



Region 9
Head Start/PreK
& Early Head Start
Policies & Procedures

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Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Governing Body Roles & Responsibilities

Section: Program Governance

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1301.2 Head Start Act: Section 642(c)(1)

PFCE Outcome: Families as Advocates and Leaders

Policy: To ensure the implementation of a high-quality program, the governing body, Region 9 Education Cooperative Coordinating Council, will perform their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the REC 9 policy manual, the Head Start Program Performance Standards, and the Head Start Act of 2007.

Procedure:

1. The REC 9 Coordinating Council shall be composed of members outlined in the Head Start Act of 2007. The REC 9 Coordinating Council is comprised of seven (7) superintendents across the seven-member districts that make up REC 9. REC 9 will provide members or will have specific people available to cover the requirements in the Head Start Act:
 - a. Fiscal management or accounting expertise;
 - b. Early Childhood Education and Development expertise;
 - c. A licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body;
 - d. Additional members will reflect the community to be served and include parents of children who are currently, or were formerly enrolled in Head Start programs; and
 - e. Expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs.
2. The REC 9 Coordinating Council's responsibilities include:
 - a. Legal and fiscal responsibility for administering and overseeing the programs, including safeguarding federal funds;
 - b. Fully participate in the development, planning, and evaluation of the Head Start programs;
 - c. Ensure compliance with federal laws (including regulations) and applicable state, tribal, and local laws;
 - d. Establish procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, and enrollment of children;
 - e. Review all applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding for programs;
 - f. Establish procedures and guidelines for accessing and collecting information;
 - g. Review and approve the annual self-assessment and financial audit;
 - h. Review and approve the agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal provisions in such agency's grant application, including implementation of corrective actions;
 - i. Review and approve personnel policies of the agency regarding hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensation of agency employees;
 - j. Develop procedures for how members of the policy council are selected;
 - k. Approve financial management, accounting, and reporting policies, and compliance with laws and regulations related to financial statements;
 - l. Review results from monitoring conducted; and
 - m. Establish, adopt, and periodically update written standards of conduct.
3. The Program Director presents annual training to the REC 9 Coordinating Council. Annual training includes:
 - a. Roles and responsibilities of the REC 9 Coordinating Council;
 - b. Procedures for shared decision-making between Policy Council and the Coordinating Council;
 - c. Program configuration;
 - d. Mission of the Head Start/Early Head Start Programs;
 - e. Description of the service area; and
 - f. Head Start Program Performance Standards.
4. At each Coordinating Council meeting, the members will receive information about the Head Start program as well as requests for any action that needs to be taken. Some items that are presented may include:
 - a. Policies and procedures designated for approval;
 - b. Approval of new professional positions;
 - c. Information on personnel decisions;
 - d. Program reports such as the Head Start/EHS Monthly Program Report and financial reports; and
 - e. Any items required for approval as stated in the HSPPS and the Head Start Act.

5. To facilitate shared decision-making and keep communication open between the Coordinating Council and the Policy Council, the following actions will be taken:

- a. The Policy Council will meet on a monthly basis, September - May, with summer month meetings scheduled on an as-needed basis.
- b. The Coordinating Council will meet on a monthly basis based on the REC 9 Coordinating Council Schedule.
- c. The Head Start/EHS Director will attend all Policy Council meetings and create an agenda based on action items, information, announcements, and a status report with updates and data reporting. The Director will update the Coordinating Council on the R9 Executive Director's status report and will add action items to the CC agenda. The Director will provide a report to the Policy Council regarding Coordinating Council action as it relates to Head Start/EHS issues.
- d. All regulatory requirements and additional items may be developed and reviewed in subcommittees, which will be presented to the Policy Council and Coordinating Council for approval or disapproval.
- e. The Coordinating Council and Policy Council will be presented with information annually and monthly based on the program's planning calendar and action items.

Cross-reference: Region 9 Education Cooperative Policy Manual and the Head Start Policy Council By-Laws, REC 9 Coordinating Council By-Laws, Caring for Our Children 9.1

Subject: Impasse Procedure

Section: Program Governance

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1301.2

Policy: In the event of an internal dispute, disagreement or deadlock between the Region 9 Education Cooperative Coordinating Council and the Region 9 Head Start/EHS Policy Council, an agreement will be reached so that the proposal or action can be put into effect. The Region 9 Head Start/PreK/EHS program will adhere to the following process for facilitating dispute resolutions.

Procedure: The goal is for the two councils to work together voluntarily to resolve internal disputes. It is important that the lines of communication remain open and both councils understand the issue to be resolved. Each council will appoint a member/s to facilitate the resolution process. Both councils must agree to generate options for possible solutions, attempt to reach an agreement, and implement the agreement when agreed upon. The Executive Director of Region 9 and the Head Start/EHS Director will offer information to the councils to assist in resolving the dispute. If necessary, outside consultants or mediators may be utilized if the issue is at a deadlock. If all policies and procedures are followed and all options have been exhausted, the Region 9 Coordinating Council will make the final decision.

Each Council will follow these procedures.

1. Define the issue of dispute, disagreement, or deadlock.
2. Analyze the situation
3. Generate possible options
4. Project the result of each option
5. Appoint member/s to facilitate communication
6. Select and agree on the option
7. Implement the option
8. Mediation if necessary

Cross-reference: Region 9 Education Cooperative Head Start/EHS Policy Council By-Laws

Subject: Parent Committees

Section: Program Governance

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1301.4, NM PreK Standard 1.B.2

PFCE Outcomes: Family Connections to Peers and Community, Families as Advocates & Leaders

Policy: Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will establish a parent committee for each program composed of parents of currently enrolled children in order to carry out the parent committee responsibilities as outlined in the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Procedure:

1. The parent committee for each program is composed exclusively of parents of currently enrolled children as early in the program year as possible.
2. The parent committees will elect the policy council members in September.
3. Parent Committee Responsibilities:
 - a. Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families;
 - b. Have a process for communication with the policy council and policy committee; and
 - c. Within the guidelines established by the governing body or policy council, participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees.
4. A parent committee leader will communicate program updates and policy council updates during classroom parent meetings monthly.
5. Parent committee leaders will participate or assist in specific committee meetings throughout the year including School Readiness Goals, Family Engagement Committee, Self-Assessment, etc.

Cross-reference: Region 9 Education Cooperative Head Start/EHS Policy Council By-Laws

ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, & Attendance)

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Absenteeism & Tardiness

Section: ERSEA

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.16, 1302.21, NM PreK Standards 1.C.4

PFCE Outcome: Family Engagement in Transitions, Families as Lifelong Educators

Policy: Children enrolled in the R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start programs are expected to attend class daily and arrive and depart according to the program's schedule. All contact with the parent/guardian will emphasize the benefits of regular attendance and on-time arrival/departures, while remaining sensitive to any special family circumstances influencing attendance/tardy patterns.

Procedure for Absenteeism:

1. When a child is absent, the parent/guardian will contact their child's teacher to inform them of the reason for the absence.
2. Teachers will call or text parents/guardians within ONE hour of program start time unless parents have already contacted the program to ensure the child's well-being. The teacher will document the contact in Child Plus under "Family Services" as a "Routine Contact". The teacher will attempt contact by telephone every day the child is absent and document the efforts and/or reason.
3. If an absence is determined to be caused by an illness or a doctor/dentist appointment, no further action is required. A doctor's release with a return date may be required by the program if the child is diagnosed with a contagious illness and/or is taking medication.
4. Required well-child checks and dental examinations are considered attendance exceptions and will not be counted against the child's attendance.
5. If the teacher cannot make contact with the parent/guardian after the third consecutive day, the Family Service Coordinator (FSC) will attempt to make contact with the family or emergency contacts. The FSC and the teacher will make a home visit in an attempt to make further contact with the family.
6. If it is determined that the absences resulted from family problems that affect the child's regular attendance, the FSC will initiate appropriate family support.
7. If the above efforts have failed to correct the absenteeism problem, the director will be notified and will send an "Attendance Concern Letter" to explain the consequences of the attendance problem and offer additional support.
8. If chronic absenteeism persists and it does not seem feasible to include the child within the program, the child will be placed back on the waiting list.

Procedure for Habitually Tardy Arrivals/Departures:

1. If a child arrives at school 15 minutes after the initial start time of each site, the classroom teacher must mark the child tardy in Child Plus.
2. After 3 incidents, the FSC will discuss the tardiness and/or late pickups with the family to resolve the issue.
3. If the problem persists, the Director will send a letter and/or meet with the family to remedy the problem.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Child Sign In-Out Sheet, Attendance Agreement, Child Plus Reports 2305 & 2320

Cross Reference: Caring For Our Children Standard 9.4, NAEYC 7A.1

Subject: Average Daily Attendance

Section: ERSEA

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.16, NM PreK Standard 1.C.4

PFCE Outcomes: Family Engagement in Transitions, Families as Lifelong Educators

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will promote regular attendance, and will track the daily attendance rate to ensure enrolled children are receiving the maximum benefit of the program.

Tracking Attendance Procedure:

1. Attendance is recorded on a daily basis in the Child Plus database for each child.
2. The Family Service Coordinator will share an average daily attendance monthly report with each classroom on their caseload. ADA will be discussed with each center/classroom monthly during Center Team Meetings and/or Staffings.
3. The Enrollment Coordinator will monitor ADA monthly to ensure it doesn't fall below 85%, and they will provide the director with the proper report.
4. The FSC will study the pattern of absences for each child, including the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. Follow-up documentation is entered in Child Plus.

Promoting Attendance Procedure:

1. The FSC will promote regular attendance during the enrollment interview with each family.
2. During the first home visit and thereafter, the teacher will promote regular attendance.
3. If a child has multiple unexplained absences, the FSC or the child's teacher will make direct contact or will conduct a home visit if necessary.
4. If it is determined that the absences resulted from family problems that affect the child's regular attendance, the FSC will initiate appropriate family support.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: ADA Report - Child Plus 2301, Parent Handbook, Name to Face Sign In/Out Sheet, Home Visit and PTC Forms

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, and Enrollment

Section: ERSEA

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

PC Approval: May 7, 2025 **CC Approval:** May 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.11, 1302.12, 1302.13, 1302.14, 1302.15, 1302.70
NM PreK Standards 1.C.1, 1.C.2, and 1.C.3

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start will establish and monitor procedures for determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility, recruiting children, selecting children, and enrolling children using the Head Start Program Performance Standards, The Head Start Act, the NM PreK Standards, and Governing Body & Policy Council input. The program will ensure it is meeting each program's enrollment requirements, based on children's age and/or income eligibility.

Procedure: The ERSEA committee, along with the Policy Council and Coordinating Council, will annually review and establish selection criteria that weigh the prioritization of the selection of participants, based on the community needs identified in the community assessment. The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed in order to adhere to HSPPS-1302 Subpart A - Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance.

1302.11 - Determining Community Strengths, Needs, and Resources:

- 1. Service Area** - Children and Families must reside in Lincoln County and provide proof of residency. For Head Start/PreK applicants only, they must live within the boundaries of the Ruidoso Municipal School District if the child receives Special Education Services. If the child does not receive Part B services, they can be enrolled in the Head Start/PreK site of their choice.
- 2. Community Wide Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment** - the program will conduct a 5-year community assessment, and use annual updates to make any updates or changes to this policy in order to better serve our community and eligible children.

1302.12 - Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility/NM PreK 1.C.1

Elements of Eligibility:

| Eligibility | Verification |
|-------------|---|
| Age | <p>The following documents can be used to determine age eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth Certificate• Hospital Birth Announcement• Baptismal Certificate• Court Record• Other Legal Proof of Birth <p>If providing proof of age creates a barrier for the family to enroll the child, the program will work with the family to continue with the enrollment process and obtain appropriate documentation.</p> <p>EHS children must be 6 weeks to under 3 years old.</p> <p>Head Start Children must be 3 or 4 years old by September 1st as determined by the public schools in our community.</p> <p>Mixed Age PreK Children must be 3 or 4 years old by 12:00 am on September 1 of the current school year.</p> <p>R9 Head Start will allow the enrollment of children who have not turned 3 years old by September 1, upon their 3rd birthday, when all efforts to recruit and enroll eligible children have been exhausted or they are transitioning from Early Head Start. The R9 Head Start Director will approve any child who does not meet the age eligibility cut-off day as specified by the school district.</p> |

| Eligibility | Verification |
|---------------|--|
| Income | <p>The following documents will be used to determine Income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax forms • W-2 • Pay Stubs • Declarations • Written Statements from Employers • Third Party Consent • SNAP Benefit Approval Letter • Self-Employed Written Statement • Unemployment • Foster Care Reimbursement • Documentation of No Income <p>The program must calculate total gross income using applicable sources of income. The program may make an adjustment to the family's gross income calculation for the purpose of determining eligibility to account for excessive housing costs.</p> <p>We will use bills, bank statements, and other relevant documentation provided by the family to calculate total annual housing costs to determine if the family spends more than 30% of their total gross income on housing costs. We will use the HS "Excessive Housing Calculation Tool".</p> <p>Applicants must submit 12 months income for the relevant time period. The relevant time period can be (A) The 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted or; (B) During the calendar year preceding the calendar year the application in which the application is submitted, whichever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application. The income can be a combination of documents listed above, and will be calculated based on amounts from each document for a 12 month period.</p> <p>Re-Verifying Income: Families will be required to submit new income and a new application for children who are still on the waitlist for the preceding school year if the income is older than 3 months. The Enrollment Coordinator will re-verify the income and eligibility criteria. Income and eligibility will be re-verified when an EHS child transitions to Head Start if the income is older than 3 months old.</p> <p>Families who receive SNAP benefits won't need to verify their income with R9 Head Start/EHS if they provide applicable documentation verifying they receive SNAP benefits. The approval letter must be less than 1 year old.</p> <p>An additional 35 percent of participants who are not eligible and whose families have income below 130 percent of the poverty guidelines may qualify. We may enroll children who are considered "over-income" but cannot exceed 10% of our funded enrollment. We will enroll all age and income eligible children, Children in foster care, homeless children, or children with disabilities first before enrolling children who are between 100-130% or over-income.</p> <p>Income is not required to enroll children in the PreK slots, however the program will require income for all applicants to determine the best placement for the child based on age and income eligibility.</p> |

| Eligibility | Verification |
|--------------------------|---|
| Public Assistance | Documentation from state or local public assistance agencies must be provided. Public assistance documents include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI Documentation • TANF Documentation • SNAP Benefits Approval Letter |
| Homeless | <p>To verify if a family is homeless, the program will use one of the following documents if applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Written Statement from a Homeless Service Provider, School Personnel, or Other Service Agency • Documentation from a Public or Private Agency • A Declaration • Information Gathered on Enrollment or Application Forms or through an interview with the family. • 3rd Party Information with Written Consent • Any Other Documentation that Establishes Homelessness <p>If the documentation and information gathered is not enough to determine if a family is homeless, the program will use the “Decision Making Tool to Determine a Family’s Homeless Situation” provided by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. This tool and the McKinney-Vento Act will help guide the staff on determining homeless eligibility.</p> <p>Priority will be given to a family experiencing homelessness/displacement</p> |
| Foster Care | <p>The following documents will be accepted to verify if a child is in Foster Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court Order • Legal or Government Issued Document • A Written Statement from a Government Child Welfare Official that Demonstrates the Child is in Foster Care • Proof of a Foster Care Payment <p>Priority will be given to children who are in foster care</p> |

Eligibility Terms and Definitions

| Term | References |
|---|---|
| Age | <u>1302.12(b)(1)(2)(3).</u> |
| Family | <u>1305.2 Terms - Family</u> |
| Service Area | <u>1305.2 Terms - Service Area</u> <u>1305.11(a).</u> |
| Relevant Time Period Current Situation | <u>1305.2 Terms - Relevant Time Period</u> <u>1302.12(i)(1)(iii) - Current Situation</u> |
| Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Income • Below Poverty • 100 - 130% • Over Income | <u>1305.2 Terms - Income</u> |

| Term | References |
|--|--|
| Foster Care | <u>1305.2 Terms - Foster Care</u> <u>1302.12(i)(4).</u> |
| Public Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI • TANF • SNAP | <u>1302.12(c).</u> |
| Verification | <u>1305.2 Terms - Verify</u> |
| Eligibility Duration | <u>1302.12(j).</u> |
| Homeless Children | <u>1305.2 Terms - Homeless</u> <u>1302.12 (i)(3).</u> <u>Section 725(2) McKinney Vento Act</u> |

Eligibility Duration

1. Children enrolled in Head Start/PreK are eligible for two school years based on school age cutoff date. If a child does not turn 5 before September 1st to enroll in Kindergarten, the family's income must be re-verified if the family chooses Head Start for a third year. Head Start may choose not to enroll a child when there are compelling reasons not to enroll the child in the succeeding school year which can include a change in the family's income or there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services. Children who are 4 years old and going into Kindergarten may attend PreK for 1 year.
2. Children enrolled in Early Head Start remain eligible while they participate in the program.
3. When a child moves from Early Head Start to Head Start/PreK, the Head Start program will re-verify the family's income. If the income was verified in the last 3 months at Early Head Start, the program will use that information as the most current income with a statement from the family that it hasn't changed in the last 3 months. A new application and the child's updated records will be submitted as well.
4. Early Head Start children can stay in EHS up to 6 months after their 3rd birthday at the program's discretion, or until Head Start begins school in the fall if they turn 3 between March and August.

Records

The enrollment records are kept in the child's file, and they include:

1. Application Documentation Cover Sheet
2. Completed Application
3. Proof of Income
4. Proof of Birth
5. Medicaid or Health Insurance Information
6. The signed Applicant Eligibility & Enrollment Information Form from Child Plus (Report #2135)
7. The signed Eligibility Verification Form from Child Plus (Report #2135)
8. Enrollment Letter to Parents
9. If applicable, homeless or foster care documentation

Once the Enrollment Coordinator receives all the required documents, they enter the application and income into the Child Plus database. The Enrollment Coordinator prints report #2135 from Child Plus, which is the income verification record, verifies the income, and signs the document as the "verifying staff".

Violation of Eligibility Determination Regulations

If a staff member intentionally violates the eligibility determination regulations and enrolls children who are not eligible to receive Head Start services, the action(s) will be taken to Human Resources. We will follow Region 9 Education Cooperative Policies and Procedures to determine the outcome for the employee.

Training on Eligibility

The program will use resources from ECLKC and the policies & procedures to train the Governing Body, Policy Council, and all staff members on ERSEA.

1. New staff members who make eligibility determinations will be trained within 90 days of hire.
2. All staff members will be trained annually during Pre-Service.
3. The governing body and policy council will be trained within 180 days of the beginning of the term of a new governing body or policy council. If the governing body does not change at the beginning of the term, they will be trained within 180 days of the beginning of the year initially, and every 2 years thereafter, or as changes in the performance standards arise.
4. ERSEA training will be documented in Child Plus for staff members under the "professional development" tab.
5. Governing Body and Policy Council training will be documented on the agenda and meeting minutes.

1302.13 - Recruitment:

Recruitment is a continuous process throughout the program year to ensure full enrollment and to maintain a waiting list for Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start. The following are ways each program recruits:

1. The following media will be used continually to recruit eligible children in Spanish and English: posters, flyers, brochures, newsletters, banners, signs, public service announcements, radio, and social media. A Head Start/PreK administrator must approve all media prior to broadcast, posting, or distribution.
2. In conjunction with other Region 9 Education Cooperative Early Childhood programs, Head Start/PreK and EHS will have a registration/child find day in the spring at each site.
3. Parents and community representatives will be asked to assist in the recruitment effort at sites that are not fully enrolled.
4. Head Start/PreK & EHS will collaborate with agencies that serve children with disabilities, and other vulnerable children, including homeless and foster care.
5. The program will attend community events and will keep up to date on new events happening throughout the school year.

