### **Policy 3**

Children shall not be allowed to remain **sedentary** or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime

Child care director shall take **Go NAP SACC Self Assessments** (Infant and Child Safety Physical Activity & Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards

#### **Policy 4:**

Child care providers must ensure physical activity is a **positive experience** for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior

### **Nutrition**

#### **Policy 5**

Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including **breastfeeding**. All educators shall be trained to: advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly

Providers shall publicly **display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage** or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in *Breastfeeding Welcomed Here* through the TN Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding)

#### **Policy 6**

Child care educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including **adequate time for snack and meal consumption** and age-appropriate portion size

Child care educators shall **provide education to families** twice each year (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size

All eating opportunities shall consist of a respect for the child and promotion of a **positive attitude toward food**

Child care educators shall apply evidence-based **early food preference learning strategies** such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods

### **Tobacco**

#### **Policy 7**

The child care provider **campus shall be free of all tobacco and tobacco-related products**, including smoking, smokeless and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all indoor locations, whether or not children are present. Child care employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off-campus at provider-related activities (i.e. field trips, walks, and all other outdoor activities)



to

Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to **change clothes and wash hands** thoroughly prior to interacting with children

“**No Smoking**” signs shall be posted conspicuously at each child care provider entrance, as required by state law.

### **Benefits**

A longitudinal study reflected that (compared to similar children who did not attend preschool) children with a preschool education were more likely to show:

1. Better achievement in school
2. Higher high school graduation and college attendance rates

3. Lower juvenile delinquency and adult crime rates
4. Less welfare dependency
5. Fewer teenage pregnancies and lower childbearing rates and
6. Increased rates of employment and job training

### **Confidentiality**

Any information received by UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start Program will be kept in strictest confidence. Under no circumstances will this information be released and/or used for any other purpose than to help the child and the child's development. All records maintained in our office are locked and access is prohibited to anyone other than staff or service personnel. Children's records are always available to his/her parent or legal guardian. Parents wishing to release information must sign a Reveal to Obtain Form. Every parent/guardian signs a Parent Permission and Agreement (PPA) form before entering the program. Occasionally, a parent/guardian indicates they do not wish their child's photos to be taken and/or published. Parents/guardians must ensure that photos taken during events or in classrooms will not interfere with the privacy of others by checking with the Central Office staff prior to taking pictures. Confidentiality statement and Photo Policy included in (PPA) and will be completed and signed by all parents prior to entry. Violation can result in termination from the program and/or legal action by the offended party.

### **YOUR RIGHTS**

All children-receiving child care services in a certified or licensed day care center shall have the following rights:

- The right to be free from physical or mental abuse;
- The right not to be subjected to abusive language or abusive punishment; and,
- The right to be in the care of adults who shall meet their health, safety, and developmental needs.
- The right to have access to their children at all times the child is in care and access to the provider caring for their children during normal hours of provider operation and whenever the children are in the care of the provider;
- The right to be provided with information about child care regulatory standards, if applicable, where to direct questions about regulatory standards, and how to file a complaint;
- The right to file a complaint against a child care provider without any retribution against the parent, custodian/guardian of the child;
- The right to review and discuss with the provider any state reports and deficiencies revealed by such reports.

### **Grievance Policy**

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start actively seeks input from families of children enrolled in our program during the year in an effort to improve program quality. In order to address the needs and concerns of our families and the community, or complaints from individuals, the program will deal with groups or organizations in the following manner:

- Complaints should be submitted in writing (if possible). Any staff member receiving a complaint will immediately gather and write down all the available facts and information pertaining to the complaints.
- Our Director, who will determine how the issue should be addressed, will review all complaints. All complaints will be reviewed within five (5) working days from receipt of written complaint.
- The Director will take appropriate action to resolve the complaint. If no policy exists to address the situation, the Director will meet with the Policy Council Chairperson to determine how the issue should be approached.
- All formal complaints will be responded to in writing by our Director within ten (10) working days from receipt of written complaints
- If a satisfactory agreement for resolution cannot be reached you may file a grievance in writing to the Executive Director of UCHRA who will review it and respond within ten (10) workdays.
- If no policy exists to address the situation then the Executive Director will meet with the Chairperson for the Board of Directors taking into consideration documentation and recommendations of the Head Start Director and Policy

Council to determine how the issue should be approached.

- If satisfactory resolution is at an impasse, a mediation process will occur.

If you have any questions concerning our grievance process, you may ask any staff member or contact our center's Director personally.

## ENROLLMENT

### Application Requirements

To apply for UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start, parents/guardians must provide the following to the Family/Community Partnership Specialist:

- Birth Certificate or Birth Verification
- Immunization Certificate (age appropriate immunized according to the schedule authorized by the Tennessee Dept. of Health before being accepted for care (Licensing requirement 1240-4-3-10)
- School Medical/Physical Exam
- Proof of Income
- Proof of Insurance
- Social Security Card (verified ss# for family members and child being enrolled)

### Enrollment Requirements

When you are accepted for enrollment in our program, you are required to complete the following forms prior to entering the classroom:

- Addendum to Enrollment Form for Child Care
- Child Transportation Permission Form
- Code of Conduct
- Influenza Notification Form
- Medication Permission Form (as applicable)
- Menu Evaluation Form
- Parent Permission Agreement (PPA)
- Personal Safety Curriculum Form
- Volunteer Interest Form

Other information will be requested as indicated by family needs. A Family Inventory will be maintained during enrollment. If your child has a pre-diagnosed or suspected disability, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss your child's status. Details as to the purpose of the meeting will be made known to you (in writing) prior to each meeting.

Orientation meetings are held in August before the academic term begins. During this meeting, all required paperwork will be completed. The Parent/Guardian will also have a chance to meet the staff, see the classroom and ask questions about the program. Children will not be able to attend UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start until all enrollment criteria are met.

### Attendance



At the Van Buren County Head Start we have implemented The Student Attendance Success Plan, which is designed to help parents track their children's attendance and work with teachers to set appropriate goals.

What we do every day in our family matters. As parents and guardians, you can have a powerful impact on your child's attendance and success in school. The Student Attendance Success Plan helps parents/guardians have clear goals for their child's attendance, strategies you will use to support your child's attendance, a backup plan for when you need help getting your child to and from school, and a way to know whether your child is on track to meeting his/her attendance goal.

This form is based on materials created by Early Works at Earl Boyles Elementary School in Portland, Ore., and the DeVos Family Foundation in Michigan.

**Research shows** that early absence predicts long-term negative consequences, such as reduced levels of school achievement, increased truancy, and increased risk of dropping out of school. Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten miss basic skills and are particularly at risk for these negative outcomes. Early absenteeism is even more problematic for children from low-income families who lack the resources to compensate for missed learning time. Children in poverty are four times more likely to be chronically absent.

Few parents are aware of the extent to which consistent on-time attendance from the beginning of preschool and/or kindergarten can benefit their children's reading readiness, math skills, and social development. Most want better for their children than they themselves experienced and will work toward that goal if it feels real. FCPS honors parents in their efforts to get their children to school, and works with parents to establish routines around attendance

### **Hours of Service**

- All children should arrive at the center between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.
- Children should leave the center by 12:30 p.m. no later than 1:00 p.m.
- Parents who will be late picking up their child, or need to make any changes to their bus route should call the center no later than 11:00 a.m.
- Children will not be allowed into the classroom before their scheduled time.

**General Policy** In order to receive the benefits of the program, Head Start children are expected to attend all Monday through Friday class sessions. Regular attendance helps our program schedule an individualized education curriculum ensuring your child's academic success, field trips, appointments, and meal plan.

The Family/Community Partnership Specialist will determine the child's starting date at the time of enrollment. The child will be expected to attend on the assigned starting date. **If a child does not attend the center on their starting date, another family will fill that slot.** You must notify Head Start as early as possible if your child is ill or will be absent for a day or more. If a child misses four (4) days of school without prior notice from the parent or guardian, or five (5) days in a two-week period, or your child misses more than half the school days within a month attendance period or excessive absences within an indicated time frame the Family/Community Partnership Specialist will contact the parent or guardian by telephone, letter, or home visit and without response, the child can be dropped from the program.