1302.14 - Selection:

The program will establish a selection criteria annually, that weighs the prioritization of selection of participants, based on community needs identified in the community needs assessment and including family income, whether the child is homeless, whether the child is in foster care, the child's age, whether the child is eligible for special education and related services, or early intervention services, as appropriate, as determined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) and, other relevant family or child risk factors.

| Head Start/EHS Enrollment Eligibility Point Criteria Starting with Highest Priority | Points |
|--|--------|
| Family Type: Homeless Family (McKinney-Vento Act) | 200 |
| Family Type: Foster Family | 200 |
| Income Eligible 100% Poverty Guidelines | 175 |
| Receiving SNAP | 175 |
| At-Risk - Biological/Medical: A diagnosed medical condition that may produce developmental delay in some children such as prematurity, low birth weight, birth trauma, prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs, diagnosed genetic or neurological disorder, hearing loss, physical impairment, growth problems, or diagnosed mental/psychosocial disorder. | 150 |
| At-Risk - Environmental: Environments that pose a substantial threat to development, including chronic abuse of drugs or alcohol, child abuse, domestic violence, developmental or psychiatric disability in a caregiver, etc. | 150 |
| Child With an Identified Disability (IEP or IFSP) | 150 |
| Child of Current R9 Head Start/EHS Staff Member | 150 |
| Other Relative or Grandparent as the Legal Guardian | 125 |
| Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) | 100 |
| Receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) | 100 |
| Single Parent Family (Mother or Father) | 100 |
| Both parents (or single parent) working full-time and/or attending school full-time | 100 |
| 3 Year old Transitioning Child from EHS (Must transition within 6 months of turning 3 and has not dropped before 3rd birthday) | 100 |
| Teen Parent (Mother or Father) | 75 |
| Both parents (or single parent) working part-time and/or attending school part-time | 75 |
| Income Eligible 130% Poverty Guidelines | 75 |
| Any child who has formally withdrawn and returned within the school year | 75 |
| Two Parent Family | 25 |

Region IX Head Start/Early Head Start programs will ensure that at least 10% of the total actual enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA.

1302.15 - Enrollment

Our system is designed to ensure that the children with the most need will receive priority placement in the program. The criteria is used for all placement as well as the children on the waiting list. Below is the enrollment process for the program:

1. The parent submits an application (paper or online) with the required information. The enrollment coordinator can do a short enrollment interview with the applicant over the phone or in person to gather the required information.
2. The enrollment coordinator enters all of the information (application information, income, medical insurance, etc.) into the Child Plus Database system which calculates the income. The coordinator will then print report #2135 from Child Plus which is the income verification worksheet, and eligibility and application form.
3. The income is verified by trained staff who will then sign the "Applicant Eligibility and Enrollment Information" and "Eligibility Verification" forms.
4. The enrollment coordinator will run a prioritization list report to show which child is next on the waitlist based on age, point criteria, and income.
5. Children will be enrolled in order of greatest need from the priority list. Any enrollment exception from the priority list requires detailed documentation and an approval by the Head Start/PreK/EHS Director. The enrollment coordinator sends an enrollment letter to the parents and calls them letting them know they have been accepted into the program. The parent(s) must fill out an enrollment packet before the enrollment interview.
6. The child is then placed in the appropriate classroom and begins services once the enrollment interview is complete. The child must start within 1 week from the time of placement.
7. As vacancies occur during the year, enrollment slots will be filled from the waiting list as soon as possible. The program will make every effort to maintain a waiting list by recruiting and accepting applications year round.

8. The Enrollment Committee will approve 3 to 5 applications per site from the waiting list for the next available slot.
9. Funded slots may be moved between sites when a site has a greater need and no more eligible children are on a waiting list.
10. All efforts will be made to ensure that program enrollment does not drop below the funded enrollment for each program.
11. Applications will **NOT** be approved **50** calendar days before the last day of school for Head Start. EHS children will be enrolled up to the last day of school in June and will start the next school year in August.
Exception: If Head Start has a slot available 50 calendar days before the last day of school, Head Start may approve an EHS transition child with the condition that the child has all of his/her screenings, exams, and immunizations are current. The oldest child on the EHS transition waiting list will be approved first after exhausting the Head Start waiting list of homeless and foster status children. The Early Head Start child must be income-eligible to attend Head Start.
12. Over income students will not exceed 10% of the overall funded enrollment. Priority will be given to families that do not exceed the family income guidelines.
13. The first day a child attends class will be considered the entry date for the center-based option.
14. The Enrollment Coordinator may reserve one or more enrollment slots for EHS transition children, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care when a vacancy occurs. No more than three percent of a program's funded enrollment slots may be reserved. If the reserved slot is not filled within 30 days, the enrollment slot becomes vacant and will be filled based on the prioritization list.
15. Enrollment will be reported in the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES) by the 5th of each month. The number of children who are 100-130%, over-income, foster care, and homeless will be reported each month in the comments section.
16. PreK enrollment will be reported in the EPICs system and the program must maintain a minimum of 95% enrollment. ECECD will monitor enrollment at the 40th & 80th day counts.

Monitoring

- Eligibility income will be monitored monthly by the director. Child Plus Report #2004 will be used to share the data with the staff, governing body, and policy council monthly.
- Income verification will be spot-checked quarterly by the director or designated staff member. 10% of the child files will be checked quarterly using a checklist to ensure that income was verified correctly and accurately.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Head Start/EHS Application, Child Plus Enrollment Reports, Prioritization report, HSES report of enrollment

Cross Reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22, Caring For Our Children 1.1.2

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Temporary Exclusion and Expulsion

Section: ERSEA

Date Reviewed: April 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.17, NM PreK Standards 2.A.4.f & 4.A.5

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start will prohibit exclusion and expulsion for a child due to behavior. Temporary suspension may be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. Procedures in place will be followed prior to temporary suspension, to ensure children, families, and staff have the opportunity to utilize all resources and strategies in place for the child to be successful in the classroom.

Procedure: Permanent expulsion and suspension are not prohibited for any Early Head Start or Head Start/PreK child. This policy and procedure is shared with staff in the program's policy and procedure manual annually, and it is shared with parents via the parent handbook at the beginning of each school year.

Temporary Suspension must be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that has not been reduced or eliminated by the provision of interventions and supports recommended by the mental health consultant and the program needs time to put additional appropriate services in place. The program will use the "R9 Head Start/PreK Behavior Response Matrix" to determine the level of behaviors and responses to those behaviors.

Region 9 Head Start/PreK Behavior Response Matrix

| Levels | Types of Behaviors | Response to Behavior |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Level One | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disruptive 2. Not following classroom expectations 3. Running in the classroom 4. Climbing on furniture 5. Excessive yelling 6. Insulting classmates and teachers <p>*All of these behaviors include in school, on the bus, and before/after school</p> | <p>Teacher/Staff</p> <p>The teacher/staff addresses the behavior using behavior management strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conscious Discipline - Proximity control - Nonverbal cue - Conference with the student away from peers in the classroom - In-class modified seating - Reteach and practice desired behavior |
| Level Two - Minor Violations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defiance 2. Verbally disrespect peers or teachers 3. Hitting others with open hand 4. Swearing 5. Threatening someone 6. Throwing toys/pushing furniture over 7. Spitting 8. Biting <p>*All of these behaviors include in school, on the bus, and before/after school</p> | <p>Teacher/Staff</p> <p>The teacher addresses the behavior using logical consequences such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conscious Discipline - Responses to behavior listed in Level 1 - Loss of logical privilege (ex. if a child is playing with playdoh and throwing it inappropriately they will not be allowed to play with it anymore) - Removal from classroom - Conference with parents (and other supporting staff as needed) |
| Level Three - Major Violation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hit with closed fist 2. Using school furniture as a weapon (putting students in harm's way) 3. Direct, inappropriate language or gestures 4. Fighting or physical aggression 5. Inappropriate touching 6. Overtly defiance 7. Property destruction <p>*All of these behaviors include in school, on the bus, and before/after school</p> | <p>Teacher/Staff/Administration</p> <p>The teacher addresses the behavior using logical consequences such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediate removal from the classroom (child will be placed in the lobby), or all other children may be removed from the classroom as a safety precaution. - Immediate phone call to parents - Complete Social-Emotional Behavior Observation Form - Develop a Social-Emotional Behavior Plan with parents - Implement an individual adjusted schedule (if issues continue) <p>*At this level Head Start staff will schedule a Parent Teacher conference with the teachers and Director (and supporting supporting staff as needed).</p> |

Prior to Temporary Suspension, the following steps will take place:

1. The Region 9 Head Start/PreK Behavior Response Matrix will continue to be followed, as well as these other steps.
2. If a child is exhibiting serious, continuous behaviors, the teacher will complete a "Behavior Ticket" for the Coach/MH Coordinator. The Coach/MH Coordinator will email the Education Manager immediately.
3. The Coach/MH Coordinator and Teachers will complete behavior assessments.
4. The Education Manager will schedule a meeting with the classroom teachers, FSC, and Coach/MH Coordinator to discuss issues and concerns. The team will develop a behavior plan based on the behavior assessment results and teacher input.
5. The FSC will schedule and facilitate a meeting with parents, teachers, and the Coach/MH Coordinator to discuss the assessment results and behavior plan.
6. If needed, the FSC will make a Mental Health Referral with parental consent to a certified mental health consultant and document the referral in Child Plus. The mental health consultant may do an individual observation on the child and/or contact the family directly. The FSC will communicate any referrals to the Coach/MH Coordinator.
7. The FSC will schedule another meeting with the family if the behavior plan needs to be adjusted based on new findings, including assessments and mental health consultant observations.
8. If needed, the Disabilities Coordinator will do a referral for special education services with the parents' consent to the LEA or FIT program.
9. Suspension measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that temporary suspension is in the best interest of the child. Temporary suspension will only occur if the child is at high risk of endangering the other students or staff, and after all other methods have been exhausted.
10. The management staff will ensure that continued support services are being provided to the parents and child in order to reintroduce the child back into the classroom.

This policy and the implementation of this policy are in accordance with applicable State and Federal statutes including but not limited to IDEA, Title II of the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: CST Forms, Referrals, Child Plus Documentation, Mental Health Referrals, Behavior Plans, Mental Health observations

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22, NAEYC 1.E.1, Caring for Our Children 2.2

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Child Assessments & School Readiness Goals

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.33, NM PreK Standards 7.D.1, 7.D.2, and 7.D.3

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS will follow a child outcomes assessment plan to gather data in order to set school readiness goals, individualize for students, improve instructional practices, and target professional development for teaching staff.

Procedure:

1. Teachers will assess children three times a year in TS GOLD, in conjunction with a home visit or parent-teacher conference. They are labeled Fall, Winter, and Spring checkpoint periods.
2. Head Start/PreK children will be assessed using TS GOLD and will use the PreK crosswalk tool to enter assessment data into the EPICs system during the following times of the year:
 - a. Within 45 calendar days of enrollment
 - b. By the first Friday in February
 - c. Ten days prior to the program end date
3. The children will be assessed using cumulative data from the time period between checkpoint periods, such as anecdotal notes and observations. The teachers will assess the children based on where they are at that point in time on the color band continuum.
4. During the first home visit, the teachers will use parent input to set individual goals. During the remaining home visits/PTC teachers will provide the TS GOLD report card to show parents where they are developmentally. They will use this data and parent input to set individual goals for children.
5. Teachers will include individual development plans and goals on their weekly planning forms for all children based on their development in each area of learning and objective.
6. School Readiness Goals will be set during a school readiness goal committee meeting with staff and community members, if available. The TS GOLD child assessment data, Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, and the NM Early Learning Guidelines Indicators will be used to set the goals based on percentages of children not meeting or exceeding the TS GOLD Standards and the milestones within the domains of the HSELOF.
7. Each School Readiness Goal will have an acronym, and each teacher will label their activities in their lesson plans with those acronyms.
8. The School Readiness Goals will be updated at each checkpoint period and shared with the Policy Council and Coordinating Council, along with the data to support the goals.
9. The children will be assessed using cumulative data from the time period between checkpoint periods, such as anecdotal notes and observations.
10. The child assessment data will be used in conjunction with CLASS scores to plan for teacher professional development and coaching plans to improve instructional practices.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: TS GOLD Color Bands, School Readiness Goals, Individualized Development Plan

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 4

Subject: Classroom Daily Schedule

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.31, NM PreK Standard 7.C.5

Policy: A daily schedule will be designed to allow a balance of various activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age groups served by Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start.

Procedure: Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start teachers will prepare a daily schedule with consideration given to predetermined events such as scheduled meal times, and including the following segments of activity for each:

Scheduled Activities:

- Washing Hands
- Brushing Teeth
- Large group activities
- Small group activities
- Individualization
- Center time/Free choice
- Music & Movement
- Read aloud (Repeated Reading Plan - 1st, 2nd, 3rd read-aloud)
- Mealtime/Snacks
- Outdoor/Large Motor Activities
- Nap/Rest Time

- 1.Mealtimes and Snacks are set by the Nutrition Coordinator and school cafeterias for each program.
- 2.Outdoor/Playground play times will be determined by playground capacity and/or scheduling.
- 3.A copy of the daily schedule will be uploaded in the shared teacher Google Drive.
- 4.The teacher will post the daily schedule on the parent board in their classroom.
- 5.The teacher will give each family a copy of the daily schedule during parent orientation/first home visit, and as the schedule changes.
- 6.The teachers will post their daily schedule outside their classroom, either on their parent board or door, and will update it as needed.
- 7.The teacher will have a pictorial schedule in the classroom at the children's eye level. The teacher will refer children to the chart and assist them in understanding what activity is to come next.

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.24(l)(8), NAEYC 3.D.2 and 3.E.8, Caring for Our Children 2.1

Subject: Curriculum

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.32, NM PreK Standard 7B

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS commits to implementing a developmentally appropriate research-based early childhood curriculum that supports each child's individual pattern of development and learning, and provides development in all areas of learning.

Procedure:

1. Teachers will use Creative Curriculum study kits, intentional teaching cards, Mighty Minutes, books, read-aloud cards, teaching guides, and CC Cloud to develop lesson plans in Teaching Strategies Gold.
2. Teachers may use other materials and activities to enrich and/or supplement in order to target children's individual goals that are developmentally appropriate. They must align with TS Gold Objectives & Dimensions and the NM Early Learning Guidelines.
3. Teachers will make modifications to activities based on children's individual development goals.
4. Requirements of Head Start/PreK lesson plans include:
 - a. A large group centered around Conscious Discipline daily.
 - b. At least 1 teacher-led read-aloud per day that is developmentally appropriate, and that follows a repeated reading plan
 - c. Small groups every day are individualized for children.
 - d. Individualization
 - e. A structured outside/large motor experience per day that reaches the individual goals of children.
 - f. Learning Centers
 - g. New materials are added to the classroom under "Interest Areas" weekly.
 - h. Family engagement activities
 - i. Transition Activities
 - j. Early Literacy Practices & Oral Language
 - k. Daily Phonological Awareness Activities (e.g, songs, finger-plays, rhyming, beginning sounds, and syllable work)
 - l. Oral Language and Vocabulary Activities
 - m. Alphabet Knowledge Activities
 - n. Concepts of Print Activities
 - o. Daily Read Aloud with Comprehension Strategies
 - p. Opportunities for developmentally appropriate writing activities
 - q. Daily, Ongoing Individual and Small Group (two or three children) read aloud, with documentation that each child is read to at least twice weekly
5. Requirements of Early Head Start lesson plans include:
 - a. Circle time daily (even if all the children don't participate) must include Conscious Discipline's Baby Doll Circle time. The following examples can be included in your circle time or done as a separate activity: read aloud stories or flannel/felt board stories, puppets, I Love You Rituals, etc.
 - b. Read Alouds - The Teacher must read a minimum of once a day.
 - c. Language, Literacy, and Communication Activities
 - d. Individualization (minimum of 2 activities per week, per child to work on goals, list goal/objective).
 - e. Music/Movement daily.
 - f. Outdoor/Indoor large motor experience (planned, teacher-led activities at least 3xs weekly).
 - g. I Love You Rituals daily (minimum of 1 per day - must be changed up weekly)
 - h. Mighty Minutes are used daily for transition times.
 - i. New materials are added/changed out monthly.
 - j. Infants and Toddlers must revisit experiences and materials across periods of days or weeks.
6. Teachers are encouraged to include community members and parents in the implementation of their studies. Teachers are also encouraged to include parents in the development of their weekly planning forms.
7. Teachers will rotate materials in their classroom according to studies, or monthly.
8. The Education Manager will monitor curriculum implementation and fidelity, and provide support, feedback, and supervision for continuous improvement of its implementation.
9. The Head Start/PreK & EHS Coach will utilize the lesson plans to assist in the coaching process and provide feedback related to individual teacher goals and action plans.
10. Teachers will be trained during pre-service and/or throughout the year on each curriculum used, and will be provided online support as well.

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 2 - Curriculum and Standard 3 - Teaching, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22(I)(7), Caring for Our Children 2.1

Subject: Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.31, NM PreK Standard 7.C.5

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start teachers will provide developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that provide knowledge of themselves and the world around them. The activities and experiences provided will focus on all areas of development in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and NM Early Learning Guidelines.

Procedure: The weekly planning forms for each class will include appropriate activities that foster the development of the skills in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework- Birth to Five and the NM Early Learning Guidelines Essential Indicators:

1. Approaches to Learning
2. Social and Emotional Development
3. Language and Literacy
4. Cognition
5. Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
 - a. Perception
 - b. Gross Motor
 - c. Fine Motor
 - d. Health, Safety, and Nutrition
6. **Media viewing will not be permitted for children under three years of age. Non-educational viewing for children three years and older will be limited to six hours per month, but not to exceed one full-length film in one day. Programs, movies, music, and music programs shall be age-appropriate and shall not contain adult content. Media viewing includes all of the above as well as computers, tablets, phones, smart devices, and screen-based learning equipment. An exception is media that is used for curriculum-based purposes or led by an educator.**
7. **A Movie Request Form** must be completed and approved by the Education Manager when a classroom would like to view a movie in the classroom.
8. Infants should be taken outside at least once a day, and toddlers & preschoolers will follow the classroom schedule policy on outdoor times.
9. Infants should have supervised tummy time every day. They should not be seated for more than 15 minutes at a time, except for meals and naps.
10. Music and movement are required daily. However, constant music playing in the classroom can be distracting and overstimulating for children. Music can be played during naptime at an appropriate volume and during music and movement activities.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start School Readiness Goals, Lesson Plans, Classroom Environment Checklist, Movie Request Form

Cross-reference: Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework - Birth to Five, NAEYC Standard 2 - Curriculum, and Standard 3 - Teaching, Caring for Our Children 2.1, 2.2, NM Early Learning Guidelines Essential Indicators

Subject: Developmental and Social-Emotional Screening

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.33, NM PreK Standards 7.D.5 & 7.D.6

PFCE Outcomes: Families as Learners

Policy: In collaboration with each child's parent, the Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff will conduct a brief standardized developmental & social-emotional screening to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills within 45 calendar days of when the child first attends the program.