**Expulsion Policy:** UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start will not expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior or health condition. When a child exhibits persistent and serious behaviors, UCHRA-VBCHS will explore all possible ways to address such behaviors and initiate ways to keep the child's safe participation in the Program. The Program will take steps to engage a mental health consultant if deemed necessary, and in accordance with the 504 and the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child is not excluded from the Program on the basis of a disability. If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, the Program will help the child to return to full participation in all Program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring all enrolled children's safety. If it is determined that the child's continued enrollment present a continued, serious, safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, and it is determined that the Program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, UCHRA-VBCHS will work with the mental health consultant, disability

specialist, and the parent to transition the child to a more appropriate placement. A detailed transition plan from UCHRA-VBCHS to a more appropriate setting will be developed with the family.

**Release of Child** Requirements are necessary to account for all students and keep them safe and maintain security. No child will be allowed to leave school with any other person without written authorization from the enrolling parent/guardian. Identification must be presented before your child will be allowed to leave school/ bus. If, for any reason you want a name to be added to or deleted from the authorized to release-to list. You must notify the school immediately, any changes to the release cannot be made after 12 noon for same day arrangements. A child can only be released to or from the Head Start (drop off/pick up) by any person 18 years of age or older who is also on the release for that child, except when the legal parent/guardian is younger than 18 years of age. Periodic review of your child's release information is recommended to ensure safety.

No child enrolled shall be released from the school/ bus to any person other than the enrolling parent without the permission of the enrolling parent, or the expressed permission contained in a certified copy of the most recent Court Order on file for the child. The enrolling parent must provide a certified copy of the **most recent** Court Order stating any rights/privileges of the **non-enrolling** parent or the noncustodial parent have been terminated or restricted.

Violation of this rule will result in a verbal warning for the first offense, a written warning for the second offense, and finally, if these two means have failed, dismissing the child from the program.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up Of the Children at the Center**

Head Start must meet regulation and requirements set by the State of Tennessee and The Office of Head Start. To allow us to meet all safety requirements, it is the responsibility of the guardian to ensure that the child is safe at all times, (i.e. not running inside building, staying within view of guardian, staying in designated child areas (classrooms), not exiting the building unattended, etc..) until the exchange of responsibility is turned over (signing child in or after signing the child out). Parent/Guardian aide in ensuring safety is greatly appreciated at all times. **We must insist that parking take place in designated area due to accommodating bus pick-up and drop-off. DO NOT PARK ON BUS LOADING ZONE AT ANY TIME. DO NOT move vehicles while buses are loading or unloading.**

### **Dropping Off Children**

On the afternoon Head Start bus route all children being dropped off at designated drop area should have a parent/guardian or authorized person available to receive the child. The bus monitor will have a sign off sheet for the parent to sign indicating that they have received their child. If a parent/guardian or authorized person is not available the bus route will continue as scheduled. If the parent/guardian or authorized person is not present to receive the child, staff will return to Head Start with the child, and the Department of Children's Services will be notified. Daily changes of the bus route are confusing and upsetting for children. Please try to limit excessive changes in your drop off locations. Photo Identification is required when picking up a child from the center or bus. There are no exceptions.

### **Signing In and Out**

Upon entering the center to pick up or drop off your child, the parent/guardian or authorized person must sign-in and sign-out their child in the child's assigned room and verbally notify staff in the room that the child is being dropped off or picked up. Parents must sign on the Attendance (Sign In/Sign Out) Sheet. This is located as you enter the child's assigned classroom. Any individual entering the building for any reason is required to sign the Center Sign-In Sheet located in the hallway by the front door. If a child is not signed in and out, the Family/Community Partnership specialist will assume the child is absent. Failure to follow this policy will result in a written warning and, as a last resort, dismissal from the program.

### **Authorization to Pick Up**

During the application process the Parent/Guardian will identify who is to be contacted in the event of an emergency/ release. The Family/Community Partnership Specialist will maintain information in the child's file. For your child's protection, only those people listed on the form will be allowed to pick up the child. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to inform the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start Family/Community Partnership Specialist of any

changes as soon as possible, and to subsequently fill out a Change of Status Form. Only legal parents/guardians can make changes to drop off or pick up arrangements. If you call into the center to authorize a one-time pick up, you must know the first and last name of the individual that will be picking up your child. Any Parent/Guardian Authorized Person coming to pick up a child that are presumed to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will not be permitted to pick up the child. Staff will contact other adults authorized to pick up the child. If no one can be contacted to pick up the child then the Department of Children's Services will be notified.

### **Late Pick-Up**

If a child has not been picked up by 2:30 p.m., the Parent/Guardian will be contacted. If the Parent/Guardian cannot be reached the persons on the emergency list will be contacted. As a last resort, and only if the Parent/Guardian or any other individuals listed on the emergency form cannot be contacted, the Dept. of Children Services and the Van Buren County Sheriff will be notified that the child has been abandoned. Keep in mind the pick-up time is 2:00 p.m. and excessive late pick-ups/violation can result in termination from the program. Arrangements can be made with your child's classroom teacher.

### **Cancellation Due to Weather**

In case of bad weather, please listen to the radio or television for announcements concerning the closing of Van Buren County Schools. If the county schools are closed, then Head Start will be closed. If evacuation from the center is required, you will be notified and the center will attempt to remain open until all children have been picked up unless risk to child and staff will occur. (See evacuation of center)

#### **Recommended Radio Stations:**

94.7 (Cookeville)  
107.3 & 107.7 (McMinnville & Spencer)  
103.9 (McMinnville) 105.5(Sparta)

#### **Recommended Television Channels:**

CBS (5), NBC (4), ABC (2) Nashville channel  
WRCB(3) Chattanooga channel

### **Calendar Closing**

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start closing will follow the same schedule as the Van Buren County School System. During orientation, you should receive a schedule of tentative closing located on page 2 of the Parent Handbook. If there are changes or additions, you will be notified of those events via callout system, Facebook, posted on bus, posted in classrooms by sign in/out sheet, posted by sign in/out sheet by front door, through face-to-face communication and on website [www.vanburenheadstart.com](http://www.vanburenheadstart.com) under calendar of events tab. It is your responsibility to keep yourself updated through one of these communication methods and to keep the program aware of any changes to your contact information.

### **Tobacco Use**

UCHRA Head Start is a Tobacco- Free Environment. It is the wish of the UCHRA Head Start to contribute to the improvement of the health of the families we serve. Tobacco use is harmful to a person's health. Tobacco smoke has numerous negative health effects not only to the person smoking (firsthand) but it affects all who come in contact with that person or the area which was smoked in (secondhand and thirdhand). **TENNESSEE LAW PROHIBITS SMOKING FIFTY (50) FEET FROM ANY ENTRANCE!** There is a container located in front of the main entrance to dispose of your cigarette-butts. Always dispose of your cigarettes in the container so that the risk of exposure to the product is limited and also to help keep our grounds beautiful. **There will be no smoking in the presence of children on field trips or at the UCHRA Head Start's bus pick-up/drop-off locations.**

### **Soft Drinks**

We provide a nutritional environment for the children here at Head Start; therefore we must ask that you do not drink soft drinks in front of the children. **Please limit your drinking of soft drinks to the "Parent Lounge"**. We do not permit drink cans to be scattered all over the building, put drink cans in the recycle bin adjacent to the kitchen. \*Water filling



stations are available free of charge for all visitors.

## **PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PRESCHOOL**

Beginning school is a big event in your child's life. You will be the one who has the most influence over his/her attitude toward the new experience. This is the first step toward many years of formal education, and it is very important that you do everything that you can to help your child adjust and feel positive about this experience.

### **General Suggestions**

- Be willing to listen to his/her fears about going to school.
- Answer all of his/her questions honestly.
- Try to show your child a positive feeling towards school and learning.
- Talk with the child's teacher about any specific concerns.
- Unless they are sick, send your child to school every day.
- If possible, let your child visit the center before their actual starting date in order for them to become familiar with the environment.

### **Specific Suggestion**

Here are a few ideas for helping your child get ready for school. We hope the following suggestions will help you to prepare your child for those first special days.

- Show your child where their classroom is. With advance permission, you and your child may spend time there prior to the starting date.
- Show your child the playground and explain that they will play there when school begins.
- Tell your child the name of their teachers (Mrs. Kim, Mrs. Amy, Mr. Joe, etc....).
- Tell your child how they will get to and from school each day.
- Tell your child who will pick them up and who will drop them off for school.
- Tell your child the time they will be dropped off and picked up. Draw a picture of a clock showing the time.
- Show your child the starting date on your calendar. Count the days until school starts.
- Give your child something special to bring to school to remind him/her of you. A note saying you love them is one idea.
- Dress your child in comfortable play clothes so they will not worry about staining clothes during normal school activities, such as painting and playing with sand, water, and clay.
- Encourage your child to tell the teachers when they want or need something (to go to the bathroom, to get a drink of water, etc....).
- Look at any work the child brings home. Tell them what you like about it.

### **Extra Items to Send to School**

Each child should bring to school an extra set of clothing (pants, shirts, socks and underclothes) identified with laundry markers or other semi-permanent methods. Always consider appropriate clothing for weather, when it becomes cold remember to change clothing available at school. Children wearing diapers or training pants can bring the amount of diapers, training pants, baby wipes, and other necessities the parent/guardian estimates will be needed. Only disposable diapers can be worn by children while attending UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start. Any other special items needed by the child can be brought to the center when agreed upon with the supervising teacher or Education Supervisor.

### Dressing for School

Dress your child for comfort and play. Your child will learn through exploration and by being involved in many types of activities. Your child will be encouraged to paint, play in sand, work in our class garden, and other potentially messy activities. Although we provide paint smocks and try to use washable materials, your child should be dressed so that clothing does not inhibit their activities and development. Dress your child for safety. While children are active, clothes that are too loose and jewelry (including earrings) may interfere with movement. National statistics show that many playground accidents occur because of jewelry. **Therefore, it is strongly recommended that no jewelry be worn. Many accidents are also associated with wearing flip-flops; therefore we discourage these types of shoes.** Dress your child for independence. In our program, we will help your child learn to solve problems, think creatively, and act independently. Clothes that children cannot buckle, snap, tie, zip, etc.... interfere with their development.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule will vary for each classroom and is posted in the classroom for both the parents and the child to see. Although changes may be made periodically, the daily schedule will be similar to the following:

#### **Classroom Schedule (Sample)**

<b>7:30 - 8:00 AM</b>	<b>Arrival/ Free Choice of Centers</b>
<b>8:00 - 8:25 AM</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>8:25 - 8:35 AM</b>	<b>Toileting/Hand Washing/ Transition #1</b>
<b>8:35 - 9:35 AM</b>	<b>Outdoor Time - Gross Motor</b>
<b>9:35 - 9:50 AM</b>	<b>Group Time #1</b>
<b>9:50 - 10:35 AM</b>	<b>Free Choice of Interest Areas</b>
<b>10:35 - 10:50 AM</b>	<b>Group Time #2</b>
<b>10:50 - 11:00 AM</b>	<b>Toileting/ Hand Washing/ Transition #2</b>
<b>11:00- 11:30 AM</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>12:00- 12:20 PM</b>	<b>Reflection/Large Group Roundup</b>
<b>12:20- 12:30 PM</b>	<b>Prepare for Departure</b>

**Classroom Limits (Rules)** We wish to instill an ability within the children to self-regulate, therefore we use the terminology Limits instead of Rules. The general Limits of the Classroom and center are as follows:

- Listening ears
- Kind Hands, Feet, & Bodies
- Inside Voices
- Walking Feet We urge you to consistently use the above limits in your home and while dropping off and picking up your children as well, in a scaffolding effort to further instill the abilities of the child to self-regulate.

### Field Trips

We extend the learning environment into the community by scheduling regular field trips. The field trips are planned by the teaching staff to include a wide range of activities and experiences for the children. When a field trip is planned, your child's teacher will send you a notification or field trip form. If you do not wish your child to attend the field trip, please let your child's teacher know and appropriate arrangements will be made. With prior arrangements, parents are welcome to come and participate in the activities. If your child attends the field trip, they must attend and arrive at the field trip with the school. If you plan to leave early with your child, please let your child's teacher know. You must sign your child out.

**Due to COVID 19, all field trips will be postponed until further notice.**

## GENERAL POLICIES

### Child Abuse

According to Public Law 101-647, Statute All staff working in a childcare setting, school, Head Start, etc. must report all suspected cases of child abuse. Examples of suspect that would be reported include, but not limited to the following:

- Physical Injury: includes, but not limited to: severe lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries and serious bodily harm.
- Mental Injury: includes, but not limited to: harm to a child's intellectual or psychological functioning.
- Sexual Abuse: includes, but not limited to: persuasion or coercion of a child to participate in or assist another to engage in sexual explicit conduct.
- Neglect: includes, but not limited to: serious endangerment to the physical well-being of a child, such as failure to provide medical care, leaving children unattended in vehicles for any amount of time or reason, etc.

### Transportation

The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start bus transports all children we can accommodate. When no arrangement can be made Parents/Guardians will be responsible for transportation of their child. All children riding Head Start Buses must observe all safety rules; failure to do so can result in transportation being denied. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start provides transportation for education field trips and Head Start related services provided by the program. All children attending these events must ride Head Start transportation. Parent transportation to these events can be provided upon request three (3) days prior to the event. **NEVER drop children off on the outside of the building!** All children must be accompanied into the building. (See "Drop Off and Pick Up").



### Behavior Management

The Behavior Management Policy used by the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program requires that corporal punishment (spanking) or extended isolation will not be used as disciplinary measures. All staff members, parents, guardians, and parent volunteers will sign a statement verifying their understanding of this policy (Code of Conduct), during the times they are in the classroom or on Head Start premises. Failure to follow this policy can result in termination of employment or volunteer status. You may not spank your child at the center. In place of corporal punishment and extended isolation, the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program utilizes the following approaches:

- Preventive measures such as teaching alternatives. (See Classroom Limits)
- Redirection and substitution.
- Natural and logical consequences.
- Centers for Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL)

A temporary suspension will only be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

### Mental Health Supports

We advocate for and provide high-quality mental health services that are respectful and responsive through strengths-based and family-centered approaches to parents/children who have to ensure awareness and identification of the effects of Adverse Childhood Trauma and ensure a foundation of resilience is established for later developmental outcomes.



Mental health is something that affects 1 in 5 Americans. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. There are ways a person can help their own mental health by becoming more active, volunteering, eating right and getting enough sleep, connecting with others and creating joy and satisfaction by doing things you enjoy. You can also consult with professionals if you feel you need help to get better. As you can see with the statistics above, it is a common problem in this country and there is help easily available.

Significant mental health problems can and do occur in young children. Children can show clear characteristics of anxiety disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and neurodevelopmental disabilities, such as autism, at a very early age. At Head Start, teachers recognize problems and we have available to us Mental Health professionals to evaluate children to get the appropriate assistance they need to live happier, healthier lives that will carry into their future.

### **Sex offenders**

Under no circumstances will UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start allow any sex offender listed on the Tennessee Sex Offender Registry into the Head Start center and/or at any other program activity that might be held outside of the center. We may notify law enforcement and request that persons be removed from the site who violate this policy.