Procedure:

1. A classroom staff member will administer a developmental screener and a social-emotional screener to each child within 45 days of his/her enrollment, with the consent & input of the parent. The parents will be informed of the screening results no later than the next family conference.
2. The EHS Teachers or Disabilities Coordinator will conduct an M-CHAT screening when a child turns 18 months and again at 24 months of age. An M-CHAT screening can be conducted anytime within those months as well if there is a concern.
3. Dual Language Learners will be assessed in their home language by a qualified bilingual staff member, based on a home language survey provided at the first home visit.
4. The teacher will complete the screener in its entirety, score, and record the screening date and results in ChildPlus and Riverside Score (for BDI only).
5. The Disabilities Coordinator will review the results for children who may be at risk or delayed. The Disabilities Coordinator will gather additional information from parents and teachers to determine a more accurate level of competency.
6. If a delay or disability is suspected by the teacher at any time throughout the year, they will communicate the concerns to the Disabilities Coordinator. The Disabilities Coordinator will enter the referral/concern in ChildPlus. Child Study Team documentation will begin within 15 days of initial concern.
7. If a child scores in the "monitor" area, the teacher will individualize for the child based on his/her needs and will monitor the progress in the areas needed.
8. As new students enroll, classroom teachers will screen students within 45 days of enrollment and record the results in ChildPlus.
9. The Education Coordinator will monitor 45-day requirements in the ChildPlus system and the education binder.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: BDI-3, ASQ-3, Child Plus Reports

Cross-Reference: NAEYC 4C.3, Caring for Our Children 2.1

Subject: Discipline & Guidance

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

PC Approval: May 7, 2025 **CC Approval:** May 21, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.90, NM PreK Standard 4.A.4

PFCE Outcomes: Families as Learners

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS requires that staff and adults model and teach appropriate social behaviors, problem-solving techniques, respect, and self-worth. Staff, substitutes, and volunteers will demonstrate positive interactions and guidance with children to serve the purpose of teaching constructive and positive behaviors, and strategies for self-regulating and/or self-monitoring behaviors using visuals and toolkits.

Procedure:

Staff will develop children's self-esteem by interacting as follows:

- Actively listening to children
- Refraining from judgmental statements
- Responding to children's ideas
- Recognizing children's efforts
- Using proper names and verbally interacting with each child
- Engaging in positive and supportive interactions
- Interacting with children at their eye level
- Supporting strength-based toilet learning

Staff will encourage autonomy by interacting as follows:

- Providing children with opportunities to make choices
- Creating opportunities for decision making, problem solving, and working together

Methods of Guidance:

1. Guidance will be consistent and age-appropriate
2. Guidance will have positive and clear limits and redirection practices
 - a. Redirection: A child will be redirected by stating what the child can do (that is acceptable and safe) versus what they can't do (i.e, don't run, don't hit, don't yell, etc.).
 - b. Simple Rules: Basic and clear rules will be established in the classroom with input from the children. The rules will state expected behavior, will be taught, practiced, and modeled daily starting the first day of school.
3. Natural Consequences: This is NOT for the purpose of punishment, but rather a choice made by the child. Example: The child will learn that if he or she uses a toy inappropriately, then the child will have to select another toy. If a child is not playing safely in a center (like the sandbox), the consequence might be that he/she would need to find another center to play in.
4. Praising, hugging, and back rubs are natural and nurturing needs of young children.
5. Behavior cues: Staff and substitutes will pay attention to cues of possible hunger, fatigue, fear, toileting needs, or misdirected anger in children's behaviors. Encouraging rest, taking time to talk about feelings, or offering an opportunity to spend some time in the "safe place" are examples of meeting children's needs.
6. Environmental Cues: Staff and substitutes will pay attention to room temperatures, noise levels, toys that are being used in a negative way, or other over-stimulating areas or activities. Having children wait too long in line or for group time is not age-appropriate. These cues might change children's behaviors drastically.

Staff must not maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children. The following disciplinary practices are not allowed:

1. Use corporal punishment or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force-feeding or dragging;
2. Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities;
3. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self worth or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child; and
4. Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet the child's basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate care-giver and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as a punishment, or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment.

5. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers report reasonably suspected or known incidents of child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and in compliance of Federal, State, and Local Laws.

A child will not be allowed to:

1. HURT HIMSELF
2. HURT OTHERS
3. DESTROY PROPERTY

In the event of compulsive striking out or unexpected unsafe behaviors demonstrated by a child, the teacher will use the "Region 9 Head Start/PreK Behavior Response Matrix" to determine next steps. Staff will be trained in CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) techniques for when a child is hurting themselves or others. CPI techniques may be used by a trained staff ONLY, and only if absolutely necessary. Contacting a parent when a child is emotionally upset might also be necessary for the well-being of the child. The teacher may call upon the CPI team member(s) at the site to ensure proper CPI procedures are being followed. If CPI strategies must be implemented by a trained CPI team member, they must fill out an incident report for the parents to sign. The parents will receive a copy of the incident report, and a copy will go in the education binder, and a copy will be given to the health & safety coordinator. The Safety coordinator will enter the incident report in Child Plus.

If a child demonstrates a consistent pattern of (1) possibly hurting self, (2) hurting others, or (3) destroying property, staff will follow the "Temporary Exclusion and Expulsion" policy and procedures.

The policy and the implementation of this policy are in accordance with applicable State and Federal statutes, including but not limited to IDEA, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: CST Forms, Behavior CST forms, Observations, Attendance, Incident Reports

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.23, NAEYC Standard 1B.8, 3 and 10, Caring for Our Children 2.2

Subject: Effective Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Teaching Practices

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.31, NM PreK Standards 3.A & 9.A.1

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS Staff will provide responsive care, effective teaching, and an organized learning environment that promotes healthy development and children's skill growth aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Birth to Five & the NM Early Learning Guidelines including children with disabilities and integrate child assessment data in individual and group planning. The program will leverage and support the cultural and linguistic diversity of each child to support learning and development.

Procedure:

1. The teaching staff will receive training in developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices outlined in the Head Start Performance Standards, Child Care Licensing, NAEYC standards, NM PreK Standards, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
2. Annual pre-service training and monthly or weekly training will readdress effective teaching practices and the "Classroom Assessment Scoring System" (CLASS).
3. Successful, effective teaching practices will be evaluated through formal and informal observations, Classroom Assessment Scoring, and performance evaluations.
4. Teachers will create environments that are communication and language rich, promote critical thinking, and problem solving.
5. Teachers will support all children's engagement in learning experiences and activities.
6. Teachers will focus on promoting growth in the developmental progressions described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: ages Birth to Five & NM Early Learning Guidelines Essential Indicators. Use the framework and NM ELGs to assist in planning organized activities, schedules, lesson plans, and the implementation of high-quality early learning experiences that are responsive to and build upon each child's individual pattern of development and learning.
7. Teachers will integrate child assessment data in individual and group planning.
8. Teachers will plan & provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, social and emotional development, math, science, social studies, creative arts, and physical development that are focused toward achieving progress outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework: ages Birth to Five & NM ELGs.
9. Teachers will focus on meaningful teacher-child interactions throughout the school day.
10. Program personnel and administration will demonstrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness in all aspects of the program, including but not limited to the use of cultural learning tools that students bring into the classroom.
11. Staff will respect and support each child's home language and promote the development of both home language and English by following these components:
 - a. Validation - the intentional and purposeful legitimization of the home culture and language of the student
 - b. Affirmation - the intentional and purposeful effort to reverse the negative stereotypes of non-mainstream cultures and languages portrayed in historical perspective.
 - c. Building - creating connections between the home culture/language and the school culture/language through instruction for success in school and society.
 - d. Bridging - creating opportunities for increased engagement by utilizing appropriate cultural and linguistic aspects of the children in the classroom.
12. Program staff will complete professional learning related to second language acquisition to support multilingual children.
13. Materials, books, and visuals in the classroom reflect the culture and language of the children and families enrolled in the program.
14. Teachers will provide the family with a "home language survey" at the first home visit of the school year. The home language survey will be used to determine which children will need to be assessed in TS GOLD in the Spanish language and acquisition portion of the assessment tool. Based on the home language survey, staff will ensure that the planning and decision making about language and early literacy practices are intentional, program wide and based on research.
15. Teaching approaches must incorporate the following evidence based strategies:
 - a. Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices that promote equity for all children and help children learn and thrive.
 - b. Early language and early literacy environments and experiences that are known to support children's optimal learning and development.
 - c. Consistent and responsive family engagement in children's educational and social growth, especially in supporting the home language of multilingual learners (MLLs).

d. Careful and intentional implementation of research-based practices that can prevent reading failure and promote school success.

16. Staff must build respectful relationships with children and families, ensuring that family engagement opportunities meet the culture, language, and literacy needs of children and families.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Weekly Planning Forms, Classroom Environment Checklist

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 3 - Teaching

Subject: Field Trip Procedure

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: Subpart C, Subpart D, and Subpart F

Procedure:

1. Prior to scheduling a field trip, teaching staff must complete the **Field Trip/Classroom Activity Form** and submit it to the Education Manager and the Nutrition Coordinator for approval **2 weeks prior**. Field trips must be age and developmentally appropriate. Children should be able to reach objectives for development and learning through TS GOLD with each field trip.
2. Teaching staff must notify the PFCE Coordinator through email of any upcoming events that may conflict with other PFCE activities. Teachers must include classroom activities in their newsletters and calendars.
3. Any requisitions for field trip expenses must be requested **2 weeks prior** to the field trip date. This will be approved by the Director and Education Manager.
4. Teaching staff must notify the Nutrition Coordinator **2 weeks prior** to make the proper arrangements regarding meals. The **Field Trip Permission Forms** are sent home **1 week prior** to the scheduled field trip. Any child who does not have a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian will not be allowed to go on the field trip.
5. Nature walks or field trips within a half-mile radius around the school campus DO require the **On-Site Field Trip Form** to be completed at the beginning of the school year. The on-site field trip form will be located in the **Name to Face Binder and the Child File**.
6. Teachers will take their name to face binder, fanny packs, their cell phones, and permission slips on the field trip.
7. Upon arrival at the field trip site, the teachers and/or volunteers need to check the area for any hazardous environmental conditions.
8. Teachers must be alert to any suspicious persons who might be in close proximity to the children's environment. Teachers must report this incident immediately to local authorities.
9. Staff must be vigilant of ALL children, even if the parent is present. Staff must continually scan the premises. Visiting with parents and/or other teachers should not distract from the attention needed by the children.
10. There should be appropriate refrigeration (ice chests) for milk or other products that need cool temperatures.
11. In case of an emergency, follow standard first aid procedures. If the situation arises, one teacher contacts the emergency numbers (parents, paramedics, clinics), and one teacher stays with the children, supervises the children, and gives necessary instructions to volunteers/parents. **CALL** the Head Start/PreK office or the R9 main office to report any incidents or accidents. All head injuries need to be checked by a nurse, physician, or nurse practitioner. Immediately call 911 and report the incident if warranted. Written **incident reports** need to be completed as soon as feasible and a copy must be turned into the Health Coordinator and the parent, and a copy will be put in the Education Binder.
12. Remember, children **MAY NOT** be left in the care of volunteers without a staff person unless it is their own parent.
13. If buses are used, parents and volunteers need advanced notice of departure, and they may not ride the bus due to liability reasons.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Field Trip/Classroom Activity Approval Form, Field Trip Permission Slip, On-Site Field Trip Form, Name to Face

Cross-Reference: Caring For Our Children Standard 3.4.5 and 6.5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.24, NAEYC 2.K and 3.C

Subject: Home Visits/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.34, NM PreK Standard 1.B.2

PFCE Outcomes: Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Family Well-Being, Families as Learners, Family Engagement in Transitions

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start teachers/staff will conduct two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences during the program year for each child.

Procedure:

1. The 1st home visit should be conducted before the child's first day in the classroom. If time or scheduling does not permit this, the first home visit must be conducted within 30 days of the child's enrollment.
2. If a parent refuses for staff to conduct a home visit in their home, the teacher must conduct a visit off campus, but avoid a place with increased FERPA violation probabilities and document reasons in ChildPlus.
3. A home visit/parent teacher conference schedule must be turned in to the Education Manager prior to and following scheduled home visits and parent teacher conferences.
4. Notify the office and use the sign-in/out board in the office when you leave campus to go on a home visit.
5. Both teachers should participate in the home visit/parent-teacher conference. If one teacher cannot attend, ask either the Education Manager or Family Service Coordinator to participate. Teachers should NEVER go on a home visit alone.
6. Teachers will fill out one of the following: First Home Visit Form, Second Home Visit Form, First Parent/Teacher Conference Form, or Second Parent/Teacher Conference Form, depending on the scheduled visit. When all scheduled HV/PTCs are completed, a copy of the HV/PTC Form and Family Conference Form will go into the Education Binder.
7. Each home visit and parent-teacher conference will include a review of the child's progress and learning, creation of joint goals with the family to support progress in all areas of development, results from developmental and/or health screenings, and transition planning.
8. The teacher will enter all home visits and parent-teacher conferences into Child Plus within 2 weeks of the visit.
9. The teacher will follow the appropriate conference/visit form to ensure consistency of all meetings.
10. The Education Manager will monitor home visits and parent-teacher conferences in ChildPlus and the Education Binder.

For Late Enrollees:

1. A first home visit must be conducted within 30 days of the child's first day in the classroom.
2. If a child enrolls close to the 1st or 2nd PTC or the 2nd HV, the teacher may conduct both conferences at the same time to get the child caught up on all Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences.
3. **All children must have two (2) home visits per school year. Two (2) parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the school year calendar for children who start on the 1st day of school or within a reasonable time frame to complete two parent-teacher conferences. If a child is a late enrollee, the program will make every effort to complete at least one (1) parent-teacher conference and two (2) home visits.**

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Home Visit and Parent Teacher Conference Forms, TS GOLD Reports, Family Conference Form

Cross Reference: NAEYC 1.A, 1.B, 7.A, 7.B, 7.C, and 4.E, Caring for Our Children 2.3

Subject: Multicultural Exploration

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.31

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start are committed to providing experiences for children that are positive, concrete, factual, and inclusive for all children. Respect will be modeled for the differences in our community, which may include cultural, religious, economic, and other individual differences.

Procedure: Instead of focusing on the typical commercial aspect (high stress and high expectations) of holiday celebrations, R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS will strive to focus on multicultural exploration to introduce cultural and religious diversity, and varying traditions amongst families in our community and other parts of the world in relation to celebrations & holidays.

1. Celebrations and multicultural exploration will remain sensitive to the varying cultures and religious views in the classroom.
2. Celebrations and multicultural exploration activities must be approved by the Education Manager using the **Field Trip/Classroom Activity Form**, 2 weeks prior to the activity.
3. Parents and families will not be expected to provide food or supplies for any celebration/activity in the classroom.
4. Foods and drinks with high sugar amounts will be avoided. If a parent chooses to bring food, it must be sealed, pre-packaged foods (homemade food or food high in sugar will not be allowed).
5. Adults and older children love the celebration of Halloween, but it is very, very scary for young children. Do not allow children to dress in costumes for Halloween. Many of these costumes can be unsafe, be ill-fitting, have extra ties, distort visibility, or pose other safety hazards for young children.
6. Any multicultural celebration or exploration activity will need to be included on the lesson plan as a "family engagement" activity.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Field Trip/Classroom Activity Approval Form

Cross Reference: NAEYC 1.A, 2.L, and 7.A, Caring For Our Children 9.4

Subject: Parent & Family Engagement in Education

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.34, NM PreK Standard 1.B

PFCE Outcomes: Positive Parent-Child Interactions, Families as Learners, Family Connections to Peers and Community

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start will structure their education and child development services to recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators, and to encourage parents to engage in their child's education that is culturally and linguistically responsive.

Procedure:

1. Teachers will regularly communicate with parents to ensure they are well-informed about their child's routines, activities, and behavior.
2. Teachers will hold two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences per program year or more as needed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the child's education and developmental progress and activities in the program.
3. Parents will have the opportunity to learn about and provide feedback on selected curricula and instructional materials used in the program. Parents will also have the opportunity to provide input and feedback on family engagement events scheduled for the school year.
4. Parents and families will have opportunities to volunteer in the class and during group activities.
5. Teachers will inform parents about the purposes of and the results from screenings and assessments, and discuss their child's progress.
6. Parents will be informed of all classroom and program activities through a monthly newsletter from the classroom teacher and the Director. Facebook & Klassly will be used to announce program activities.
7. Teachers will provide take-home activities and/or ideas based on their child's individual goals. Parents will keep track of their efforts on the Home Activity Log for each program.
8. Parent workshops/training will be centered around education, but will be specific to the parents' interests. Parents will be surveyed at the beginning of the school year so the PFCE coordinator can schedule specific educational training.
9. Professional interpretation and translation must be provided when applicable.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Head Start Family Partnership Agreement, Home Activity Log

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 7 - Families

Subject: Rest/Nap Time

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.31

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will implement an intentional, age-appropriate approach to accommodate children's need to nap or rest according to Head Start Performance Standards, NAEYC, Child Care Licensing regulations, and Caring for Our Children Standards.

Procedure: The following procedures will be followed daily to ensure proper rest/nap time for children enrolled in R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start:

1. Every classroom has a scheduled Rest/Nap period (Toddlers and Preschoolers Only).
2. Each child will have an assigned crib, mat, or cot that is clearly labeled with the child's name. Cot & mat sheets will be stored when not in use.
3. Children will help locate their cot/mat, place the sheet on their cot/mat, and pick up their cot/mat at the conclusion of Rest/Nap time. This activity helps children with name recognition and self-help skills.
4. Cots/Mats will be placed at least 30 inches apart, per licensing, to permit easy access by adults and children using the mat or cot. Sheets will be laundered once a week.
5. Children who have not fallen asleep after 10 minutes or are restless will be permitted to participate in a quiet activity either individually or with the teacher. Teachers and staff may rock, pat/rub the child's back, sing too, etc., to help the child fall asleep.
6. Children will never be forced to remain on cots/mats.
7. Teachers will not lie down with children.
8. Teachers will ensure children learn proper Rest/Nap protocol by redirecting children who lie between the cot/mat and sheet, stand or jump on cots/mats, and place covers over their heads.
9. Children will be allowed to bring a blanket or pillow from home for comfort during Rest/Nap time. Any blanket or pillow must be clearly labeled with the child's name and not shared with other children. Blankets will be washed once a week. If a child is sent home due to an illness or the child has missed school due to an illness, their blanket and pillow must be sent home to be washed.
10. Teachers will be present in the classroom during Rest/Nap time and physically available to children. Staff ratios must be maintained during nap time.
11. Children will not rest/nap in a completely dark classroom. The equivalent of a soft night light illumination will be used.
12. Naptime music must be at an appropriate volume level to help children fall asleep.
13. Head Start/PreK children must not sleep longer than one (1) hour. This does not include the transition into naptime.
14. See the "Safe Sleep Policy" for safe sleep practices.

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.24(B), Caring for Our Children Standard 3.1, 5.4.5.1

Subject: Social-Emotional Development

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.31, NM PreK Standard 4.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS will support children in understanding their emotions, developing social awareness, feeling and showing empathy for others, establishing healthy relationships, and making good decisions by using a birth-to-five social-emotional curriculum that focuses on social-emotional learning.