Parents or legal guardians who are sex offenders may be allowed into the center or center activity, once they have received written permission or a request from the Director, notice of offender status must be provided upon enrollment, and any parent/guardian offender must have a staff escort at all times and only for extenuating circumstances such as child illness or injury or as required by LICENSURE RULES FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS these regulations state that “During operating hours, parents shall be permitted immediate access to their children.” (40-39-211)

### **Personal Items Brought to School**

Children are permitted and encouraged to bring personal items to school. If possible, place your child’s name on the item. **In selecting items, which you allow your child to bring to school, please select those which provide comfort only. Please do not send toy weapons, war toys, and/or toys that encourage aggression (guns, knives, swords, water pistols, etc....).** Prior to bringing items to school, discuss with your child the proper care, possibility of loss, and their responsibility for the item. Explain that a teacher has to approve the item. Check the item for safety. The teachers will try to protect the children’s personal items. However the safety of the item cannot be guaranteed and neither the teacher nor the center will be responsible if it’s lost or damaged.

### **Alias**

On the Parent/Guardian Permission To Reveal Or Obtain Confidential Information form the name/s in the alias section you must include the following: -Name you currently use. This should be the name on a government ID like a passport, driver’s license or

military ID. -Your maiden name, if applicable, even if it is your current name. -Nicknames which you publicly use on other forms, usually a derivative of your name, such as if your name is

Daniel and have been known as Dan or Danny. -Nicknames which you have publicly used in the past. -Pen names/stage names/professional names you do use or have used in the past.

If your mother calls you “Cutie Pie” or a nickname that is more personal you DO NOT have to list that name on the form.

Even if a name was not a legal name, you still must include it on the form. For example, if your full name is Jane Roberta Smith but people have always called you Roberta, your friends call you Bobbi, you use J. Roberta Smith on legal documents, and your birth name was Jane Roberta Jones, then you must include the following names in the AKA (also known as) or alias section of the form if you have used them:

Jane Roberta Jones

Jane Roberta Smith  
Roberta Jones  
Roberta Smith  
Bobbi Jones  
Bobbi Smith  
J.Roberta Jones  
Roberta Smith  
Jane Jones  
Jane Smith

### **Name Change**

When a parent/guardian or child has a name change, a certified copy of a court order or a marriage certificate or a dissolution decree reflecting the new name in full is the primary document required. If these documents are not available, then the student must demonstrate usage.

A legal name change is recognized by submitting the following:

- \*State issued driver license with your photo
- \*United States Passport
- \*Photo ID issued by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security
- \*Photo ID issued by the federal or Tennessee state government
- \*United States Military photo ID
- \*Tennessee handgun carry permit with your photo

What IDs are not acceptable? College student IDs and photo IDs not issued by the federal or Tennessee state government are NOT acceptable. This includes county or city issued photo IDs, such as library cards, and photo IDs issued by other states.

### **Television and Video Viewing**

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start uses only educational and/or theme-related media within the classrooms during implementation of the curriculum.

### **Lost and Found**

When something is found in the classroom, bus or on the playground and no child claims the article, it is placed in a Lost and Found box located in the office. Please check it regularly. Items brought to school that become disruptive to classroom activities or become a major problem will also be placed in lost and found. You will be notified to pick up these items.

### **Naps**

An extended rest period is part of the preschool program. Children are not required to sleep but are required to rest quietly (see "Covers"). **Due to COVID 19, we will have a shortened day this school year and until further notice, naps are eliminated.**

### **Covers**

Tennessee Licensing Regulations require that covers and pillowcases are washed weekly and all children who take naps (rest) have individual covers for naptime. Our center provides a cot, sheet, cover and small pillow for each child. You can provide a **nap "buddy"/"lovie" that can be left at the center every day**. If possible, these items should be marked with your child's name. Storage is limited; please select items accordingly. No other child will use your child's cot to sleep on.

### **Transfer of Records**

Head Start programs are required to keep on file records documenting professional diagnoses of disabilities and the results of all screenings, exams, treatment, immunization, family contacts, referrals to outside agencies, developmental assessment, and samples of classroom work. These records can be shared with the public school system if written legal parental release of information is obtained.

Records in your child's file are the property of UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start. With written permission from the legal parents/guardian, records can be released to another school or facility responsible for services to the child. All requests for transfers must have the legal parents/guardians signature. Any request will require 24-hours to process. If your child will be leaving our center to attend Kindergarten, you may want to sign this form and leave it in your child's file. Then, if you need forms later during the next year, we will be able to mail them to you or the person/facility you choose. If a form is not in your child's folder, you must come to the office to sign the form before any documents will be released.

### **Reviewing Records**

Parents/Guardians are free to view their child's records at any time. Reviewing your child's records must be done in the office area only. **Under no circumstances may any records leave our office.** Parents who wish copies of items in their child's file may request them in writing at no cost. Copies require at least 72-hours to process.

### **Outdoors**

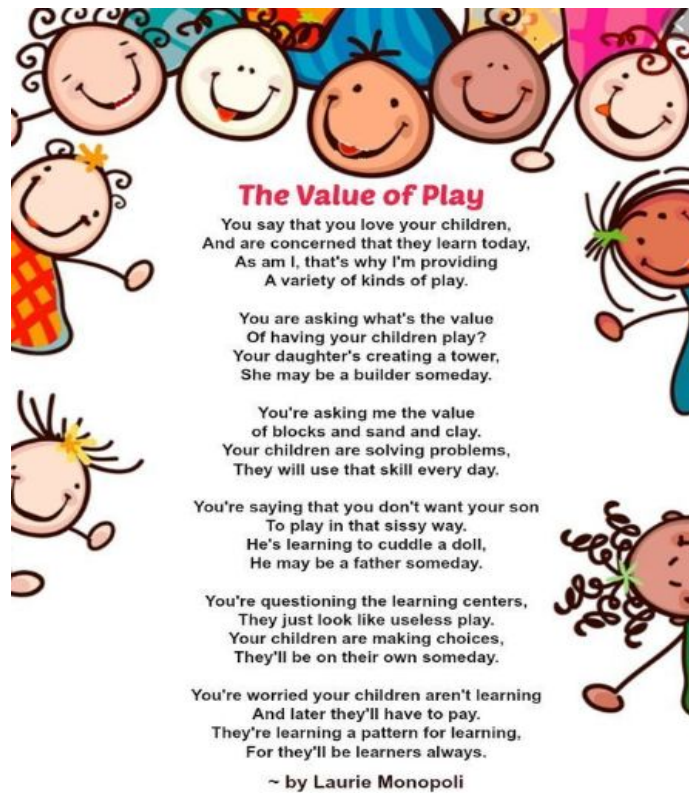
Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily schedule when the temperature is 35-95 degrees. Adjustments will be made for heat index and wind chill factor. We use the playground as an extension of the classroom. All children who attend school will go outside. Sun block is provided and administered when necessary with written consent from parent/guardian. In most cases, any child who is too ill to participate in our curriculum, which includes outdoor learning, should stay out of school until they have recovered completely. Please send appropriate clothes your child can wear outside. Teachers will make sure hoods and gloves (these items) are worn as needed. These items are provided by Head Start and these items will not be shared between the children. If a child happens to take these items home, the parent/guardian should return them to the center. If you are unable to provide your child with appropriate clothing due to family circumstances, please contact the Family/Community Partnership Specialist. We might be able to help you find the needed item.

### **Entry Refusal**

To protect your child from illness, children will not be allowed to stay at school when sick. Your child's teacher has the option of not allowing your child into the classroom if there is suspicion of communicable illness or disease (see "Health").

### **EDUCATION**

The learning environment and the daily schedule is designed to foster independence, self-control, exploration, feelings of positive self-worth, problem solving, creativity, and physical and intellectual growth.



## Curriculum

At the heart of The Creative Curriculum is knowledge of child development theory and careful consideration of the latest research in the field of early childhood education. Used to inform and shape, The Creative Curriculum and the guidance offered to teachers, the research base ensures that teachers know not only what and how to teach children but why particular practices are effective. By understanding the theory and research behind how children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors progress over time, teachers are better able to support children's development and learning. The Creative Curriculum highlights the important balance between applying a general knowledge of child development with the particular knowledge a teacher gains by forming a relationship with each child and family.

Until the 20th century, little scientific attention was given to studying how children develop and learn. In the past 75 years, however, research has provided a wealth of information about childhood as a separate and distinct stage of life with its own characteristics. That research informs developmental and learning expectations for young children in early childhood education programs (Berk, 2009). Early childhood professionals make decisions about the education of children based upon three types of information (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009):

- child development and how children learn
- the individual strengths, needs, and interests of each child
- each child's family and community cultures.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is based on five fundamental principles. They guide practice and help us understand the reasons for intentionally setting up and operating preschool programs in particular ways. These are the principles:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.

- Teacher–family partnerships promote development and learning.

This paper summarizes the major theories and research that helped Teaching Strategies identify these principles; each of these influences our understanding of child development and learning and informs our recommendations to teachers.

The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start implements the Creative Curriculum. The curriculum is based very much on the transfer of control from the teacher to the child. The main mission is providing developmentally appropriate materials and activities within a wide variety of learning centers. During active learning, children are not just recipients of information but have hands-on experiences. The teachers concentrate on developing a real ability to converse with the child; asking questions that will extend the learning experience that is taking place. Children are provided experiences in language, representation, classification, sequencing, numbers and logical reasoning, special and temporal relations, movement and social/emotional development.

Children are encouraged to make choices and plan what they will do. They are provided with time to work on their activity of choice as the teacher observes, reflects and asks the child to respond to questions about their experiences. This is called Observe/Reflect/Respond) Using this information, enables the teacher to determine whether a child needs more time to practice a particular skill or if they are ready to move to the next stage (scaffolding).

To help the children improve their listening skills and to allow for a variety of learning styles, the teachers plan large group activities at least once a day. Some large groups include storytime, films, songs, finger plays, and guest speakers (to include parents). To help the children plan their activities, work on individual projects, and carry out tasks, the teachers plan small group activities. These activities usually involve a small group of children (usually 10 or less) and include things like art projects, nutritional snacks and science discoveries.

### **Learning Centers**

Rooms are arranged in easily identifiable Learning Centers that the children may choose to work in during center time. Each center has a variety of materials and activities that children can find, use, and put away with a minimum of adult supervision.

When visiting our classroom, you will see a room full of children playing. Our center does not use duplicated learning materials, worksheets, or coloring pages. All activities are designed for hands-on involvement. Activities sent home are designed for parent-child interaction, not for “Busy Time.” As parents/guardians you may ask what your children are learning by playing. The learning centers most often used in our classroom are listed below with examples of how they promote development and learning for your child:

#### **I. Block Center**

- Use of materials and develop social skills
- Follow safety rules for building
- Expand their knowledge and learn to respect viewpoints different from their own
- Develop large and small (gross and fine motor) muscle strength/skills
- Improve eye/hand coordination
- Increase their vocabulary
- Practice writing skills as they make signs for their buildings
- Set the basis for more complex abstract thinking
- Increase math and science concepts, such as size, shape, number, order, area, length, patterns, weight, balance, and cause and effect

#### **II. Art Center**

- Expands vocabulary and language by describing art elements such as color, shape, space, texture.
- Promotes knowledge of print by having them sign their names on their artwork.



- Introduces one-to-one correspondence as they place one paintbrush in each paint cup.
- Observes patterns in art, such as stripes and alternate shapes.
- Explores geometry and spatial sense as they use three-dimensional shapes.
- Teaches life science by using leaves and flowers collected to make art collages.
- Encourages social studies by drawing, painting, and sculpting people and things in their world.
- Promotes knowledge of people and the environment by creating art to beautify their school.

### **III. Dramatic Play Center**

- Offers opportunities for role-play and creative dramatics
- Offers opportunities for development and use of reading, writing, and number skills.
- Helps the child develop acceptable social skills (sharing, taking turns, etc....)
- Encourages development of oral language skills
- Promotes physical development and self-help skills by buttoning and snapping dress-up clothes.

### **IV. Discovery Center (Science & Math)**

- Increases vocabulary of mathematical and scientific concepts
- Encourages the use of counting, sorting, and classifying skills
- Strengthens the understanding of size, shape, and textures of objects
- Provides opportunities to explore, manipulate, and experiment with measurement, temperature, time, and weight
- Stimulates interest in matter and energy, living things and their activities, our earth, man, and his environment
- Guides process skills by helping them learn how to observe, collect information, make predictions, and then experiment.

### **V. Library**

- Gives opportunities for children to acquire reading and pre-reading skills
- Encourages children to experience literacy as a source of enjoyment.
- Promotes phonological awareness.
- Supports comprehension by asking open-ended questions during storybook readings.
- Gives opportunities for children to remember details and express ideas
- Increases verbal skills through storytelling with flannel board figures and puppets
- Provides ample opportunity for children to seek quiet time and personal space

### **VI. Music and Movement**

- Supports spatial sense by having them to move around, in, out, through, etc.
- Enhances children's awareness that listening is important for information and enjoyment
- Teaches children how to listen effectively
- Stimulates creativity in rhythms and movement
- Increases oral skills
- Increases auditory skills
- Introduces dance, music and drama.

### **VII. The Circle/Toys and Games (Group Rug and Manipulative)**

- Encourages talking and sharing as a total group
- Offers a place for small group lessons during work time
- Offers a space for making plans together
- Offers manipulative games for promoting eye-hand coordination and recognition of shape, size, color, etc.
- Introduces unit concepts to the entire group

- Helps the group learn to complete a task
- Offers opportunities to match, sort, and classify

#### **VIII. Outdoor/Indoor Gross Motor**

- Offers opportunities for gross-motor development through running, climbing, crawling, skipping, jumping, playing with balls, etc.
- Develops writing skills through sand play, painting, drawing, etc.
- Develops weighing and measuring skills through water and sand play woodworking, etc.
- Offers opportunities for children to watch plants and animals grow.
- Promotes development of social skills.
- Offers opportunities for children to use their bodies in challenging tasks (promoting self-esteem).

#### **VIV. Sand/Water Center**

- Allows children to recognize cause and effect.
- Helps to develop the concept of sequencing, textures, and form.
- Promotes development of social interaction and language skills.
- Introduces physical science by using props such as funnels, sieves, etc. to explore sand/water.

#### **X. Technology Center**

- Develops fine motor hand/eye coordination.
- Aids letter, number, colors and shapes recognition.
- Promotes social interaction and language skills.
- Introduces life science when children learn about plants and animals.



## Daily Schedule

The daily schedule supports our goals for children. We want your child to feel secure and independent, moving from one activity to another as easily and confidently as possible. We strive to provide a variety of learning experiences for a well-rounded education. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start plans a daily schedule that takes all of these goals into account. The staff follows a schedule day after day so that children may know what will happen next (see “Daily Schedule”).

## Notes to Parents

There are two types of notes to parents: Notes concerning activities and accomplishments the child has demonstrated in the classroom, and notes concerning behaviors exhibited by your child and involving your child. Notes about activities and accomplishments help teachers and parents keep in close contact. Teachers will look for **Key Experiences** the child has demonstrated in class. During home visits, your child’s teacher will discuss all of these Key Experiences with you, and make a note of what you would like to have him/her work on during the year. Notes about behaviors, including accidents, will be sent home on the same day the incident happens. Should your child demonstrate a violent behavior (such as biting), or if your child is the recipient of a violent behavior (such as being bitten), or has a minor accident (such as falling down on the playground), you will receive a note from the teacher about what happened and what action was taken. It is the policy of UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start not to include the name of other children involved in an incident. For example, if another child scratches your child you will receive a note saying that your child was scratched and what the teacher did. If your child scratched someone, you will receive a note saying what your child did and what measures the teacher took after the incident. Teachers maintain strict confidentiality concerning any incidents that occur at our center. Please do not ask the teacher to reveal the name(s) of children or families involved in incidents. If you feel more extensive measures should be taken, you may contact the Education Specialist to express your concerns.