Procedure:

1. The program will use Conscious Discipline as its evidence-based social-emotional curriculum. Conscious Discipline will be used throughout the Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start program, starting with children who are 6 weeks old.
2. Parent Engagement:
 - a. Parent workshops will be provided to parents who are interested in utilizing the curriculum at home. Workshops will be provided as often as needed throughout the year, and interpretation/ translation will be provided if necessary.
 - b. Conscious Discipline will be introduced at the first home visit, and tools will be provided so parents can start using the tools at home.
 - c. Snippets of information and resources will be sent through the parent texting system throughout the year.
3. Conscious Discipline will help develop children's capacity for executive function in the following areas:
 - a. Self-confidence
 - b. Self-efficacy
 - c. Self-regulation/self-control
 - d. Self-esteem
 - e. Developing relationships
 - f. Persistence
 - g. Conflict resolution
 - h. Versatile communication skills
 - i. Empathy
 - j. Social skills and social situations
 - k. Morality
4. All Head Start/PreK & EHS staff will complete professional development in Conscious Discipline and social-emotional development & support of young children.
5. Training will also be provided around mental health issues and trauma-informed practices, attachment and behavioral supports.
6. Conscious Discipline will also be used to support the following:
 - a. reinforcement strategies
 - b. implementing positive behavior strategies and interventions to support the development of each child.
 - c. identifying classroom management practices with the Education Manager and Coach to inform continuous quality improvement and classroom practices.
 - d. referrals for special education evaluations or mental health services
 - e. family education, and information related to social emotional support

Subject: Transitioning In and Out of the Program

Section: Education

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.71

PFCE Outcomes: Family Engagement in Transitions

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS staff will implement transition strategies to support a successful transition into and out of Early Head Start and Head Start/PreK.

The Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start enrollment coordinator, education managers, the director, and the disabilities coordinator will meet once a month to discuss enrollment and children transitioning in or out of the programs.

Head Start Transition Procedure:

1. The program will offer a parent orientation/open house before home visits and before school begins so that parents and children can see their classroom, and learn about some of the policies/expectations of the program.
2. Parents will be invited to participate in the School Readiness Goal committee, and will receive information on their child's progress 3 times a year (more often if needed).
3. During the last parent-teacher conference, the family will receive a transition folder or a transition bag.
4. The Education Manager, in collaboration with the school districts, will facilitate a "Transition Day" at each school so that children and parents get to experience the various activities of a kindergarten student.
5. Teachers will start implementing activities, books, and experiences in their classroom in April/May that relate to the transition into kindergarten.
6. The Disabilities Coordinator will attend the transition meetings for children with IEPs.

Early Head Start Transition Procedure:

1. Approximately 6 months in advance, EHS staff will identify children who will be turning 3 years of age, to ensure that the transition process begins at least six months prior to the child's third birthday.
2. When the child is 30 months, the FSC will meet with the family to discuss the availability of Head Start/PreK, public school PreK, or other early childhood education services in the community that may meet the family's and child's needs.
3. If transitioning to Head Start/PreK, proof of eligibility, provided by the family, will be used to re-determine if the family qualifies for Head Start/PreK services.
 - a. If the family is determined eligible after completion of the application, Head Start/PreK staff will notify the family of enrollment status. If the family does not qualify, the EHS staff will help support the family in identifying a new placement for their child in a public or community Early Childhood service option.
 - b. If the child has an IFSP, additional transition services will be provided, as determined through EHS staff and the NMFIT program.
 - c. Upon acceptance into the Head Start/PreK program, a copy of the child's file information (if up to date) will be provided to the Head Start/PreK Family Service Coordinator, and the Head Start/PreK teacher will be notified to conduct an initial home visit.
 - d. The EHS and Head Start/PreK teachers, the FSC, and Disabilities Coordinator (if applicable) will have a "transition staffing" prior to the child transitioning to discuss the child's developmental level using TS GOLD reports, progress made by the family and child while in EHS, disability status, changing and current needs of the family, and any other pertinent information needed. The staffing will be documented in Child Plus.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Transition Plans, Teacher's Input Placement for Kindergarten

Cross-reference: NAEYC 7A.3, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22, Caring for Our Children Standard 9.2.

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Coaching Process

Section: Coaching

Date Reviewed: May 7, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part 1302.92

Policy: R9 Head Start and Early Head Start will implement a research-based, coordinated coaching strategy for education staff to improve interactions and environments that promote children's cognitive and social-emotional development.

Procedure:

1. The program will use the practice-based coaching model for intensive coaching for education staff.
2. At the beginning of the year, the teaching staff will complete the **Coaching Needs Assessment**. This information will be used to gain insight into the needs of each teaching team/individual teacher.
3. Each coachee, in conjunction with the coach and supervisor, will sign the **Coaching Agreement**.
4. The coach will use the following data to determine shared goals and action steps on a coaching plan or how they can support the classroom teachers effectively:
 - a. Conversations with the teachers (self-reflection)
 - b. Assessment data (past & present child data)
 - c. DECA Assessments (specifically for children with behavior plans or who need extra support in social-emotional skills). Please see the "Temporary Exclusion & Expulsion" policy for more details on the steps for children with behavior plans.
 - d. CLASS observation scores
 - e. QCIT observations
 - f. Behavior observations - DECA behavior assessments
 - g. Informal observations
5. The coach will assess education staff to identify strengths, areas of needed support, and which staff would benefit from intensive coaching and those that just need extra support in specific areas. The coach will determine the level of support for each teacher/teaching team with the input of the Education Manager. The following are levels of support:
 - a. Tier 1 - Teachers with no concerns or needs
 - b. Tier 2 - Teachers with few concerns/needs
 - i. The **Coaching Observation Form** will be used for those who need tier 2 support, so the coach can provide valuable feedback and support.
 - ii. The coach will use the **Classroom Support Documentation Form** to document visits and supports provided for those who are not on a coaching plan, but who need tier 2 support.
 - c. Tier 3 - Teachers with several or many concerns/needs that need reflective/intensive coaching.
 - i. Reflective/Intensive coaching includes:
 1. Planning goals and action steps with the teacher on the **Coaching Plan form**.
 2. Engaging in focused/active observations in real time that include the teacher reflecting on and sharing feedback about teaching practices on the **Coaching Observation Form**.
 3. The coach will complete the **Coaching Activity Documentation Form** to document coaching visits and supports provided.
 4. Review the coaching plan regularly on the **Coaching Plan Review form**.
 5. Determine next steps for the teaching staff, including making a new goal or providing other supports as needed.
 6. If the teacher(s) do not attend scheduled meetings with the Coach, they will complete the **Refusal to Meet Form** to reschedule or opt out of coaching for the time being.
6. The coach and teacher will work together to determine professional development that would help with growing their skills, including but not limited to:
 - a. Online modules or in-person professional development.
 - b. Book study/reading information with discussion and application with the coach.
 - c. Observing another classroom with discussion and application with the coach.
 - d. Viewing videos with discussion and application with the coach.

7. Throughout the year, the coach will build relationships with teachers and collaborative partnerships by:
 - a. Being authentically helpful with time, suggestions, and resources.
 - b. Providing practical solutions.
 - c. Modeling demonstrations or side-by-side instruction.
 - d. Having reflective conversations with the teacher that respect his/her input to their growth.
 - e. Utilizing systems that already exist in order not to over-burden the teachers.
8. Provide “In Real Time” Coaching - the coach will spend a significant amount of time in the classrooms during their routine classroom visits. When “teachable moments” present themselves, the coach will provide coaching/modeling in the moment to assist the teacher in growing their knowledge and skills. This will be documented on the **Classroom Support Documentation Form**.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure:

Cross-reference:

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Child Health & Developmental Status and Services

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.42, NM PreK Standard 5.A

PFCE Outcomes: Family Well-Being, Family Engagement in Transitions

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff will ensure that all child health and mental health concerns are identified and children & families are linked to an ongoing source of care to meet their basic health needs in collaboration with families and health professionals.

Procedure: The procedures in this section address the initial determination of a child's health status and developmental needs, and discuss ongoing services provided in collaboration with parents and professionals.

Source of Health Care

The Family Service Coordinator will consult with parents within 30 calendar days of the child's first day in the program to determine if the child has ongoing sources of continuous, accessible health care (medical home), health insurance, and dental home. If the family does not have a health care or dental provider, Head Start/Early Head Start will begin the process to assist the parents in accessing a medical home, dental home, or health insurance.

Ensuring Up-to-Date Child Health Status

1. The Health Coordinator and FSC will determine if the child is, or is not up to date on their well-child checks and immunizations upon enrollment. The FSC will assist parents with making arrangements to bring the child up-to-date as quickly as possible.
2. If a child's immunizations are not current according to the NM EPSDT schedule, the child will not be allowed to attend the program until all immunizations are current. The Health Coordinator will make the determination if a child must be excluded due to lack of immunizations based on the child's NMSIIS report or doctor's immunization record, unless the family has provided a state-approved exemption form.
3. For children who are on a delayed immunization schedule or behind on their shots, the FSC will obtain documentation from the child's doctor to show they are on a delayed schedule. The parent must provide documentation that a doctor's appointment is scheduled for the delayed immunizations. This documentation can be written and must be added as a case note in Child Plus under "Immunization Notes".
4. Homeless Children Exceptions:
 - a. A PreK child experiencing homelessness must be enrolled regardless of a lack of immunization records.
 - b. A Head Start/EHS child experiencing homelessness can be enrolled for 90 days or as long as is allowed under state licensing if they don't have their immunizations. This gives parents reasonable time to obtain the documentation needed. A program must work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible in order to comply with state licensing requirements.
5. Children who are underimmunized will promptly be excluded if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in the program to which children are susceptible, including children who have an exemption form from the state.
6. Family Service Coordinators are responsible for obtaining health information from a health care professional or conducting screenings to ensure children are up-to-date on a schedule of age-appropriate preventive and primary medical and dental health care based on: well-child visits as prescribed by the NM EPSDT schedule.
 - a. Head Start/PreK
 - i. The FSC will obtain the following within 45 calendar days after the child first attends the program to determine if the child is up to date:
 1. Hearing screening
 2. Vision screening
 3. Nutrition Assessment
 4. Heights & Weights
 - ii. The FSC will obtain the following within 90 calendar days after the child first attends the program to determine if the child is up to date:
 1. Blood Pressure
 2. Dental Exam
 3. Physical Exam or Most Recent Well Child Check

- iii. Heights and Weights will be conducted by Head Start/PreK-accredited staff or other health professionals twice a year, once within the first 45 days of enrollment per the Height and Weight Screening Policy. Heights and weights will be recorded a second time, 45 days after the beginning of the second semester of the program school year.
 - iv. Within 45 calendar days after the child first attends the program, a licensed community partner or Accredited Head Start Staff will either obtain or perform evidence-based vision and hearing screenings.
- b. Early Head Start
- i. The EHS FSC will monitor and obtain Well Child Checks based on the NM EPSDT schedule, along with any screenings or exams that should happen during those Well Child Checks. The FSC will follow up with parents and health care professionals on missing information based on the NM EPSDT schedule.
 - ii. A licensed community partner or EHS Accredited Staff will conduct vision, hearing, and height & weight screenings for children who did not have those completed during their well-child check.
7. During the enrollment interview, the FSC will identify each child's nutritional needs, such as dietary requests/restrictions and food allergies. They will also identify any health & medical needs. The FSC will complete an internal referral to the Health Coordinator to develop health plans based on the information they gathered.

Ongoing Care

1. The Health Coordinator, Teachers, and FSCs will monitor and/or observe children periodically to identify any new or recurring developmental, medical, oral, or mental health concerns.
2. Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start health and oral care services, follow-up, and referrals are tracked in ChildPlus.
3. Parents are encouraged to keep appointments and accompany their children to the appointments. Parents' responsibility is to inform the FSC when they can not keep the appointment, and when it is rescheduled. The parent handbook covers the parents' responsibilities concerning their child's health status and care.
4. The Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff will serve as advocates for families and children in a variety of health delivery systems and other related needed services, such as transportation arrangements, appointments, etc.

Family Support Services

The PFCE Coordinator & Health Coordinator will ensure that parents and families have the opportunity to:

- Learn about preventative medical and oral health care, emergency first aid, environmental hazards, and health and safety practices for the home, including health and developmental consequences of tobacco product use and exposure to lead, and safe sleep.
- Learn about other health-related items based on the family engagement survey and the parents' interests.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Vision screenings, Hearing screenings, Physical Exam Form, Dental Exam Form, ChildPlus Reports

Cross-reference: Caring for Our Children Standard 2.1, 2.4, 3.1 and 7.2, NAEYC 4C.2, 7.C, 5A.14, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22

Subject: Diapering and Potty Training

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: To provide a safe, sanitary, and discreet environment for diapering, changing soiled clothing, and potty training, Region IX Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff will carry out sanitation and hygiene procedures that adequately protect the health and safety of children.

Procedure:

1. Toileting and diapering areas will be separated from areas used for cooking, eating, or children's activities.
2. Toileting and diapering will be the responsibility of ALL STAFF!
3. Diapering:
 - a. Diapers are to be opened and visually checked every two hours for wetness or feces, and children should be changed immediately when diapers are found to be wet or soiled. Diapers and training pants will be checked and changed if they are wet/soiled after nap/rest time.
 - b. Diapers will be changed on an elevated, non-porous surface used only for that purpose.
 - c. Assemble supplies prior to changing: wipes, gloves, diapers, disposable plastic bags, and disinfectant cleaner.
 - d. Staff will wear gloves when changing diapers or assisting a child with toilet use, wiping, or changing soiled garments. Gloves will be changed with each child.
 - e. **Important!! Staff will keep one hand on the child the entire time the child is on the changing table, no matter the age of the child. They will talk with the child while changing him/her. (The child will not be scolded.)**
 - f. If a child has diarrhea, the Teachers will consult the Short Term Exclusion & Communicable Disease Policy and the Health Coordinator.
 - g. The staff will remove the soiled diaper or clothing. The child's bottom will be cleaned with a wipe.
 - h. The staff will place soiled disposable diapers, wipes, and disposable gloves in a plastic bag or plastic-lined receptacle. Soiled clothing should be secured in a bag for transporting home.
 - i. Staff will then wash their hands and the child's hands per the hand-washing policy.
 - j. Staff will clean and disinfect all surfaces per the sanitation policy.
 - k. Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will follow and post a copy of the diaper changing procedures in each room near the diaper changing table.
 - l. Staff will use the **EHS/Head Start/PreK Diaper Log** to document the time of day the diaper/pull-up was changed and the type of diaper (wet, dry, stool).
 - m. Each program will provide diapers/pull-ups during the part of the day that the child is in the program.
 - n. Staff will be trained on proper diapering procedures.
 - o. The Health Coordinator and staff will monitor diaper changing on a regular basis.
4. **Potty Training:**
 - a. It is recognized that toilet learning is a gradual process and works best when staff and parents work together using a POSITIVE and CONSISTENT approach.
 - b. The FSC will develop a "potty plan" with the parents and teachers for children starting the potty training process.
 - c. Toileting supplies, including gloves, wipes, bags, and extra clothes, will be available.
 - d. Staff will use gloves during potty training and wash their hands, and change gloves between every child.
 - e. Place any soiled undergarments/clothing in a bag, close securely, and store properly for the parent to take home. Staff will adhere the "Biohazard/Accident Sign" to the bag.
 - f. Encourage the child to dress themselves and wash their hands after changing.
 - g. Let the parents know that the child is "toilet learning" in class and to dress the child in cloth undergarments as much as possible.
 - h. Special needs children will be evaluated on an individual basis, and a plan will be made for toileting if necessary.
 - i. Staff will clean and disinfect all surfaces per the sanitation policy.
 - j. "Potty Parties" are an appropriate way to celebrate a child who has been fully potty trained. Food and supplies will need to be approved by the Health Coordinator prior to the celebration.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: EHS/Head Start Diaper Log, Diaper Changing/Toileting Monitoring Observation, Diapering Procedures, Health Monitoring Checklist, Biohazard/Accident Sheet

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.24(D), NAEYC Standard 5, Caring for Our Children Standard 2.1, 3.2,

Subject: Handwashing

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: All staff will systematically and routinely implement hygiene practices that ensure appropriate hand washing procedures are followed during all Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start activities where applicable.

Procedure: In order to prevent infection and illness in the classroom, proper hand washing should be stressed with staff and children. Staff, substitutes, volunteers, and children must wash their hands with soap and running water during the appropriate times.

Adults and children ALWAYS WASH HANDS at the following times:

1. On arrival for the day;
2. After using the restroom, assisting a child with toilet use, changing a diaper or toileting;
3. After caring for a sick child;
4. Before handling or preparing any food, or any other food-related activities (setting the table);
5. Before and after eating;
6. After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals;
7. After handling any bodily fluids or whenever hands are contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids;
8. After handling contaminated objects such as toys;
9. Before and after administration of medication to a child.
10. Before and after treating or bandaging a wound, non-porous gloves should be worn if there is contact with blood or blood-containing body fluids.
11. After caring for a child with symptoms of a communicable illness (runny nose, cold, lice, etc.);
12. After playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
13. After handling garbage or cleaning.

Handwashing procedure:

1. Wet your hands under warm running water.
2. Use liquid soap (preferably an antibacterial soap), because bar soap can harbor bacteria
3. Lather up and rub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Be sure to scrub the back of hands, wrists, and between the fingers.
4. Rinse well under warm running water.
5. Use paper towels or an air dryer to dry hands.
6. Use a paper towel to turn off faucets before discarding it.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Health Monitoring Checklist

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.26, Caring for Our Children Standards 3.2.2

Subject: Health & Mental Health Advisory Committee

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.40

PFCE Outcomes: Families as Advocates and Leaders

Policy: In an effort to bring professional experts together periodically to review and evaluate the Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start medical standards of practice and local needs and problems, R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start Programs will establish and maintain a Health & Mental Health Advisory Committee which will include Head Start/PreK/Early Head Start parents, community professionals, community partners, and other volunteers from the community.

Procedure:

1. The Health & Mental Health Advisory Committee will meet at least two times annually.
2. Performance Standards, budgets, timelines, plans, policies, and procedures will be reviewed and revised with the health advisory's recommendations.
3. Each member will be encouraged to complete a document that allows him or her to write comments and give recommendations concerning health & mental health issues, and return their comments and recommendations to the health staff.
4. Agendas, feedback forms, future events, and handouts for each session will be distributed to all committee members.
5. Minutes and copies of all documents will be kept and distributed to all members.
6. The Health Coordinator will keep track of agendas, minutes, handouts, and all documents for each meeting.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Meeting Minutes, Agendas, Sign-In Sheet

Cross-reference: Caring For Our Children Standard 9.2 and 9.2.3

Subject: Height & Weight Screening

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.4; 1302.41, NM PreK Standard 5.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff will track the individual growth and development of each child in the program.

Procedure:

1. Each child in the Head Start/PreK program will have an initial screening within 45 days of enrollment and at least one additional screening to determine individual growth patterns.
 - a. The Health Coordinator and Family Service Coordinator will conduct, or assist a health professional in conducting, an initial height and weight screening for children upon enrollment, and at least one additional screening in the second half of the school year.
 - b. Children will be measured to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ inch without shoes from a standing position with their heels against the wall and eyes looking forward.
 - c. Children without shoes or heavy coats will be weighed on a balance or digital scale.
 - d. Results of measurements will be documented in ChildPlus.
 - e. The FSCs will inform parents of the results.
 - f. The FSC will refer children, if needed, to a nutrition specialist.
2. Early Head Start children will have the following heights and weights done according to the NM EPSDT schedule and Well Child Checks:
 - a. Length/Height & Weight
 - b. Head Circumference
 - c. Weight for Length
3. If the physician does not conduct the proper measurements on a well-child check, the FSC will use the EHS tools to conduct heights and weights for EHS children and document it in Child Plus.
4. The nutrition specialist will assess the children who are referred and provide appropriate intervention, including any or all of the following:
 - a. Providing an informational packet for the parent
 - b. Providing counseling to parents regarding nutrition concerns
 - c. Discussing nutrition issues with other Head Start/PreK/Early Head Start staff members

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Nutrition Assessment, Growth Assessment Report in ChildPlus, Nutrition Referral

Cross-reference: Caring For Our Children Standards 2.1, 3.1 and 4.7

Subject: Infectious Disease Control

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts 1302.47, 1302.92, 1302.93

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will reduce the spread of communicable diseases and viruses among staff and children through proper hygiene, housekeeping, and infection control practices. Our programs will follow the strictest guidelines from the following entities: NM Department of Health, CDC, ECECD, and NMPED.