## Health



# A Healthy Child is Child Ready to LEARN!

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start staff members are provided training in the areas of medical, dental, nutritional and mental health. The training will help to ensure that a safe, healthy environment is provided to all children and that staff can serve as a resource to the families. Staff members are also provided with CPR and first-aid training.

In the health area, staff assists families in obtaining TennCare and CoverKids when applicable, serving as an advocate when necessary and ensuring all children and families have a primary caregiver/medical home.

**Immunizations** Tennessee Day Care regulations require that an Immunization Certificate be on file before a child is permitted to enter the classroom. Immunization status is checked regularly by the Health Services Specialist and the parents/guardians will be consulted. Immunizations are available from the local Health Department or your primary caregiver. **It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to keep them up to date.**

## Meals

An on-site cook prepares food for the UCHRA Van Buren Head Start. Our program offers breakfast, lunch and a snack. Children eat in a family style setting socializing in a relaxed atmosphere. Activities related to nutrition will be planned on a regular basis for children. Please note when your child’s class eats breakfast and lunch. If your child misses the time the meal is served, it is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to provide for their child. Meals are provided for volunteers who have donated at least three (3) hours of service. All volunteers who substitute in the classroom will be provided meals free of charge (this pertains to meals served during your scheduled volunteer time). No snacks are provided to adults.

## **Nutrition**

Our program strictly follows state and Head Start regulations regarding meals. The meals must be balanced according to State, Federal, and Head Start nutritional guidelines. The Nutritionist for the Van Buren County Board of Education oversees menus. A variety of foods must be offered to broaden the children's food experience. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start makes every attempt to make considerations for cultural preference, ethnic restrictions, identified needs, and nutritional requirements in menu preparation. Current menus are posted in the hallway and classrooms. All Parents/Guardians will be provided a copy of the monthly menus via the newsletter. The newsletter can be found on our website [www.vanburenheadstart.com](http://www.vanburenheadstart.com). Food cannot be used as punishment or reward in the Head Start Program. Children are offered additional portions as desired and as available during meal times. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start works closely with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in menu and fiscal planning in the nutritional area.

## **Food Brought to School**

Nutritious meals are provided by UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start. Food is not allowed to be brought from home into the classroom or on buses for an individual child. If children have food allergies, special arrangements will be made with our food services for substitutions, with a statement from a recognized medical authority on file. Arrangements may also be made for religious beliefs and ethnic restrictions. Special food to share with all the children can be brought by families **but only with prior approval from the teacher**. This includes birthday and holiday treats. This helps us to let you know if there are allergies to avoid.

## **Brushing Teeth**

Self-care oral hygiene is emphasized daily as part of the classroom experience. Preschool children brush their teeth once daily prior to leaving. Toothbrushes and toothpaste will be provided by UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start at the beginning and upon returning from Christmas break. You will be provided toothbrushes throughout the year so that you can scaffold this learning experience at home. If you are in need of toothbrushes for home use see the health specialist for assistance.

## **Sickness**

Any child unable to participate in the daily schedule (including outside play) due to illness, should not attend their session. Our center will call you to pick up your child if any of the following conditions occur:

- Diarrhea
- Nausea with vomiting
- Fever 101 degrees and above
- Chills
- Continuous c/o Earache
- Continuous c/o Sore throat
- Skin rash or open sores
- If the child appears excessively sleepy or lethargic
- Eye discharge: thick mucus or pus draining or pink eye
- Severe coughing: child gets red or blue in the face, or makes high pitched whooping sound after coughing

If you wish to be called in circumstances other than those listed above, please state that on the Emergency Form. Do not bring your child to school if they show any of these symptoms. It is a good idea to have substitute childcare planned for emergencies.

If your child has had a communicable disease, such as measles or strep throat, please contact our Health Services Specialist for information about what you will need to do before your child will be permitted back into the classroom. Some illnesses require a note from the Health Department or physician before we will let your child re-enter the classroom. You will be advised with a note home if a child in our program has contracted or is suspected of a

communicable disease. This note will inform you of symptoms to watch for and what necessary actions you must take.

### **Care of a Sick Child**

If a child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be placed in a supervised area until arrangements can be made for you or someone on your Emergency Form to pick them up. If it is suspected that a child has a communicable disease, they will be separated from the other children and placed in an isolated supervised area.

A letter will be sent to all families any time there is an occurrence of any contagious illness (such as measles or chickenpox) at our center. The letter will list all the symptoms you might want to look for with your own child, and will indicate the steps you will have to take to re-admit your child to the classroom.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Emergency Information**

Upon enrollment, the parent/guardian is required to complete an Emergency Form. You are asked to list the names of at least three (3) adults who can be contacted in case your child is sick or in case of any emergency. The adults will be called in the order they are listed. Therefore, if you wish us to contact you first when your child is ill, your name should be listed first. It is extremely important that the names of the individuals listed be kept up to date. This is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. If the information needs to be changed, please fill out a Change of Status form immediately. If any of the individuals listed on your form refuse to pick up your child, we will notify the parent/guardian in writing. If that individual is called a second time and refuses to pick up the child, the name of that individual will be dropped from the Emergency Form and the parent/guardian will be notified in writing that a new name will need to be supplied to our office. If the parent/guardian, second individual and third individual are all called and no one can be reached or refuses to pick up the child, the child will thereafter be refused entry to the center until this information is complete and up to date.

### **Allergies**

Any allergies or special conditions must be noted on the Emergency Form. It is especially important that the staff is aware of allergies to such things as poison ivy, bee stings, and different foods. Alerts are posted in the classroom of any potential problems and restrictions that staff should be mindful of.

### **Accident Insurance**

Accident insurance is provided free of charge for Head Start children while on the premises or during a scheduled Head Start Outing.

If you have primary insurance of any type, including a medical card, this insurance will be a secondary coverage policy only and the primary company's claim must be filed first. The primary company will be responsible for filing with UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start indicated insurance provider.

### **Medication**

**Staff members will not administer medications without a signed permission and instruction from a doctor** (Copy of this form will be provided at orientation and upon request). Parents/guardians may administer medicine to their own children in the center, as they deem necessary. **Expired medications will not be given. Medication must be in the original container with full physician's orders.**

### **Medical Emergency**

The detailed Medical Emergency Procedure followed by all staff is posted on the bulletin board in the main office. In the case of an accident, a staff member will apply first aid and supervise the care of the injured child. Minor injuries will be treated on site. Every effort will be made to contact the parent or guardian using information on the Emergency Form. A staff member certified in CPR will always be on duty.

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start is unable to provide any emergency medical care or transportation to emergency

facilities without a signed PPA. For this reason, no child is allowed to enter the center until one has been completed by the parent/guardian. In this form, the parent or guardian authorizes the program and medical professionals to provide emergency care until they arrive. **It is critical that the parents or guardian's inform the UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start Staff if there are changes in their daytime location or telephone number.** The parent/guardian should contact the Family & Community Partnership Specialist and ask for a Change of Status form. This form should be signed and returned to our office.

**It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep all emergency and contact information up to date.** Children whose information is found to be in error will be denied entry into the classroom until all corrections and updates have been made.

### **Entry Into Building**

The building is equipped with a security system to eliminate unlawful entry into the building. This requires you to ring in at the front door. At that time, we will grant access if we know the individual requesting entry, at times you could be asked to step back so that we might identify you through the monitoring system. If we cannot identify you, you will be asked to identify yourself and/or to state your business with this facility. Entry can and will be denied if we feel that staff and children are at risk.

### **Evacuation**

The State Division of Licensing requires that we inform all parents of our emergency procedures in the event that the center must be evacuated. If time permits, we will try to reach all parents by telephone to inform them of the need to pick up their child. If we must leave the school grounds, we will transport the children to the Spencer Elementary School or Fall Creek Falls State Park. You will be alerted via an all- call with instructions. We ask that you come to this location as quickly as possible to reassure your child of his/her safety.

### **Fire**

Fire drills are scheduled bi-monthly to teach children safety procedures to use in the event of a real fire. If you have any questions, please ask your child's teacher to show you **the procedure posted in the classroom.**

### **Tornado**

Tornado drills are scheduled monthly, to teach the children safety procedures to use in the event of a real tornado. **This procedure is posted in the classroom.**

### **Bus Evacuation**

Bus Evacuation drills are scheduled monthly, to teach the children safety procedures to use in the event of a real bus accident. **This procedure is posted in the classroom.**

### **Gun/Intruder Drill**

Gun/Intruder Drills are scheduled three times a year to teach children safety procedures to use in the event of a real gun/intruder.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social Services, as provided by Head Start, is a program for the entire family. We will do our best to help you or introduce you to people who are qualified to meet your needs. Some ways we can help:

- (1) Obtaining clothes, shoes, and food (clothes bank on premises)
- (2) Budgeting money
- (3) Securing a medical home
- (4) Locating housing
- (5) Providing or identifying counseling services
  - (a) Dealing with family or personal problems
  - (b) Child, spouse, alcohol, or drug abuse

- (c) Child management
  - (d) Any other concerns involving you, your child or your family environment
- (6) Obtaining education or employment.

A community resource directory will be given to each family every year. This is an excellent source of information about agencies that can also assist you in finding answers to questions and help in solving any problems that may come up throughout the year.

### **Home Visits**

During the year, the Education staff is required to complete two home visits. The Education staff will meet with you and your child in a setting where you both feel comfortable --preferably in your home. We want to know your child's interests, whether they make friends easily, what foods they like, whether they need special care, and what their habits and routines are normally.

At the same time, the family is free to question the teacher about the daily schedule, the curriculum, lunch, birthday parties, friends their child has at the center, or whatever they would like to know. The purposes of the home visits are to help the family by providing any information you request and by assisting you in any goals you may have for yourself and your family. Education, Health and Social Services staff can provide varied information on such subjects as parenting, health services available in the community, budgeting money or time, going back to school, getting a job, and many other topics.

The staff will schedule these meetings at a time convenient for the parent or guardian. Home Visits are required for Head Start, your participation will not be a determining factor for your child to attend the program.

### **SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN**

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start actively recruits disabled children of all ages. The philosophy of our program is to mainstream disabled children, which means that pending recommendation of the Disabilities Screening Committee children with special needs are grouped with non-disabled children in the classroom at all times except when they attend special services, such as speech or physical therapy.

Children with special needs who wish to enroll in UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start must first meet with the Disabilities Screening Committee. During this meeting, your child will be allowed to interact in a classroom situation. The committee will determine if Head Start is the best placement for your child. If not, UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start will assist the family in any way possible to find appropriate placement in the community.

Disabled children will be provided the same opportunities to learn, play and interact with their teachers, peers, and non-disabled children. Every effort will be made to alter the learning environment to accommodate special needs. School age children receive services on an as-needed basis upon request of the parent /guardian.

### **Your Rights as a Special Needs Family**

Your rights and those of any exceptional child may be summed up in the following key terms:

- **NOTICE:** You have the right to be informed (receive notice) in writing any time Head Start plans or refuses to identify, evaluate (test), or change the placement of your child.
- **PERMISSION:** You must give your permission before your child is tested or placed in a special education program for the first time.
- **EVALUATION:** You have the right to have a full evaluation of your child's individual educational needs.
- **INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:** You are a voting member of the Committee which must plan and review an Individual Education Program (IEP) for your child should he/she be determined to be exceptional and in need of special education and related services.

- **LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT:** You have a right to have your child educated with children who are typically functioning to the maximum extent appropriate.
- **RECORDS:** You have the right to see any record kept on your child and the right to know what Head Start will do to make sure your child's records are kept private.
- **HEARINGS:** If at any point along the way you do not agree with how Head Start is dealing with your child concerning his/her identification evaluation, placement, or program, you have a right to due process and may request an impartial hearing.

### **Screenings**

With the advent of the Head Start Handicap Effort in 1972, programs were required to initiate screening programs. These programs are designed to screen all children for possible disabling conditions so that intervention can take place early in the program year. In addition to the health screenings, which include hearing and vision, the screenings for disabilities include articulation, receptive, expressive language, visual, motor and developmental progress. All screening must be completed within forty-five (45) calendar days from the beginning of the program year. You will be notified of all screenings upon completion. Only certain individuals have access to this information:

- Director: Can access everything pertaining to children, working in conjunction with service delivery staff to ensure timely services and for staff planning services.
- Educational Staff (teaching): All have access to developmental and social/ emotional in order to individualize every child's educational program. Health related screenings are assessed on a need to know basis in order to assist with the educational program or the child.
- Health Services Staff: Can access to ensure functioning at developmentally appropriate levels to insure future success in the learning process.
- Consultants/ Health Professionals: Can access on a need to know basis in order to assure services are delivered (i.e. Mental Health Professional, Disability, Doctor, Dentist).

### **Diagnosis**

Screenings are not diagnostic instruments. Children who do not perform satisfactorily on any one of the first screenings are re-screened. If they perform far below age-level on the second screening, they are referred to an appropriate diagnostician for evaluation.

**IEP Development** When the diagnostic process is complete and documentation is on file, the child's Individual Education Program (IEP) process begins. The program meetings will involve staff and providers discussing available information on the child and making tentative plans. The parents/guardians are an important part of the IEP. If necessary, transportation to and from the IEP will be provided by the Head Start program. Parental input for goals, objectives and activities is sought. The parents are given a copy of the completed IEP form.

**IEP Services** Head Start programs endeavor to provide the services identified on the child's IEP, or contact appropriate professionals to provide the services. For example, speech therapy may be provided by an on-staff therapist or speech aide, by the local Board of Education with whom the Head Start program has a contract, or by a private consultant. Due to limited funds, programs are constantly searching for more cost-effective ways in which to provide services. For example, in some agencies, physical therapy is provided by a member of the classroom staff who has observed and been trained by a physical therapist in the exercises that help the child. Although the physical therapist sees the child only once every two or three months, the service is still being provided by Head Start staff.

### **Transition to Public School**

In addition to the services provided to the child and family during their Head Start experience, Head Start also assists in the child's enrollment in the local school district. The assistance may take the form of helping with the initial registration, sending records, or contacting school officials. This allows for prior plans to be made by both the school system and the parents. We also assist children with individual, developmental and school-readiness goals. We prepare them to transition



from family-style to cafeteria style food service. We organize parent/child Kindergarten orientation. We provide the child with actual Kindergarten/School experiences in conjunction with the Van Buren County School System.

### **Staff Training**

In order to better service disabled children, training is provided for Head Start staff. Training topics include:

- Child development
- Identification of disabled children
- Behavior management
- Working with parents of disabled children
- IEP development Training is provided by local program personnel, consultants, and other members of the Head Start Disabilities Network such as the Specially Funded Coordinators, Quality Improvement Center for Disability Services, Chapel Hill Outreach Program, and the Western Kentucky Training and Technical Assistance Program.