Procedure:

Reporting Diseases or Viruses

1. The program will report any notifiable disease or conditions as outlined in “Appendix 3: List of Notifiable Diseases or Conditions in New Mexico - 7.4.3.13 New Mexico Administrative Code,” which includes emergency reporting and routine reporting.
2. The Health Coordinator will call the local health office or the Epidemiology and Response Division at (505) 827-0006 within 24 hours when a child or staff member has contracted any of the illnesses on the list.
3. The Department of Health has a “Child Care Settings - Selected Infectious Diseases” document that outlines the most common infectious diseases that occur in a childcare setting.
4. Parents and Families may request a list of notifiable diseases and individual disease fact sheets.
5. Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will follow the NM DOH, CDC, and Caring for Our Children guidelines for excluding children who have contracted a notifiable disease or virus. Please see the “Short Term Exclusion and Communicable Disease” Policy in this handbook for further details on exclusion.
6. The Health Coordinator will follow the recommendations of the local health office or the Department of Health regarding notifying parents of children who attend the facility about exposure of their child to a communicable disease. When notification is recommended, the Health Coordinator will notify the parent/guardian in writing and shall include the following information:
 - a. The disease to which the child was exposed, and whether this is one case or part of an outbreak.
 - b. Signs and symptoms of the disease that the parent should watch for in the child.
 - c. How the disease is spread.
 - d. The incubation period of the disease (when they might see symptoms appear).
 - e. How long the disease can spread.
 - f. Disease prevention measures are recommended by the Department of Health.
 - g. What control measures have been implemented at the center.

Infectious Disease Control Practices

The following procedures will be followed to ensure our programs are stopping or controlling the spread of infectious diseases or viruses in our centers.

- **Key Hygiene Practices:** Each staff member will follow these practices daily and will make every effort to ensure each child follows them as well.
 - a. **Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds** - see the “Hand Washing Policy”
 - b. Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol when water and soap are not available.
 - c. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - d. Wear cloth face coverings (when cleaning or during a virus pandemic)
 - e. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash your hands thoroughly.
 - f. Discontinue toothbrushing in child care facilities (during a pandemic)
 - g. Follow diaper and toileting procedures by wearing gloves and washing hands before and after.
- **All Head Start/PreK and EHS Staff** will be required to complete specific training on infectious disease control and our policies and procedures in place that coincide with disease control. The following training will be required by all staff in conjunction with all other required training. These will be provided using the Vector system through R9:
 - a. It’s Up to You - Bloodborne Pathogens in Schools
 - b. Health & Safety Training in Quorum
- Staff will follow the “Sanitizing and Disinfecting” policy in this manual, as well as completing the cleaning checklists provided by the Health Coordinator either daily, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly depending on the schedule for classrooms and school buses.

• **Personal Protective Equipment Procedures:**

- a. Latex gloves shall be worn if there is contact with blood, blood-containing fluids, or tissues, during diapering or potty training, and while sanitizing and disinfecting.
- b. Food service gloves shall be worn during meal/snack preparation and serving.
- c. Gloves shall be available in the center's first aid kit and the bus first aid kit, in the fanny packs, in each classroom, and in the office.
- d. Teachers and volunteers must carry the fanny pack on the playground or on a field trip that contains gloves.
- e. Disposable gloves shall be changed as soon as practical when they become contaminated and as soon as feasible when they become torn or punctured.
- f. During a pandemic or when necessary, face coverings are recommended for everyone in a child care facility that is three years of age or older. Masks should fully cover the nose and mouth without gaps and stay in place without needing adjustments.

Pandemic or Virus Control Procedures: If a global pandemic happens or a highly contagious virus is evident, our programs will follow these specific procedures as recommended by the NM Dept. of Health, ECECD, and the CDC.

1. Children who become ill at the center with symptoms related to a notifiable disease or virus will be placed in a separate area away from other children until their parent/guardian picks them up. Parents will be notified immediately if their child is showing symptoms and will be required to pick them up within 15 minutes.
2. Arrival and Departure Procedures:
 - a. We will limit the number of people who enter the facility. We will not allow visitors or volunteers during this time.
 - b. Teachers will accept children outside the building, at the front door, or in a lobby area during drop off.
 - c. If parents are ill, the child will not be allowed in the program and should return home with the parent.
 - d. We will stagger drop-off and pick-up times if possible to avoid a large number of people congregating outside or in front of the facility.
 - e. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after signing in and out.
 - f. Frequently clean iPads and scanners with alcohol wipes.
3. Health Screening at Entry
 - a. Staff and children will be checked upon entry each day for symptoms.
 - b. Each staff member and child will have their temperature taken upon entry into the building. Any staff member or child with a temperature of 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath, or any other symptoms related to the virus should be excluded from the centers and stay away from others.
 - c. Parents will be asked at drop off if any medicine was given to their child to lower their temperature, and if there are any household members with the virus.
4. Daily Health Checks
 - a. Every day, each child will receive a daily health check by teachers and/or coordinating staff. The health check will be conducted as soon as possible after the child enters the child care facility and whenever a change in the child's behavior or appearance is noted.
 - b. The caregiver/teacher will check by direct observation, by asking parents specific questions, and, where applicable, by conversation with the child. The infant rooms will make a note of this on the "Infant Daily Report" form.
 - c. The infant rooms will keep a log of feedings, diapering, nap schedule, and any additional observations on the "Infant Daily Report" form.
 - d. Health checks may serve to reduce the transmission of infectious diseases in child care settings by identifying children who should be excluded and enabling caregivers/teachers to plan for necessary care while the child is in care at the facility.
5. Physical Distancing
 - a. Staff will avoid getting too close to babies' and toddlers' faces when holding them
 - b. Group sizes will be established based on the guidance of the CDC and DOH.
 - c. Incorporate physical distancing within groups - at least six feet between children.
 - d. We will not combine or mix groups. We will maintain the same groups from day to day.
 - e. Outside and Indoor physical activity time will be taken in small groups and staggered shifts.
 - f. We will incorporate additional outside time as weather permits.
 - g. Children will be distanced during table work, meals, and while standing in line. We will minimize the time children are standing in line.
 - h. Teachers will not use water or sand/sensory tables.
 - i. Limit item sharing. If items are being shared, remind children not to touch their faces and to wash their hands after using these items.
 - j. Open windows frequently and adjust the HVAC system to allow for more fresh air to enter the program space.

6. Meals

- a. Meals and snacks will be provided in the classroom (when applicable) to avoid congregating in large groups.
- b. Family-style meals will be eliminated. Employees will handle utensils and serve food to reduce the spread of germs. Do not allow the children to handle the serving utensils.

7. Hand Washing

- a. Staff will practice frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds, and require handwashing upon arriving at the center, when entering the classroom, before meals or snacks, after outside time, before and after diapering, after going to the bathroom, and prior to leaving for home.
- b. Staff will help young children to ensure they are washing their hands effectively. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- c. After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.
- d. Posters describing the steps for hand washing will be placed by each hand washing sink, and will be provided in Spanish and English.
- e. Staff, Children, and Parents will be required to wash their hands after: blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing, before eating or preparing food, after contact with pets or animals, before and after providing routine care for another child who needs assistance.

8. Cleaning and Sanitizing

- a. Staff will increase the frequency with which they clean toys, equipment, and surfaces.
- b. Disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- c. Use disinfectant safe for electronics to clean keyboards and electronics regularly, and wash hands after use.
- d. Minimize the potential for the spread of germs by temporarily removing toys that are not easily cleanable (such as stuffed animals and pillows) and rotating the toys that are in use at any one time so they can be adequately cleaned and sanitized.
- e. Surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned to remove all organic matter before a disinfectant is applied.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Incident report, Daily Health Checks, Infant Daily Report, Child Plus reports on staff professional development, sanitizing and disinfecting schedule/checklist

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standards: 5.A, 5.C, and 9.D. Caring for Our Children Standards: 1.4.1, 1.7, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, and 9.2.3. Child Care Licensing Standards: 8.16.2.21, 8.16.2.22, 8.16.2.26, and 8.16.2.27.

Subject: Medication Administration

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff will establish, follow, and practice appropriate procedures for the handling, storage, administration, and documentation of medication administration.

Procedure: The Family Service Coordinator will meet with the family during an enrollment interview, and if the child requires life-saving medication, the FSC will consult with the Health Coordinator to develop a **health plan**. The Health Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the teacher and parents to review the **Medication Administration Forms** and the child's health plan.

If a child needs medication during the day, the following must occur:

1. Parent(s) and a physician must complete and sign the **Authorization to Administer Medication form** in its entirety.
2. A **Child Health Plan** must be completed with the parent, family advocate, health coordinator, and teacher.
3. Families will be required to provide a separate medication that stays at the center. The medication will be signed in and signed out on the medication form. Should the medication consist of pills, a staff member will count pills in front of the parent/guardian when it is signed in and again when it is signed out, and document it on the medication form.
4. The teacher or administrator who will administer medication will have specific training on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) Verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication in the (3) right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. The Health Coordinator, Nurse, or staff administering the medication will complete the **Medication Log**.
5. Medication and the over-the-counter products will be stored properly as required (refrigeration), in a locked location (cabinet or safe), or out of the reach of children.
6. Non-prescription drugs will not be dispensed unless a physician has signed an **Authorization to Administer Medication form**.
7. The medication label is checked for accuracy to include:
 - a. Must be in the original, child-resistant container
 - b. Clearly labeled by a pharmacist
 - c. Child's full name (first and last)
 - d. Name and dosage of medication
 - e. Date the prescription was filled and the prescription number
 - f. Name of the prescribing physician
 - g. Medication expiration date
 - h. Medication strength
 - i. Storage requirements
 - j. Medication instructions

Over-the-Counter Products:

Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff are not allowed to apply or administer any over-the-counter medication or products without a parent's consent. The FSC will have the parent fill out the "**Over the Counter Products Administration Consent**" at the enrollment interview. The form will be placed in the name to face binder.

- Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Diaper Cream
- Lotion
- Teething Ointment
- Teething Tablets

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Medication Log, Authorization to Administer Medication, Health Plans

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.26(B), NAEYC Standard 5 & 10, Caring for Our Children Standard 3.5, 3.6.3

Subject: Mental Health Concerns & Referrals

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.33; 1302.40; 1302.42; 1302.45; 1302.46

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff will work collaboratively with parents, the mental health coordinator, and mental health specialists to identify, observe, and refer Head Start/PreK & EHS children who have mental health concerns.

Procedure:

Identifying Mental Health Concerns:

1. Classroom teachers will assist parents in completing the social-emotional screener (Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional Questionnaire or BDI-3, depending on the age of the child) at the first home visit or entry into the program. Families enrolled for more than one year will be asked to complete the questionnaire each additional school year.
2. The original questionnaire will be placed in the classroom "Education Binder". A copy will be submitted to the Coach/Mental Health Coordinator if there is a concern based on the scoring of the screening tool.
3. If the parent has a mental health concern for their child, the Family Service Coordinator (FSC) will document the concern/referral in ChildPlus and will provide any resources necessary. The FSC will provide a referral to the appropriate mental health provider. The FSC will follow up with the family regarding the referral and document all follow-ups and results in Child Plus.
4. Head Start/PreK and EHS Staff will receive specific Mental Health Training based on need, and program data, including mental health referrals, trauma-informed care, observations, behavior plans, etc., throughout the school year.

Mental Health Observations: Mental Health observations will be performed in a timely manner according to Head Start performance standards.

1. The Coach/MH Coordinator will collaborate with the Mental Health Consultant on classroom and individual observation schedules for each site.
2. Mental health observations will be identified as one of two types:
 - a. Classroom Observation - the identified problem or problems are typical for children of this age or developmental level and/or largely related to the classroom setting or processes; and
 - b. Individual Child Observation - There is a definite concern about a child's typical behavior or social-emotional functioning.
3. If a teacher or staff member has a concern, they will need to follow the referral process below.

Referral Process for Mental Health

1. The parent must sign the consent form during the enrollment interview for any mental health, health, or educational referrals.
2. If a classroom teacher or staff member has a mental health concern about a child, they will document the concern in ChildPlus and communicate with the Coach/MH Coordinator and FSC their concerns.
3. If a referral is needed to an outside agency or consultant, the FSC will refer the family.
4. The Mental Health provider will contact the parents/family based on the referral.
5. The FSC will follow up with the parent. They will document all concerns, referrals, and follow-ups in Child Plus.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Mental Health Referral Form - Outside Agency Form, ChildPlus Reports, Staffing Notes, CST Forms

Subject: Pets/Animals

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: Staff, substitutes, and volunteers will follow the Child Care Licensing and NAEYC regulations for classroom pets, personal pets, and visiting animals.

Procedure:

1. The presence of animals must not create unsanitary conditions.
2. There must be documentation at the facility that animals requiring vaccinations have been vaccinated according to state and local requirements.
3. Parents must be advised when animals are present.
4. Animals should not be in the kitchen, dining, bathrooms, any food storage areas, or infant rooms.
5. The facility and playground must be kept free of stray animals.
6. Children must not be allowed to play with stray, dangerous, vicious, or contagious animals or other animals that could be dangerous.
7. A center will inoculate any pets as prescribed by a veterinarian and keep a record of proof of inoculation prior to the pet's presence in the center.
 - a. Dogs - 2 yearly vaccinations, rabies, distemper/parvo - a tag and a certificate are given.
 - b. Cats - One vaccination a year for rabies and one vaccination for feline distemper a year. Be concerned with ringworm and rabies.
8. A center will not allow on the premises pets or other animals that are undomesticated, dangerous, contagious, or vicious in nature.
 - a. Turtles - due to salmonella, it is best not to keep turtles in the classroom.
 - b. Birds - birds bigger than a cockatiel or cockatoo can have diseases.
9. Areas of confinement, such as cages and pens, and outdoor areas are cleaned of excrement daily. Animals shall be properly housed, fed, and maintained in a safe, clean, sanitary, and humane condition at all times.
 - a. Fish are ok to have in the classroom.
 - b. Rabbits, guinea pigs, and gerbils - ok in the classroom, keep animal cages cleaned on a daily basis.
10. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.
11. Program staff made sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Pet Vaccinations

Cross-reference: NAEYC 9D.4, Caring For Our Children 3.4.2, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.29

Subject: Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: To prevent the spread of illness and disease, implementation of proper sanitation practices will be followed. All Head Start/PreK & EHS teachers will disinfect and sanitize at the appropriate times per the NAEYC "**Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table**".

Procedure:

Sanitation of Tables, Chairs, Toys, Materials, Carpets, Floors, Cribs, Cots, and Mats

1. Each classroom will have a spray bottle with soap and water and a bottle with bleach and water. The program will use the least toxic solution possible, but in order to prevent germs from spreading, a bleach solution may be necessary.
2. Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start classroom staff will clean surfaces (including high chairs for Early Head Start) before and after use with soap and water, then sanitize surfaces with the proper sanitizing solution.
3. The program will use a disinfectant solution to disinfect the surfaces per NAEYC standards.
4. Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start classroom staff will clean child-sized chairs and bean bag chairs daily and as needed using a solution of antibacterial dishwashing soap and warm water. The chairs will be rinsed and left to air dry. Once dried, sanitize using Lysol spray.
5. Classroom staff will clean and sanitize the classroom's hard surface toys regularly. Toys will be cleaned and sanitized more often if the toy is placed in the child's mouth or appears soiled. If a child puts a toy in their mouth or it needs to be sanitized, the toy will be placed in the receptacle provided in each classroom.
6. Head Start/PreK children will be included in age-appropriate cleaning procedures as part of the educational curriculum.
7. Cribs, cots, and mats must be cleaned daily with a disinfectant solution.
8. If a surface becomes soiled with mucous, urine, feces, or blood, the area must immediately be cleaned with a disinfectant/germicidal solution as outlined in the Bloodborne Pathogens training. OSHA bags are available to all classrooms.
9. Crib and mat sheets must be washed at least weekly, but can be cleaned more often as needed.

Sanitation of Sand and Water Tables

1. Head Start/PreK & EHS teachers will change the water in water tables each day (if using water instead of sand).
2. Tables containing textured material (e.g., dry macaroni shells, rice, dry beans, etc.) must remain dry if kept overnight. If water is added to any textured material, it must be changed daily.
3. Sand will be discarded and replaced every 3 months. The sand table will be cleaned prior to pouring new sand. The sand will be sifted as needed by the classroom staff.
4. In the event of contamination by body fluids, the contents of the sand and water table will be emptied immediately.

Sanitation of Changing Tables and Diaper Pails

1. Early Head Start & Head Start/PreK teachers must disinfect the diaper-changing table after each use with a disinfectant solution. The diaper-changing table pad must be removed daily, and the underlying surface must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
2. Teachers will empty trash cans (with lids) daily.
3. Trash cans and lids must be cleaned with soap and water and sanitized daily.
4. A Classroom Sanitation Schedule will be in the Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start classroom or center, completed by classroom staff and reviewed as per center policy.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: NAEYC Cleaning and Sanitizing Frequency Table, Health Monitoring Checklist

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.29, Caring For Our Children 3.3

Subject: Short Term Exclusion & Communicable Disease

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: Children and staff who have a suspected/diagnosed communicable disease may pose a significant risk to the health or safety of themselves or anyone who comes in contact with the person. The child or staff member will be temporarily excluded from the program if they have a suspected/diagnosed communicable disease or condition/symptoms that are contagious.

Procedure:

The teaching staff will conduct daily health checks of all Head Start/PreK & EHS children in attendance each day. Staff members are aware of certain symptoms in children that may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. The Program Staff (not the families) will make the final decision about whether children who are ill may attend.

The program staff may ask for a note from a physician to allow a child to re-enter the program. This will be determined by the seriousness of the child's illness and if the illness will compromise the care of other children in the program.

The program staff will contact the Health Department if a child or staff member comes in contact with an infectious disease. A current list of infectious diseases can be found at www.cdc.gov

If a confirmed diagnosis of a contagious disease (ex., Measles) is made by a healthcare provider, a written notice will be provided to all families and posted at the site. The identity of the diagnosed child will remain confidential. Once 25% of the children in the classroom have been diagnosed with the same contagious disease, we will close the classroom.

Conditions/Symptoms That Do Not Require Exclusion or Notice:

These conditions do not require exclusion unless it is determined by a program staff member that the child be temporarily excluded:

- Common colds, Runny noses
- A cough not associated with a fever, rapid or difficult breathing, wheezing, or blueness of skin.
- Pinkeye or watery, yellow, or white discharge without fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness.
- Head Lice - only if the child has been treated can they return to school

Temporary Exclusion will Occur If:

- An illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- An illness results in a need for care that is greater than what the staff can provide.
- The child exhibits a severely ill appearance (lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash).
- The child has a temperature higher than or equal to 100.4 degrees with signs or symptoms of illness (temporal).
- Diarrhea
 - Defined as: Loose, watery stools that occur more frequently than usual. Diarrhea is usually caused by a virus or, sometimes, contaminated food.
 - Temporary Exclusion will occur:
 - If the stool is not contained in the diaper for diapered children, and if the diarrhea is causing "accidents" for toilet-trained children, or if it contains blood or mucus.
 - If the child has **several diarrhea (4 or more loose or watery stools within a 4-hour period)**
 - If the diarrhea is accompanied by any of the following symptoms:
 - A fever that lasts longer than 24 to 48 hours without fever-reducing medication
 - Bloody stools
 - Vomiting that looks green, tinged with blood, or like coffee grounds
 - The abdomen looks swollen
 - Will not eat or drink
 - Severe abdominal pain
 - Rash or jaundice (yellow color of skin or eyes)
 - If a child is under one year of age or breastfed, stools may be runny and run outside the diaper. Children will be sent home if this is accompanied by any of the symptoms listed above.

- Vomiting - more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a noninfectious condition.
- Abdominal pain - longer than 2 hours and accompanied by fever or fatigue.
- The child has mouth sores with drooling that the child cannot control.
- The child has a rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- The child has active tuberculosis.
- Children with a known respiratory infection may return to school when they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication, the child can participate in child care activities, and the child's care does not result in more care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children. A doctor's note with a return to school date may be required.
- Children with a diagnosis of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease may return to school if they have a doctor's note with a return to school date, they do not have open or oozing sores on their body, and they are free from fever, diarrhea, and nausea. It is recommended but not required that children be sent home with a known diagnosis of Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease.
- Head Start/EHS staff will follow guidance from the NMDOH Communicable Disease Manual or Caring for Our Children in determining exclusion for all illnesses present in the child care center.

Process for a Sick Child

If a child becomes sick at school, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Health Coordinator or management staff will be contacted to evaluate the child's condition.
2. The parents will be contacted by the Health Coordinator. If the Health Coordinator is unavailable, another coordinator will call the family.
3. If the parents are unavailable, other contacts on the "Emergency Information" form will be contacted.
4. If the emergency contacts cannot be reached, the following will occur:
 - a. The child will be placed in a separate room away from other children and made comfortable.
 - b. The child will not be left unattended.
 - c. A **Sent Home Sick Note** will be filled out by the teacher, and a copy will be given to the parent at pick-up. A copy of the note will be given to the Health Coordinator to place in the Child File, and a case note will be entered into Child Plus.

Lice

1. When a child is found to have head lice or nits, the student WILL NOT be sent home from school, but will not be able to return until treatment has been applied.
2. Health staff or teachers will notify the parents, and a case note will be entered into Child Plus.
3. The parents may pick up their child to treat them or choose to let them remain until the end of the school day.
4. Health staff will give the parent a handout on treatment options and a lice shampoo kit, and encourage parents to treat everyone in the family.
5. If the child continues to have lice after the second round of treatment, they are required to go to a physician to obtain a stronger medicated shampoo.

Program staff who work with children will require a physician's note in order to return to work if the following illnesses are diagnosed:

- Chickenpox
- Shingles - only if the lesions cannot be covered by clothing or a dressing
- Rash with fever or joint pain
- Measles
- Rubella
- Hepatitis A virus
- Pertussis
- Skin infection (such as impetigo)
- Tuberculosis
- Strep Throat
- Scabies
- Hib
- Meningococcal Infection
- Respiratory Illness

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Sent Home Sick Note, Physician's note

Subject: Special Diets and Food Allergies

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47; 1302.42

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start centers will develop and implement a Health plan for students who have special diets or food allergies.

Procedure:

1. During the enrollment interview, the Family Service Coordinator (FSC) will identify the students who require a special diet or have food allergies.
2. The Health Coordinator will develop a Health Plan for students based on a physician's recommendation (with signature) or the CACFP milk substitute form.
3. The Nutrition Coordinator will communicate all food allergies and accommodations to the vendor (LCMC) via email.
4. If a child has a food allergy or nutrition accommodation that the vendor will not accommodate, the program will provide an accommodation to the best of its ability.
5. The Health Coordinator will provide the health plan to the teachers and FSC as soon as it's completed. If needed, the Health Coordinator will meet with classroom teachers and FSC on the details of the health plan.
6. The food allergies and special diets will be posted in each classroom on the health board, in the substitute binder, and on the dining tables.
7. Each classroom will have a sub binder with information on which children have allergies or special diets, with a picture of that child, so substitutes adhere to the health plan.
8. Students who are at risk for anaphylaxis MUST have a doctor's note signed by a physician, and each staff member must be aware of the risk. When applicable, it will include the use of an EpiPen.
9. Staff members will be trained in the use of an EpiPen either on a one-to-one basis or by verifying they have been trained in CPR/First Aid.
10. EpiPens for children will be stored in a designated locked cabinet in the classroom clearly labeled "EPIPEN".
11. If a child of any age has a special feeding need (food intolerance, allergy, health concern, or medical conditions that require the use of specialized feeding equipment) and comes in contact with the intolerance, the staff must do the following:
 - a. Complete an Incident Report with the type and quantity of food the child consumes
 - b. Contact parents and will be provided a copy of the incident report
 - c. Give a copy of the incident to the family and the Health Coordinator
 - d. Call 911 if it's an emergency

Information regarding this policy will be distributed in the parent handbook, individual handouts, or on the Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start website.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Health plan, physician's note

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.26, NAEYC Standard 10, Caring For Our Children 3.5, 4.2

Subject: Staff Health and Wellness

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.93 & ACF Memo: ACF-IM-HS-21-05

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and EHS staff will follow the health requirements as required by all entities including OHS, ECECD, NAEYC, and Region 9. Mental Health and Wellness information will be available to all Region 9 staff.

Health Requirements Procedure:

Each staff member will have an initial examination and a periodic re-examination as recommended by their health care provider in accordance with ECECD and Region 9 requirements, which includes screeners or tests for communicable diseases. The employee must receive a Tuberculosis (TB) test as part of the physical exam or from a different provider.

If a staff member does not have health insurance or has a co-pay, the program will pay for the initial health examination as needed.

R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS will pay for a TB test if the test is not included in the physical exam. The staff member will have to receive a TB test from the provider choice of the program (Sierra Blanca Pharmacy).

Region 9 Health Requirements - Section 606 in the Region 9 Policy Manual:

Communicable Diseases - Any employee who is infected with any acute communicable disease dangerous to the public health shall absent themselves from employment activities during the prescribed period of recovery.

Medical Examination - If at any time there is a question as to the ability of a REC 9 employee to perform job-related functions consistent with business necessity, the Executive Director may require a complete physical examination by a REC 9-appointed doctor to be paid by the REC 9.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has identified limited situations under which a medical examination or inquiry will be considered job-related and consistent with business necessity and, therefore, permissible:

1. When an employee wishes to return to work following an approved FMLA absence due to illness or injury. An examination may be conducted to determine if the employee, with reasonable accommodation, can safely and effectively perform the essential functions of the job. The employee must be notified of such requirements at the time FMLA approval is authorized.
2. When an employee requests an accommodation. If an employee requests an accommodation on the basis of a claimed disability, an examination may be conducted to determine if the employee is an "individual with a disability" to whom a duty of accommodation is owed and, if so, to help identify potential accommodations.
3. When federal law requires an examination, medical examinations or monitoring are required under certain circumstances by regulations issued by the Department of Transportation and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
4. When the employer has reasonable belief, based on objective evidence, that the employee's ability to perform the job's essential functions is impaired by a medical condition, or the employee poses a direct threat to the employee's own safety or the safety of others due to a medical condition.

The REC 9 may conduct voluntary medical examinations as part of an employee health or wellness program. All information obtained through medical inquiries or examinations must be treated as confidential employee medical files, separate from other personnel information about the employee.

Staff Illness and Exclusion:

Staff who are feeling ill and have exhibited fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or have an infectious disease shall not return to work until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. Teachers need to make accommodations for substitutes to cover their classrooms when calling out. Staff who have had surgery or an illness that requires a doctor's note must obtain a doctor's note before returning to work. The Human Resources Director and their Direct Supervisor must get a copy of the doctor's note with the date of return before the employee can return to work. See the "Short Term Exclusion - Illness/Communicable Disease" policy for details around COVID-19 requirements.

Staff Mental Wellness:

Staff members have access to the Region 9 School-Based Health Center for medical and clinical services. Region 9 also participates in the Presbyterian HealthCare Services “Solutions Group” for employee assistance in counseling and mental health services. Staff can also access resources for stress management, prevention, and treatment of depression, and general wellness from the resource guide from Child Plus, and the community resource guide provided by the Health Council.

The program will support the physical health, safety, and wellness of our staff. The program will create a working environment for staff that transmits a culture of wellness. Program leaders will model and promote staff well-being and infuse this culture throughout all program services and interactions on a regular basis. The program will focus on staff mental wellness by following these procedures:

1. The program must support a program-wide culture that promotes children’s mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health (45 CFR §1302.45(a)).
2. The program must ensure all staff and consultants follow appropriate practices to keep children safe during all activities, including, at a minimum, the requirements listed in 45 CFR §1302.47(b)(5). To achieve this, the program will:
 - a. Provide at least one regularly scheduled break for staff during their work day.
 - b. Support staff to feel comfortable to request and receive a brief unscheduled ‘wellness break,’ in addition to a regularly scheduled break, to cool down or regroup if they are feeling overwhelmed.
 - c. When possible, provide a dedicated space for staff breaks that offers comfortable seating, water, soft lighting, stress-reduction resources, etc.
 - d. Offer the employee assistance program through Presbyterian that provides a check-in or consultation with a mental or physical health provider to address personal well-being concerns.
3. The programs will foster a working environment of mutual respect, trust, and teamwork where staff feel empowered to make decisions and know that program leadership are there to support them. To achieve this, the program will:
 - a. Empower education staff to feel true ownership of the learning and developmental progress of children in their care.
 - b. Use strategies such as reflective supervision, peer reflection groups, mentoring, coaching, and mental health consultation to build a work climate of respect and trust.
 - c. Engage staff in team activities that foster a safe and fun work environment, such as:
 - i. Health and fitness challenges (e.g., staff exercising together or achieving a common health goal such as collectively walking 100 miles)
 - ii. Celebrating staff’s personal and professional achievements
 - iii. Noticing and rewarding staff for their work (e.g., personal thank-you notes, shout-outs to staff who did something great in a certain week, etc.)
4. The program will make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance, and must provide staff with regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health, wellness, and health education (45 CFR §1302.93(b)).
5. The program will consider ways to improve workspaces and incorporate more physical activity, safety practices, and healthy options into daily work routines. To achieve this, the program will:
 - a. Provide adult-sized furniture in classrooms and other spaces that staff may need to use on-site. This includes chairs, tables, desks, changing tables, step stools, etc.
 - b. Ensure staff have a dedicated space to take breaks and eat meals during the day.
 - c. Provide on-site yoga or exercise classes, and other mental health activities, with the feasibility of time.
 - d. Encourage staff to implement physically active learning activities with children, such as dancing, outdoor games, sports, etc. This includes Zumbini.
 - e. Have healthy snack or meal options available during staff meetings or throughout the year when feasible.
6. A critical part of promoting staff wellness is ensuring staff are aware of their rights as employees. The program will establish written personnel policies and procedures that are approved by the governing body and Policy Council or policy committee and that are available to all staff (45 CFR §1302.90(a)). This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - b. Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
 - c. Whistleblower protection laws

Subject: Toothbrushing

Section: Health & Mental Health

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.43

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS teachers, substitutes, and staff will promote effective oral health hygiene by ensuring all children with teeth are assisted in brushing their teeth with toothpaste containing fluoride once daily in conjunction with a meal. EHS children without teeth will be assisted in brushing their gums with a proper infant/toddler toothbrush.

Procedure:

1. The classroom teacher, instructional assistant, or substitute will teach proper tooth brushing techniques to the children using puppets, books, stories, etc.
2. Children will brush their teeth in conjunction with a meal (breakfast or lunch). Staff will be encouraged to brush their teeth with the children to model proper dental hygiene.
3. Staff will wear gloves when assisting with toothbrushing.
4. Do not brush teeth during bathroom time or on the bathroom floor because cross-contamination may occur.
5. Teachers will store toothbrushes in holders to prevent contamination. Toothbrushes must not touch each other when stored. Toothbrush holders will not be stacked on top of each other when stored. Toothbrush holders will be cleaned once a month and more often as needed on visual inspection with a soap and water solution, rinsed, and dried.
6. The teacher or instructional assistant will assist children in dispensing a “pea-size” amount of fluoridated toothpaste onto a toothbrushing cup.
7. Teachers or instructional assistants will ensure that each child rinses their toothbrush before and after use. Early Head Start teachers will rinse the toddlers’ toothbrushes if the toddlers are unable to do it alone.
8. New toothbrushes will be issued to children every three months, or more often as needed. Toothbrushes will be given out throughout the year if the bristles are worn or a child has a contagious illness, including colds or flu.
9. Early Head Start teachers will *not* store toothbrushes in the diaper changing area.
10. Early Head Start will follow the recommended guidelines for infants and toddlers:
 - a. Infants with no teeth – teachers will continue to clean their gums with gauze and water after a bottle or meal, or with infant toothbrushes.
 - b. After the older infant has teeth, until two years of age, teachers will clean their teeth with a toothbrush and a smear of toothpaste. Children will not be required to rinse, only spit.
 - c. At the age of 2 and older, teachers will use a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste
 - d. on the child’s toothbrush, having the child spit as he/she is able.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Health Monitoring Checklist

Cross-reference: Caring For Our Children 3.1.5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.26, NAEYC 5A.23

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Active Supervision of Children

Section: Safety

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.21, 1302.31, NM PreK Standard 5.B

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start requires that all staff, consultants, contractors, substitutes, and volunteers actively supervise children at all times throughout the school day using various ways to ensure that all children are accounted for at all times.

Procedure: Children will be supervised at all times throughout the day using the following methods and/or requirements:

1. **Staff-Child Ratios** will be maintained at all times based on the youngest child present in the group. **Two paid staff members must be with children at all times, regardless of ratio.**
 - a. Early Head Start Ratio = 4:1
 - b. Head Start/PreK Ratios: 3-year-olds = 8:1 4 year olds = 8:1
 - c. According to ECECD (Child Care Licensing), ratios must be maintained at all times.
2. **Volunteers & Support Staff**
 - a. Volunteers & Support Staff may not be left alone with children. They must be with and supervised by regularly scheduled teaching staff at all times.
3. **Name to Face Procedure:**
 - a. Staff will ensure that parents/guardians sign their children into the classroom at arrival, and sign them out at departure using the **Sign In-Out Form**.
 - b. Staff will take the **Name to Face Binder** with them when they leave the classroom for the playground, cafeteria, on field trips, on fire drills, and emergency evacuation drills.
 - c. If a child is receiving Special Education Services, the services provider will be asked to sign the **Sign In-Out Form** using the key code for services and signing on the bottom of the sheet. The teacher and educational assistant will sign to verify that the child is taken out of the classroom for services. The educational assistant will change the count them in/count them out boards in the classroom. When a child leaves, the lead teacher and educational assistant will count out loud and document how many students are present and mark it on the **Name to Face Form**.
 - d. The classroom teachers will conduct a name-to-face check every hour and a half, and at every transition, and document the results on the **Name to Face Form**.
 - e. Name to Face/Sign In-Out Forms and checks will be monitored at least once a month or subject to random checks by the Safety Coordinator and other management staff to ensure compliance.
 - f. Sign-in and out forms and name-to-face forms will be stored in a locked designated file in the classroom for the whole school year.
 - g. The teachers will update the name to face pictures as children transition and enroll in their classrooms.
4. **Attendance Board:**
 - a. Each Head Start/PreK & EHS classroom will have a home-to-school board. Home-to-school boards will be posted before school begins and/or by parent orientation.
 - b. The attendance board will have columns that represent "home" & "school". Each child will have a name or picture for the attendance board.
 - c. When families sign their child in for the day, they will move their child's name/picture to the "school" side, and at departure, the picture will be moved to the "home" side of the board.
 - d. Each classroom will have a "bus/pick-up" board or area in the classroom to identify how children will be going home at the end of the day.
5. **Count Them In/Count Them Out:**
 - a. Each classroom/site will have the "Count Them In/Count Them Out" sign on each exit door for a reminder to count all children before leaving the classroom. Teachers/Staff will write the number of children on the count them in/out sign every day, and update it throughout the day as necessary.
 - b. A sign will also be hung up on the school building exit doors as a reminder to count them in and out.
 - c. The Safety Coordinator will conduct a walkthrough before school begins to ensure these signs are put into place and utilized throughout the school year.

6. Classroom Supervision

- a. Teachers and staff must supervise children in the classroom at all times. One classroom teacher will count the children out loud using the Name to Face Form every 1.5 hours and/or when they are transitioning. The other classroom teacher will confirm students' presence by signing off at the bottom of the sheet. The first Name to Face count should start at 8:00 AM.
- b. When transitioning outdoors, the Teacher Assistant will "sweep" the classroom and confirm the correct count of children before departing with their co-teacher. This will include the entire classroom premises, including the restrooms. In the event they are missing or a child is unattended, they will call the Health Coordinator, the Health Coordinator will conduct a "Shelter in Place." All Managers will be asked to sweep the premises. If a child isn't found within 5 minutes, the Health Coordinator will call 911, then a teacher will contact the parent/guardian immediately. An incident report will be filled out, and staff will ensure that it obtains parent/guardian signatures on all incident reports within 24 hours of the incident. The Director will report it to all the required entities.
- c. Classrooms must be set up so that teachers can maintain visual contact with each child in the classroom throughout the day. Shelves and materials should not be stacked too high so that it doesn't compromise the teacher's line of vision.
- d. Teachers and staff must be engaging with the children on the floor, at the work areas, and in the centers during group and free play times.
- e. Teachers must monitor bathroom activity as children are allowed to enter and exit the bathroom on their own.
- f. Staff placement should be strategic so children do not leave the classroom, hide, or go through other doors leading into other areas of the building.
- g. Teachers will be trained regularly on active supervision. Training will be provided throughout the year.

7. Playground Supervision

- a. Two designated staff members will be with Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start children while they are on the playground. Child/staff ratios will be maintained on the playground.
- b. The Teachers will take the **Name to Face Binder** outside. Both teachers will sign off at the bottom of the sheet to verify that the children have been taken outdoors. A teacher will conduct the same procedure before coming back into the classroom.
- c. The infant classroom will take the infants outside in the strollers to ensure all children are present when leaving the classroom and returning from the playground.
- d. A teacher will "sweep" the playground before the children return to the classroom, confirming the number of children that are present with the other classroom teacher.
- e. Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff, substitutes, and volunteers will guide outdoor play.
- f. Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff, substitutes, and volunteers will station themselves around the playground where children will always be within their field of vision. Teachers will not sit in a group and talk.
- g. While on the playground, Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff members will have their fanny packs or backpacks on at all times.

8. **Ongoing Monitoring:** The Safety Coordinator will use the **Safety Monitoring Checklist** and **Outdoor Playground Supervision Form** to monitor active supervision bi-monthly. The other management staff will monitor active supervision throughout the day and by observing the camera footage from each classroom weekly. All ongoing monitoring will be documented, and supervisors will follow up with staff if active supervision needs to be corrected.