### **Head Start and Public School Work Together**

While each of the Head Start Programs in Tennessee differs, there are basic ways in which the local school district and Head Start may work together to provide continuous quality services to disabled children:

- Sharing information for Child Find
- Referring children for recruitment/enrollment in Head Start and/or the local school district
- Sharing pertinent information and records with appropriate parental permission
- Serving on the Multi Service-Advisory Council or Policy Council.
- Sharing information concerning community resources
- Transitioning children from Head Start to Public School System

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are vital to the operation of the Head Start program. Children need a lot of adult attention to teach them to count, comfort them when they cry, help them dig up treasure on the playground, mix ingredients for nutrition activities, and, especially, to tell them how well they are doing. Three (3) teachers in a room of up to 20 children can do all these things but ten teachers can do it twice as well. Parents/guardians are the child's first teachers. Therefore, we encourage you to volunteer in the classroom. **Volunteers at the Center cannot work in the kitchen unless they have a Health Card and Current Fingerprint Verification on file in the Center. Volunteers are never to discipline children including their own while on Head Start premises or while attending field trips. At no time are volunteers allowed in the bathroom with the children. All child areas are under camera surveillance at all times.**

Children take great pride in having their parents/guardians in the classroom. Parents/guardians can take advantage of the opportunity to see their child in a classroom setting. Volunteers fit easily into a Creative Curriculum classroom. Adults can talk with children while they play. Families are encouraged to be actively involved in whatever area is of most interest to them. Please consult the Parent Newsletter or Calendar for announcements of activities that may need volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Preparing homemade learning materials
- Fixing toys that are damaged
- Going on field trips
- Saving containers to use in the Home Living Center
- Putting on a puppet show
- Making decorations for the room
- Making doll clothes
- Helping with decorations
- Preparing for that special party or event

- Cleaning up the room after an activity
- Typing
- Filing
- Organizing materials
- Setting up for a parent meeting
- Calling other parents

### **Volunteers Signing In and Out**

Volunteer services are counted as In-Kind contributions for the program. For this reason, both family and community volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Time Sheet (In-Kind Form) noting the time/date they volunteered. If a Volunteer Timesheet is not available, ask one of the teachers to help you. Observation forms are available outside each classroom door . We ask all volunteers to take a moment to provide us with your input. We are only as good as you help us to be.

Maintaining In-Kind helps the program in two ways. First, because the federal government requires that the Head Start program match 25% of the federal grant money awarded with In-Kind contributions. Signing in helps prove that the community and family are providing the non-federal share required. Second, signing in helps the center plan activities for those times when large numbers of volunteers are in the classroom.

### **Volunteer Training**

Anyone who wishes to volunteer in the classroom is required to attend volunteer training. During this training you will be instructed about the center's rules and will be asked to sign an affirmation statement form concerning confidentiality, discipline, etc.

Things Prospective Volunteers Should Know:

- If you are going to be volunteering for more than twenty (20) hours in the classroom, you must provide us with a copy of your TB screening unless instructed to obtain a TB test.
- Must have a signed PPA on file and verified prior to volunteering.
- Laugh with, not at the children.
- The teachers are generally not free to socialize during class time.
- Jot down any questions you may have and the teachers and service area specialist can discuss them with you at a later time.
- You may not discipline the children; you should indicate the problem to one of the teachers in the room.
- You may not take any child out of the group unless a teacher or coordinator is with you.
- You may not bring in food or drink to the classroom.

During lunch, please:

- Sit at a table and model good eating habits, appropriate conversations, etc...for the children.
- Talk with the children.
- Help with cleanup.
- Help children wash their hands before meal times.

### **Remember:**

- Working with our program is voluntary; it is not required of any family member.
- There are no educational requirements, such as an elementary or high school degree.
- You do not need any special abilities or talents.
- Males and females of all ages are needed.
- The time you volunteer is at your convenience; however, we need to plan with you so that we may

work your time into our plan. You can donate an hour, a day, or several days a month.

- Your individual desires, interests, talents, and abilities can be of use in the classroom.
- You will be part of a program where you will be of invaluable service and where you will serve on behalf of UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start children and families.
- All information you hear is confidential and should not be repeated.
- Respect other families' cultures and differences.
- Accept supervision from paid staff, follow through on specific requests, and support classroom activities and express criticism and disagreements in private. **Never in the classroom.**
- Follow common sense guidelines for public behavior. Drug, alcohol and tobacco use, swearing, threatening, shouting, fighting, and firearms are all examples of common sense prohibitions. There are plenty more. Generally speaking, if you cannot do it in the mall, you probably cannot do it in the classroom.

All Classroom Volunteers, including parents, are expected to adhere to classroom conduct guidelines in order to maintain their volunteering privileges.

Van Buren Head Start reserves the right to deny access to Head Start facilities to parents and volunteers who violate the above guidelines for classroom conduct.

### **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Engaging parents is one of the most important aspects of the Head Start program. We respect parents and recognize they are the first and most important teacher(s) in their child's life and responsible for their child's well being. Some of the ways you, as a parent, you could be engaged are to:

- Attend and/or serve on Parent Committee/ Policy Council
- Attend and/or serve on Advisory Committee
- Volunteer in the classroom/center
- Accompany your child's class on field trips
- Attend training opportunities
- Attend Male Involvement Opportunities
- Read to your child a **MINIMUM** of **20** Minutes every day to re-enforce education in the classroom and develop positive relationships, family well-being, and families as educators.
- Participate in Family Reading Night to re enforce education in classroom and developing positive relationships, family well-being, families as educators
- Attend scheduled Parent Teacher Conferences
- Make Sure your child is **ON TIME** and in **Attendance** of school **EVERY SCHEDULED DAY**
- **Schedule** and **ATTEND** all of your child's dental and health appointments
- Participate in Home Activities with your child and submit completed home activities to your child's teacher to re-enforce education in the classroom and develop positive relationships, family well-being, families as educators.
- Participating in the program supplied Power Packs to re-enforce education in the classroom and developing positive relationships, family well-being, families as educators.
- Read newsletters or calendars on the website [www.vanburenheadstart.com](http://www.vanburenheadstart.com), Facebook, check backpacks, and listen to phone messages about upcoming events and news regarding your child's school.

The staff members may contact you by telephone to provide or obtain needed information. **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep all telephone numbers, addresses, etc. up to date.** If you have a change in your telephone number, please complete a Change of Status form. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start agrees to keep all information

concerning your family confidential. Please feel free to contact any of our staff members by telephone. The office number is 423-881-5182. In the event that the staff member you need to talk with is out of the office, a message will be left so that they may return your call.

**In the event of an emergency situation such as loss of electricity, parents/guardians can contact the center on the emergency number: 423-881-5292. Please remember the number is used only in the event of a power outage or if the current phone line is not in working order.**



*Families are the*  *of Head Start*

### **FAMILIES ARE IMPORTANT**

Families are a very important part of our childcare program. You are the very special people the children watch, learn from, copy, and go to in a time of need. The UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start program helps children by helping each parent/guardian develop skills, become involved, make new friends, and grow as a total person. Our lives are easier when we have others who care and want to help. We do care and are ready to help in any way we can. Please come to us if you need anything.

Also, we need you. As you are so vitally important to your child, you are also vitally important to keeping our program alive and growing. We want it to be the best it can be for your child. No one knows your child like you, so **Attend** meetings, **Give** your opinion, and **Communicate** with the program, the program staff, and most of all, your child.

### **MALE INVOLVEMENT**

Head Start's Male and Father Involvement Initiative encourages fathers and male figures to be actively involved in the lives of Head Start children. It is a proven fact that children are more successful when this occurs. We also value the ideas that:

- All fathers can be contributors to the well-being of their children.
- Parents are partners in raising their children, even when they don't live in the same household. UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start will ensure **3** activities for Male/Father Involvement each year. These activities will be:



- **“Donuts for Dads” / “Pizza For POP”**- this event will occur during the month of September. Fathers and/or male figures will be encouraged to attend a “Meet and Greet” (for fathers and males only). This event will allow all that attend the opportunity to socialize and discover the importance of their involvement and methods of being involved.
- **“Birds of a Feather”** - this event will occur mid-school year, fathers and male figures will be encouraged to participate with children in building a birdhouse for each child to take home. **“MVP” (Male Valued Partner/Most Valued Person) Day** - this event will occur at the year end. Fathers and male figures will be encouraged to attend and participate in all event activities interacting with children. This interaction will allow both males and children to benefit from the experience.