*****Staff who violate this policy or leave a child unattended will be subject to disciplinary action and/or termination*****

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Name to Face/Sign In-Out Form, Count Them In and Count Them Out signs, Ongoing Monitoring Checklists, Classroom Video Monitoring

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.23(C), NAEYC 10.B.1 & Standard 3, Caring for Our Children (4th Edition) 1.1, 2.2, 5.4

Subject: Emergency Care, Accidents, and Injuries

Section: Safety

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47, NM PreK Standard 5.B

Policy: Accidents, injuries, and emergency needs will be evaluated, documented, reported, and managed appropriately based on the severity of the incident. R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff assume responsibility for the immediate care of all accidents that have occurred during program hours

Procedure: The following actions will be taken in case of accidents or emergencies involving a child, parent or staff member:

1. Give immediate care (first aid). (CHECK / CALL / CARE)
2. Call 911 if appropriate. If 911 is not needed, call and/or take the person to the Safety Coordinator or available coordinator as needed.
3. Notify parents or emergency contact.
4. Every attempt should be made to have a parent transport a child home or to a medical facility.
5. On all SERIOUS ACCIDENTS, the Safety Coordinator and Director will be notified immediately.
6. All ACCIDENTS, ILLNESSES (notifiable disease or condition), OR INJURIES THAT REQUIRE MEDICAL CARE BEYOND ON-SITE FIRST AID will be reported to the Safety Coordinator immediately, and an incident report will be completed.
7. Utilize universal precautions at all times.
8. Additional medical emergency information is posted in each classroom, such as references on burns, convulsions, cuts, unconsciousness, head injuries, shock, etc.
9. HEAD INJURIES: Staff will notify parents and office staff of all head injuries/incidents immediately.
10. CARE FOR MINOR INJURIES is the responsibility of the teacher in charge at the time of injury if the Safety Coordinator is not available.
 - a. Bumps and bruises should be treated by applying ice to the injured area and notifying the parents.
 - b. Cuts should be cleaned with soap and water to avoid infection. Apply a sterile dressing or Band-Aid as needed.
 - c. The incident report will be completed.
 - d. Contact the Site Director and/or Safety Coordinator.
11. INCIDENT REPORTS will be completed for all injuries, regardless of nature. Procedures for Incident Reports are as follows:
 - a. Incident Reports will be completed when an incident/accident occurs.
 - b. The staff member who witnessed the incident/accident will be responsible for filling out the report.
 - c. Teachers & parents will need to sign the report the day of the incident or within 24 hours.
 - d. Parents must have a copy within 24 hours.
 - e. The staff member who completed the report will document it in Child Plus as an event under Health.
 - f. A copy of the incident report will be provided to the Safety Coordinator.
12. POISONS: Incidents involving ingestion of poisons or other foreign substances should be reported to the New Mexico Poison Center at 1-800-432-6866.
13. All staff will be trained in CPR/1st Aid (with pediatric component) every two years or as their certification expires.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Incident Report

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 5 & 10, CYFD 8.16.2.26, Caring for Our Children Standard 3.1, 3.4.3

Subject: Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan (EPRP)

Section: Safety

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47, NM PreK Standard 5.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will keep children and staff safe during various disasters or emergencies by following the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) for each site.

Procedure: Each Head Start/PreK & EHS Center will have an up to date Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP), which shall include steps for the evacuation, relocation, shelter in place, lock-down, communication, reunification with parents, individual plans for children with special needs and children with chronic medical conditions, accommodations of infants and toddlers, and continuity of operations (see waivers, Subsection D of 8.16.2.14 NMAC). The plan shall be approved annually by the licensing authority, and the department will provide guidance on developing these plans.

1. Each Head Start/PreK & EHS site will follow the EPRP of the site they are located in.
2. Each site will conduct a monthly fire drill and document the fire drill on the **Region 9 EHS/Head Start/PreK Fire/Disaster Drill Log**. For the 1st 4 weeks of the school year, each site will conduct a fire drill weekly. The log will be posted on the site's main board.
3. The program will ensure that a lockdown drill, shelter in place drill, and evacuation drill are conducted quarterly.
4. The program will ensure children are only released to an authorized individual that is included in the Emergency Form and has been properly identified. The Teachers will ensure that they have their **Name to Face Binder** up-to-date, and if any changes occur they will inform the FSC, the Transportation Coordinator, and the Program Assistant.
5. A copy of the EPRP is included in the **Name to Face Binder**.
6. The Safety Coordinator will ensure the plan includes phone numbers for other staff at each site.
7. Teachers will take their Name to Face binder (which includes the EPRP) and backpack/fanny packs with them during an evacuation. If there is a change on the Emergency Form the teachers will make a new copy of the emergency form with the changes and give a copy to the FSC, Transportation Coordinator, and Program Assistant. The information will be changed in Child Plus by the FSC.
8. All new educators will complete emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies training within three months of their date of hire.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Fire Drill/Disaster Drill logs, Emergency Forms, Sign In and Out sheets

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 10, Caring for Our Children Standard 5.1, 5.2, 9.2.4, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22

Subject: Facilities and Equipment

Section: Safety

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47, NM PreK Standard 7.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff must ensure all facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate for child safety.

Procedure:

1. All facilities where children are served, including areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, and eating, are, at a minimum:
 - a. Meet Child Care Licensing requirements;
 - b. Clean and free from pests;
 - c. Free from pollutants, hazards, and toxins that are accessible to children and could endanger their safety;
 - d. Designed to prevent child injury and free from hazards, including choking, strangulation, electrical, and drowning hazards, hazards posed by appliances, and all other safety hazards.
 - e. Well lit, including emergency lighting;
 - f. Equipped with safety supplies that are readily accessible to staff, including, at a minimum, fully-equipped and up-to-date first aid kits and appropriate fire safety supplies;
 - g. Free from firearms or other weapons that are accessible to children;
 - h. Designed to separate toileting and diapering areas from areas for preparing food, cooking, eating, or children's activities; and,
 - i. Kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance, including the HVAC system.
2. All cleaning supplies must be kept in a locked cabinet out of children's reach. It will be locked when not in use.
3. Other toxins, such as rubber cement, hand sanitizer, dish soap, etc., must be kept out of reach of children at all times in a locked cabinet or drawer.
4. Teachers and substitutes will store purses and other personal belongings in a locked cabinet out of children's reach.
5. Blind cords, computer cords, and any other hazards will be stored in a way to avoid (d) above.
6. Teachers will restock first aid kits and fanny packs monthly and as needed. The teacher will submit a monthly inventory request form to the Health Coordinator by the 5th of each month.
7. Managers and Coordinators will use an ongoing monitoring tool to monitor safety practices monthly in each classroom.
8. Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children, and as applicable, other equipment and materials meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM). All equipment will be:
 - a. Clean and safe for children's use, and appropriately disinfected;
 - b. Accessible to children based on age appropriateness;
 - c. Kept safe through ongoing supervision and maintenance.
9. The program Director will be informed of any recalls by the CPSC or ASTM by email and will provide a copy to the Safety Coordinator and the Coach. Recall notifications will be sent through Parent Powered and posted on the Health & Safety Board at each center.
10. The program will ensure children are not exposed to lead in water or paint in their facilities. The program will have facilities tested for lead in water and paint before occupancy and every 2 years thereafter if necessary.
11. Facilities maintenance will be documented in Child Plus by the Director or Safety Coordinator.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Safety Monitoring Checklist, Inventory Lists, Playground Checklist, Classroom, Classroom Environment Checklist

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standards 9 & 10, Caring for Our Children Standards 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.1, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.2

Subject: Release of Children

Section: Safety

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: The R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS program will ensure the safe release of children to a parent/guardian or authorized person(s). Parents must notify staff and update as needed, who has access to the release of their child at the Head Start/PreK or EHS site, or at the bus stop.

Procedure:

1. During the enrollment process, an **Emergency Form** will be completed with the names of individuals authorized to pick up the child from the center or bus stop. The parent must list **at least 2 individuals** on the emergency form who reside in Lincoln County.
2. The parent/guardian will regularly update the staff regarding changes to the **Emergency Information form**. Parents can add emergency contacts to the emergency form over the phone, but they will be required to initial the changes through DocuSign.
3. If the parent/guardian or another adult brings and picks up the child from school, the parent/guardian will sign them in and out on the iPad by signing or initialing each time, and choosing their name from the drop-down list.
4. If the child is transported by bus, the parent/guardian or another adult will initial the **Child Sign-in/out Sheet** on the bus. The parents will update the bus/pick up board or designated area in the classroom to identify if they are bus or being picked up.
5. If an adult comes to the bus stop and is unauthorized to pick up the child, the individual will be informed that they are not on the Emergency Form, and the child will be returned to the school. The teacher or office staff will contact the parent/guardian and/or other individuals on the Emergency Form to pick up the child. If the child has not been picked up by the close of the business day, CYFD or police will be contacted.
6. In cases where the parent wishes to deny access to the non-custodial parent, they will be required to provide the program with appropriate copies of legal documentation (custody decree, restraining order, and/or termination of parental rights).
7. In cases where potential kidnapping or violence is an issue, photographs of said persons will be provided for the family file and the front office to assist staff in identifying these individuals.
8. In cases where there are concerns on the part of the custodial parent, but there is no legal documentation available, the FSC will make appropriate referrals to legal aid or other legal counsel for assistance.
9. If a person comes to a site, classroom, or bus stop to take the child and the staff person does not know for a fact that they are authorized to do so, the staff person will do the following:
 - a. Ask for picture identification and verify the name is on the **Emergency Information Form**.
 - b. Inform (if ID verified) the person to use the iPad to sign them in/out and initial. And, have him/her move the child's picture to the HOME side of the attendance board. Or inform the person that he/she is not on the "Emergency Information" form, and the program will be unable to release the child.
 - c. Refer the person to the director if he/she should protest in any manner.
 - d. Contact the police if the person continues to protest.
 - e. Contact the custodial parent to inform them of the incident if safety is an issue.
 - f. Notify the director of the incident, and submit a written "Incident Report."
10. If an individual who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol comes to the site or bus stop to pick up a child, the staff member will do the following:
 - a. Assist the individual in obtaining safe and appropriate transportation for him/herself and the child.
 - b. Call the police and/or CYFD in cases where an individual habitually appears to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, insists on leaving with or without the child, or becomes a nuisance or threat to the safety of himself/herself, the child, staff member, or property.
 - c. Notify the director and submit a written "Incident Report."
 - d. Make a referral to the FSC for family assistance.
11. Parents should carry an ID with them at all times in the event that there is a substitute teacher or office staff member who is not familiar with the parent.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Child Sign In and Out Sheet, Emergency Form, Incident Report

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 3 & 10, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22, Caring For Our Children 9.

Subject: Safe Sleep Policy

Section: Safety

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: R9 Early Head Start staff, substitutes, and volunteers will follow practices to promote safe sleep when infants are napping or sleeping to reduce the risk of SIDS or suffocation death and other infant deaths that could occur when an infant is in a crib or asleep.

Procedure:

1. Infants up to 12 months of age will be placed in a crib with a tight-fitting sheet to sleep.
2. Infant rooms shall be arranged so that placement of cribs in an area used by other children does not encroach upon the minimum usable floor space requirements.
3. Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep.
4. Children 12 months and up will be placed on a cot or mat to sleep.
5. When infants arrive at the program asleep, or fall asleep in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in appropriate infant sleep equipment.
6. No child will be allowed to sleep in a playpen, Pack and play, car seat, stroller, swings, bean bag chair, bouncy seat, jumping chair, highchair, chair, futon, or any other type of furniture/equipment that is not a safety-approved crib.
7. Cribs will not be used for storage. Animals and pets will not be allowed in cribs or on sleeping materials.
8. Children with disabilities, medical conditions, or cultural preferences that require unusual sleeping arrangements will have written authorization from a parent and physician justifying the sleeping arrangement. A physician's note must contain a timeframe for the specific sleep arrangement. The facility shall adhere to the timeframe recommended by the doctor.
9. The Safety Coordinator will develop a **Sleep Plan** for children who need specific sleeping accommodations.
10. Soft or loose bedding will not be allowed in cribs. These include, but are not limited to: bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sleep positioning devices, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, bibs, etc. Children 12 months and older may use a blanket on their cot/mat, but it will not cover any part of their face/head.
11. Swaddling will be allowed following these procedures and expectations:
 - a. Infants may be swaddled until they can turn over on their own or up to 6 months of age.
 - b. Infants may only be swaddled during naptime using one-piece swaddlers provided by the center in the appropriate size. When swaddled, infants must be closely monitored and checked every 15 minutes to ensure they are comfortable, safe, and not overheating.
 - c. Swaddling may NOT be used without the consent of the parents on the **Over-the-Counter Authorization Form**.
 - d. Swaddling may NOT be used as an alternative to caregiver interaction. Caregivers must make an attempt to soothe and comfort the child prior to swaddling.
 - e. Caregivers must wean infants out of a swaddler and into a "sleep sack" before 6 months of age or sooner.
12. Infants may have a pacifier (without the clasps) when sleeping in a crib.
13. Children will not be laid down in a crib or on a cot/mat with a bottle or sippy cup.
14. Staff will be trained on safe sleep practices annually, and as needed, to ensure the policy and procedures are being followed.
15. Illumination must be enough to see the entire room, clearly observe sleeping children, and allow for quiet activities for non-sleeping children. Children who are awake should be moved every 30 minutes to offer new stimulation.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Safety Monitoring Checklist, Sleep Plans, QCIT Observation

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.24, NAEYC 5A.10, 5A.11, 5A.12 and 10.D, Caring For Our Children 3.1.4

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: CACFP & Meal Service Accountability

Section: Nutrition

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.44, NM PreK Standard 5.C

Policy: The R9 Early Head Start & Head Start/PreK program will comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines for program accountability at each site that participates in CACFP. The program will contract with food service vendors who are CACFP trained and certified to provide meals and snacks for children.

Procedure:

CACFP Meal Service, Recordkeeping, and Other Operational Requirements

1. The Director will submit the renewal application annually and complete the vendor agreement with the food vendor.
2. The Director will be responsible for the following recordkeeping and operational requirements:
 - a. CACFP Income & Expense Tracking Form
 - b. Financial Binder with copies of invoices, bank statements, and receipts
 - c. Permanent Documents Binder
 - d. ADA Reports and Meal Count Reports for monthly claim purposes
 - e. Self-Audits
3. The Nutrition Coordinator will use the monitor & ensure compliance for the following:
 - a. Head Start, PreK, and EHS attendance and meal counts in Child Plus
 - b. Menu Record Books and Infant Meal Patterns (checked weekly and initial the forms)
 - c. Menus & Meal Components
 - d. Monthly Nutrition Activities (Will purchase food items and monitor the nutrition activity binder)
 - e. Meals and Snacks using the **Meal and Snack Time Observation Form**, bi-monthly.

CACFP Training:

1. The Director and/or CACFP program administrator will attend the initial CACFP training, annual training, and any other required training designated by CACFP.
2. The Director and/or Nutrition Coordinator will train staff during Pre-Service on all requirements of CACFP. New staff hired after Pre-Service will be trained.
3. Specified staff will attend CACFP training annually or throughout the year as required.

Financial Monitoring at Program Level - CACFP

1. Region 9 Education Cooperative employs a business/accounting director to monitor all the grants and accounts under the REC.
2. The REC 9 business director will work with the director to ensure that expenditures are not greater than the amount appropriated.
3. The Director will send a copy of the invoice to REC 9 Accounts Payable upon receipt. The Director will verify the invoice for accuracy and will notify accounts payable that the invoice can be paid.
4. The Director monitors monthly invoices from the food service vendor and the reimbursements from CACFP, and compares them to ensure fiscal integrity and accountability.

Subject: Food Preparation Safety

Section: Nutrition

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47

Policy: Food is to be prepared, served, and stored in a safe and sanitary manner. The program will adhere to Federal, State, and local food safety and sanitation laws, including those related to the health of food handlers. The program must post evidence of compliance with all applicable laws. In addition, the program will only contract with food service vendors that are licensed in accordance with state and local laws.

Procedure:

1. If a person is infected with a communicable disease, that individual must not work in a licensed kitchen. Such diseases would include, but are not limited to, Salmonella, Shigella, E. coli, or Hepatitis A. Also excluded from working is anyone suffering symptoms of acute gastrointestinal illness. Such an individual will not return to work until certified by a physician, in writing, to be infection-free and no longer considered a significant health risk.
2. Employees engaged in food processing, preparation or service who have communicable forms of skin infections to include but not restricted to cuts, burns, abrasions, boils or bandages on the hands, forearms or face will be temporarily excluded from work activities in which there is a likelihood of contaminating food or food contact surfaces, unless plastic or surgical gloves are utilized.
3. All employees will thoroughly wash their hands and forearms with hand cleanser and warm water before starting work. All food handlers will wash their hands during work hours as often as may be required to remove soil and contamination, after working with raw meat products, before handling ready-to-eat foods, after visiting the restroom, after using tobacco, or after eating or drinking.
4. No person will use tobacco in any form or consume food or drink in the food preparation or processing areas, in equipment and utensil washing areas, or while engaged in serving food except that a food employee may drink from a closed beverage container if the container is equipped with a straw and is handled to prevent contamination of food, hands, equipment, utensils, and linens.
5. Effective hair restraints will be used by employees who process, prepare, or serve food to keep exposed hair from food or food-contact surfaces.
6. Employees will maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and shall conform to good hygienic practices during all working periods. Personal cleanliness includes clean clothing.
7. The Health Authority will inspect food establishments at least annually to determine compliance with the Food Service Sanitation Act, the New Mexico Food Act, if applicable. The results of the annual inspection will be posted at the center.
8. Staff will make sure that food requiring refrigeration stays cold until served.
9. Staff will check refrigerator thermometers regularly to ensure they are at 41 degrees or below. Freezers will be at 0 degrees or below. This includes refrigerators/freezers in a licensed kitchen or classroom.
10. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must either be whole fruits or commercially prepared, packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.
11. A center will protect food and drink from insects, rodents, and vermin by properly storing items in an airtight container or by tightly wrapping them. A center will label and date all leftover food.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Meal & Snack Time Observation Form

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.25, Caring for Our Children Standards 4.5, 4.6, 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10

Subject: Food Safety and Sanitation

Section: Nutrition

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.44; 1302.47

Policy: Evidence of compliance with Federal, State, and local food safety and sanitation laws related to the storage, preparation, and service of food and the health of the food handlers will be posted, and all food safety regulations will be followed.

Procedure:

1. The food service inspection certificate will be posted at each Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start site.
2. All sites will comply with the New Mexico Environmental Department laws and rules.
3. Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk to their child. A private place will be provided upon request.
4. Early Head Start staff members at facilities serving infants and toddlers will have proper instruction on the handling of breast milk, formula, and commercially prepared baby food. Parents should not bring pre-made bottles of formula for their infant, unless there is a doctor's note provided.
 - a. Staff will discard any formula or breast milk that has been unrefrigerated for one hour or more.
 - b. Breast milk must be labeled with the infant's full name and the date the milk was expressed.
 - c. Staff will wash, rinse, and sanitize bottles after use.
 - d. Staff will not feed infants in place of other forms of comfort.
 - e. Infants shall either be held or fed sitting up for bottle-feeding. Infants unable to sit shall always be held for bottle-feeding. Infants and toddlers shall not be placed in a lying position while drinking bottles or sippy cups. The carrying of bottles and sippy cups by young children throughout the day shall not be permitted.
5. Early Head Start staff members serving infants will have proper instruction for the sterilization of dishes and utensils used during meals and snacks per Minimum Standards for Child Care Licensing.
6. Staff will discard any food with expired dates.
7. Baby food will need to be served in bowls or will be discarded if the utensil was used in the original food container to avoid contamination and bacterial growth. It cannot be refrigerated or reused if the utensil is used directly in the container to feed a child.
8. When staff serve meals or snacks, they will follow these guidelines:
9. Thoroughly sanitize dining areas before and after use
10. Wash hands before serving
11. Wear food-safe gloves
12. Wash all fruits and vegetables prior to eating
13. Staff will never use plastic or Styrofoam containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages.
14. Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff who handle food on a consistent basis will be required to obtain their food handler's card within 30 days of hire.
15. Teachers will follow safety practices when cooking or doing nutrition activities in the classroom. They will limit the types of appliances they use for the safety of the children, and will get any cooking activity approved by the Education Manager prior to the activity.
16. **Outside drinks and food will not be allowed in the classroom (with the exception of water). This includes but is not limited to:**
 - a. Sodas, Tea, Coffee, Juice, Hot Liquids in any type of container
 - b. Hot sauce, BBQ sauce, Dressings, etc. Condiments offered by the vendors or the school may be eaten if the children are eating them.
 - c. Chips, cookies, crackers, or any type of snack
 - d. Any outside food (pizza, fast food, burritos, salads, etc.)
17. Staff will consume their food, snacks, or beverages on their break or in the teacher's lounge, not in the classroom.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Meal & Snack Monitoring Form

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.25 and 8.16.2.24, NAEYC Standard 5 - Health, Caring For Our Children 4.3, 4.5, and 4.9

Subject: Meal Service & Nutrition Education

Section: Nutrition

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.31; 1302.32; 1302.44, NM PreK Standard 5.C

PFCE Outcomes: Families as Learners

Policy: Nutrition services will contribute to the development and socialization of children enrolled in Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start programs. Nutrition education will be offered to children in the classroom, and parents based on requirements and interests.

Procedure:

Meal Service

1. A variety of foods will be served that broaden a child's food experience.
 - a. New foods will be introduced along with familiar foods to enhance acceptability.
 - b. Discussion of new or unusual foods before, during, or after meals will be encouraged.
 - c. Discussion will include color, texture, cultural aspects, etc.
 - d. Children will be encouraged but not forced to try new foods.
2. All children will be fed breakfast, lunch, and a snack.
3. Food or physical activity will not be used as a reward or punishment.
4. Sufficient time will be allowed for each child to eat. In general, ½ hour is allowed for meals, but may be adjusted if necessary.
5. All classroom staff, including volunteers, will eat together family style and share the same menu to the highest extent possible. The focus of the family-style dining experience will be on pleasant conversation or simple nutrition education activities to ensure the experience is relaxed, social, and educational.
6. Infants will be fed as their eating and sleeping schedule allows. They will not have a set time to eat, and may eat until they are finished.
7. The Nutrition Consultant must be consulted regarding any medically-based diets, food allergies, or special diet requests. These requests will be reviewed and accommodated on an individual basis according to the "Special Diets and Food Allergies" policy.

Nutrition Education for Children

1. Developmentally appropriate nutrition experiences for children will be offered in the classroom daily. Nutrition activities will be offered monthly. These may include any of the following:
 - a. Physical activity as it relates to the lesson plan.
 - b. Participation in activities that convey how food relates to good health.
 - c. Discussion of the daily menu and any unusual or different foods offered.
 - d. Comparison and contrasting of the taste, texture, shape, size, and color of the foods served.
 - e. Discussion of similarities and differences in the preparation of cultural foods (e.g., bread and tortillas).
 - f. Participation in food preparation or tasting experiences that are age-appropriate.
 - g. Participation in the different aspects of meal service according to developmental readiness. (e.g., preparing food, setting the table, cleaning up after meals).
2. The Nutrition Coordinator will correspond with the Education Manager to make available appropriate nutrition education curricula for classroom teachers. In developing the nutrition education curricula, the managers will use a variety of resources.
3. Nutrition activities will be documented on the weekly planning forms for Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start.
4. Parents will be encouraged to participate in or facilitate the monthly nutrition education activities with the children with prior notification.

Nutrition Education for Parents & Families

1. Nutrition education will be offered annually to parents and families
2. Parents will have the opportunity to discuss their child's nutritional status with staff, including the importance of physical activity, healthy eating, and the negative health consequences of sugar-sweetened beverages, and how to select and prepare nutritious foods that meet the family's nutrition and food budget needs.
3. The PFCE Coordinator will schedule a nutrition education training on the parent activity calendar for the program year. The PFCE coordinator will facilitate, or use outside resources to provide training to families.
4. Healthy food choices will be offered at parent functions. Meals or snacks must be approved by the Nutrition Coordinator prior to the activity. Infant formula and baby food will be available as needed.
5. General nutrition information will be offered to all parents.
6. Parents will be involved in evaluating nutritional services, including but not limited to the annual self-assessment and parent surveys.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Newsletters, Weekly Lessons, Nutrition Activity documentation

Cross-reference: Caring for Our Children 2.4, 4.2, 4.5 and 4.7, NAEYC 7.C and Standard 5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.25

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Family Partnership Services

Section: Family Services

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.50; 1302.52

PFCE Outcomes: Family Well-Being, Families as Learners, Family Engagement in Transitions, Family Connections to Peers and Community

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS Family Service Coordinators will collaborate with families in a family partnership process that identifies needs, interests, strengths, goals, and services and resources that support family well-being, including family safety, health, and economic stability.

Procedure:

Family Partnership Agreement

1. The Family Partnership Agreement is a process, not merely a series of forms. From the first contact with a family, the FSC will build rapport and create a trusting relationship in order to understand, as early as possible, the strengths, ambitions, skills, and hopes of family members.
2. FSCs will aim to engage all parental figures in the partnership process, remaining sensitive to the differing needs, roles, and interests of each individual.
3. FSCs will assist parents in the process of developing an individualized Family Partnership Agreement (FPA). The FPA process includes families' interests, needs, strengths, and goals. Break down bigger goals into small steps in order to develop an attainable outcome. The PFCE Outcomes Assessment will help guide the FSC and family in setting SMART goals and action steps. FPA Goals are only required for Head Start and Early Head Start families.
4. Each goal will be recorded on the "Family Partnership Plan", signed by the parent/s and by the FSC at the time of setting the goal at enrollment. Progress towards the achievement of goals will be reviewed frequently with the family and/or at the end of the school year. All updates or completion dates will be added as goal progress and will be documented in the ChildPlus system by the FSC.
5. Using the information gathered from the family's interests and needs, the FSCs will refer the family to the appropriate social service agencies, including services for children with special needs. The FPA is an ongoing process throughout the time the child is enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start.
6. Parent Education may be provided via parent meetings, one-on-one contact with parents, distribution of brochures, parent bulletin board postings, social media, and any other preferences the parents request.
7. FSCs will encourage parents to participate in policy council, parent committees, and other community groups.
8. The FSCs will follow up on referrals made to families in order to ensure the family receives the appropriate service in a timely manner. Results of services received will be documented in the ChildPlus system.
9. Meetings and interactions with families will be respectful of each family's diversity and cultural and ethnic background.

PFCE Outcomes Assessment

1. The FSC will develop a relationship with each family and will build rapport.
2. The FSC will use the *Region IX Family Partnership Plan* as a conversation guide in order to assess the family on their strengths and needs in the 7 areas outlined in the *Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework*.
3. The FSC will score the family using the scoring guide on the form. They will then input the scores into the ChildPlus database system for each family.
4. The PFCE Outcomes Assessment will be completed with each family. The scores will be entered into ChildPlus at the beginning of the program year and at end of the program year.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Region 9 PFCE Outcomes Assessment Tool, FPA, Resource Guide, Referral forms

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 7, Caring for Our Children 2.3

Subject: Family Services and Communication

Section: Family Services

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.50; 1302.52

PFCE Outcomes: Family Well-Being, Families as Learners, Family Engagement in Transitions, Family Connections to Peers and Community

Policy: The R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS program will utilize a family services management approach to service delivery in order to ensure communication among staff members, as an integral part of ongoing monitoring, and to ensure that the family is provided comprehensive services.

Procedure:

Initial Contact with Families

1. Families can access applications on site at one of the centers, at the annual registration/child find event, and online at www.rec9nm.org. Staff will assist families in applying and providing the required documentation to start the enrollment process.
2. A staff member will assist families with the application process and answer any questions.

Enrollment and Orientation Meeting

1. After eligibility and selection have been determined, parents receive an acceptance letter and an enrollment packet, which includes a scheduled date and time for an enrollment interview with the FSC.
2. At the enrollment interview, the FSC will follow the family partnership service procedures.
3. The FSC will create a child file with enrollment documents and complete a file monitoring form, enter information into Child Plus, including uploading documents, and submit required information to the classroom teaching team.

Initial Home Visit

1. The teaching team will schedule appointments with the family for the first home visit. All the information is reviewed and completed on the First Home Visit Form.
2. Teachers or staff will administer the developmental screener and set individual child goals with the parents' input.

Family Service Coordinator Responsibilities

1. FSCs will be assigned to EHS or Head Start/PreK classrooms to provide comprehensive services related to health, family, and community services.
2. FSCs will maintain the child files for their caseload.
3. Family Service Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all 30, 45, and 90-day health requirements are completed for each child and documented in ChildPlus. In addition, all treatment must be followed up with, documented, and data accurately entered into ChildPlus. The Health Coordinator will monitor the FSC health data. FSCs will consult with the Health Coordinator on all issues related to health and mental health.
4. The FSC will assist families in meeting their goals identified in the Family Partnership Agreement, as well as assist with referrals from teachers, parents, staff members, and community agencies.
5. The FSC will lead monthly staffings to review issues, concerns, and successes of children enrolled.

Disabilities Coordinator Responsibilities

1. The results of the developmental screener will be entered into ChildPlus by the teacher. Results will be reviewed by the Disabilities Coordinator and flagged for children below the cutoff scores at team meetings after 45 days of enrollment.
2. The Disabilities Coordinator is responsible for leading the Child Study Team meetings to develop and implement strategies to assist children in developing their skills and abilities.
3. The Disabilities Coordinator will attend monthly staffings if possible.

Teaching Teams

1. The teaching team will meet with the parent/s to complete and review the items on the Parent/Teacher Conference and Home Visit forms.
2. Ongoing contact with parents in between meetings will occur through the Communication Folders and in person or by telephone as needed. Communication with parents will be documented in ChildPlus.
3. The teaching team is responsible for the maintenance of the *Education Binder*, which consists of Education documents and IFSPs/IEPs, if applicable.
4. The teaching teams, along with all staff will support school readiness by reinforcing the PFCE activities related to the goals set by the program staff.

Staffings

1. The monthly staffings are held to facilitate communication between key staff members in order to support the unique needs of each child and their family.
2. Staffing agenda will be developed and followed. Meeting notes will be documented in ChildPlus for each child discussed. The agenda items will be monitored beforehand by the staff member's service area.
3. Concerns and issues discussed during staffing will guide the FSC or other coordinator on what needs to be addressed and a timeline for follow-up that best supports the child and family.
4. All parties attending the meeting will have access to the ChildPlus case notes where the next steps are entered.

Data Entry Responsibilities

1. The Enrollment Coordinator and Program Assistant will enter new applications, and all other trained staff will assist as needed during high data entry times in the year.
2. The Enrollment Coordinator or Program Assistant will enter applications as soon as all documentation is received and determine if they are eligible for EHS or Head Start/PreK.
3. Upon selection of children and placement in the classroom, the Enrollment Coordinator will be responsible for accurately enrolling them and updating any information as needed.
4. Key Performance Information Report (PIR) data will be run quarterly. The supporting documentation for the final PIR report for the areas of health, mental health, nutrition, family services, enrollment, and disabilities will be maintained by the Health Coordinator and Director.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: ChildPlus case notes, Referral forms, CST Forms, Child Plus Reports

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 7, Caring for Our Children 2.3

Subject: Father/Male Involvement

Section: Family Services

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.50

PFCE Outcomes: Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Families as Learners

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start will promote father/male involvement in all areas of the program, and will offer specific father engagement activities.

Procedure:

1. Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start staff members will become knowledgeable about the importance of father engagement and share that knowledge with families.
2. Staff members will support father engagement in all aspects of the program to strengthen the role of fathers and father figures as parents and educators of their children. Fathers will be encouraged to participate in home visits, parent-teacher conferences, policy council, parent committees, health advisory committee, school readiness team, and other group activities.
3. Staff members will make the program environment at each site father-friendly and will support fathers' strengths, needs, and aspirations for themselves and their children.
4. Staff members will support fathers in accessing community resources that support families' strengths, interests, and needs.
5. Staff members will respect and respond appropriately to the culture, language, values, and family structures of each family served.
6. The PFCE Coordinator will schedule and facilitate two father/male engagement activities within the program year, or have each teacher offer a small classroom activity for male involvement within the program year.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Classroom Newsletters, Calendars, Fliers, PFCE Sign In Sheet, In-Kind Forms, ChildPlus Reports

Subject: Parenting Curriculum

Section: Family Services

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.51, NM PreK Standard 4.A

PFCE Outcomes: Families as Learners, Families as Lifelong Educators, Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Policy: The R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start program will offer parents the opportunity to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge and offers parents the opportunity to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development.

Procedure:

1. The Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start programs will provide the Conscious Discipline Parent Curriculum to all families.
2. The Coach/MH Coordinator and Teachers will encourage parents to participate in the Conscious Discipline program/workshops. Handouts, flyers, snippets, and other materials will be sent home and introduced throughout the school year to increase parent participation.
3. The Coach/MH Coordinator will introduce Conscious Discipline at parent orientation to all parents and/or at monthly parent meetings.
4. The Coach/MH Coordinator will develop, plan, and facilitate all Conscious Discipline workshops. The scheduled workshops will be announced at the beginning of each semester. The workshops may be offered in person and virtually, and during a time that works best for most parents.
5. The Coach/MH Coordinator will develop incentives for parents to participate and complete the coursework.
6. The PFCE Coordinator will monitor the time each parent spent at Conscious Discipline workshops and enter the time in Child Plus as part of in-kind documentation.
7. The Director will report data to the Policy Council and Coordinating Council if needed.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Parent Curriculum data reports, Home Activity Logs

Subject: Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

Section: Family Services

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.50; 1302.51; 1302.51, NM PreK Standards 1.A & 1.B

PFCE Outcomes: Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Families as Lifelong Educators, Families as Learners, Family Connections to Peers and Community

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. The program will establish ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations to facilitate access to community services that are responsive to children's and families' needs and family partnership goals.

Procedure:

Family Engagement

1. Family engagement and parent training will be developed and scheduled based on parent interests, requirements of the HS performance standards, NAEYC standards, NM PreK Standards, and the community assessment.
2. The PFCE coordinator will develop a parent and family engagement calendar for the program year that includes all required and approved activities in collaboration with the PFCE committee, which consists of all Family Service Coordinators.
3. The program will recognize parents as their child's primary teacher and will engage parents in their children's learning and development, and support parent-child relationships.
4. The program will encourage parents to participate in the program as volunteers. The program will also encourage parents to apply for substitutes or open positions.
5. The program will consider the family's preferred language for PFCE events and ensure families have the opportunity to share personal information in an environment in which they feel safe. If a parent needs interpretation during a parent meeting or Policy Council, the program will make every effort possible to accommodate them.

Parent Activities to Promote Child Learning and Development

1. Teachers will include parents and families in their child's early learning and development by:
 - a. Conducting home visits and parent-teacher conferences with family members to go over their child's development, and set individual goals with the family based on the child's needs.
 - b. Conducting monthly parent meetings and providing information about the classroom, and giving parents opportunities to give ideas for studies/lesson plans.
 - c. Sending home "Take Home Activities" or ideas that help their child reach individual goals, quarterly.
 - d. Promoting and encouraging parents to fill out the "Home Activity Log" to help their child reach their individual goals.
2. Teachers will turn in the Home Activity Logs to the PFCE coordinator by the first of every month.
3. The PFCE Coordinator will enter all volunteer/in-kind time into ChildPlus from the Home Activity Logs.
4. The PFCE Coordinator will provide parent training and family engagement activities that revolve around child learning and development.

Community Partnerships

1. The PFCE Coordinator and Director will work collaboratively to establish and maintain ongoing relationships and partnerships with community organizations.
2. The PFCE Committee will assist the PFCE Coordinator in community outreach efforts to receive donations or free services.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Activity/Volunteer Sign In Sheets, In-Kind Forms

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standards 7 & 8, Caring for Our Children 2.3, 2.4

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Child Study Team & Referrals

Section: Disabilities

Date Reviewed: April 22, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.60; 1302.61; 1302.62, NM PreK Standards 2.A.4 & 2.A.5

PFCE Outcomes: Families as Advocates, Families as Lifelong Educators, Families as Learners

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK will use a Child Study Team process to discuss and plan next steps for children who are suspected of having a disability or who are exhibiting challenging behaviors. R9 Early Head Start will refer children suspected of having a disability to the early intervention program in Lincoln County.

Procedure:

Child Study Team Procedure (Head Start/PreK Only):

1. If a teacher suspects a child has a disability or has a child with challenging behaviors based on documentation, observations, screenings, or outside concerns, the parent/guardian must be notified immediately.
2. Teachers document the concern in ChildPlus and notify the Disabilities Coordinator as soon as possible. The teaching team will follow the timeline for completing CST paperwork and meetings:
 - a. Teachers will schedule an Initial CST Meeting 15 days after being reported to the Disabilities Coordinator.
 - b. Teachers will have 30 days to complete all CST Documentation and Forms from the day of the initial CST meeting.
3. The FSC provides a copy of the hearing screening, vision screening, and health case history form to the Disabilities Coordinator.
4. Head Start/PreK Teachers will complete the Child Profile Form for Preschool and Teacher Form for Preschool in Google Docs (shared drive). If behavior is a concern, the teacher will follow the procedure in the Temporary Exclusion and Expulsion Policy.
5. If a referral to the Child Study Team is agreed on by the parent, teacher, and Disabilities Coordinator, then the CST will meet to review data collection and documentation. The Initial Summary Form will be completed at this time.
6. Head Start/PreK teachers will conduct at least four observations during a variety of activities and will document on a CST Observation Form. The Disabilities Coordinator, Coach, or Education Manager will complete any additional observations if needed.
7. If the Child Study Team determines additional screening information is needed, the FSC will confirm that parent consent was given during the enrollment orientation process. Parents will be notified prior to administering additional screenings, and documented in the child's file and ChildPlus. If a parent does not give consent to proceed, other actions will be taken.
8. If the parents give consent for additional screenings, the Disabilities Coordinator or another staff member will screen the child.
9. The teacher will give the Parent Invitation to Child Study Meeting to the parents for the next CST meeting to review the results and determine the next steps.
10. Follow-up CST meetings will be scheduled based on the next steps. If more documentation is needed, strategies will be discussed and implemented in the classroom. If a referral to the district is evident, the Disabilities Coordinator will complete the referral packet and give it to the Special Education Director for the district.
11. Once the school district has the referral packet from the Disabilities Coordinator, they will complete the next steps in the referral process.
12. The Disabilities Coordinator will provide the family with resources that will help them understand their rights under IDEA, the FIT Program, or anything else that would help parents understand their child's disability and how to best support the child's development.

Early Head Start Procedure:

If the teacher, FSC, or Disabilities Coordinator has a concern about an EHS child, they will follow the NMFIT referral process and fill out any required forms. The Disabilities Coordinator will document the referral and concern in ChildPlus. The EHS Disabilities Coordinator will be in communication with the NMFIT program provider so that EHS information is updated regularly in Child Plus.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: CST Forms, FIT Referral Form

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 4, Caring for Our Children Chapter 8, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22

Subject: Inclusion & Provision of Special Education Services

Section: Disabilities

Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.60; 1302.61; 1302.62, NM PreK Standard 2.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start implement inclusive teaching and learning strategies with curricula and assessment designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all learners. The program will coordinate and collaborate with the local education agency (LEA) responsible for implementing IDEA, and with the local NM FIT program responsible for providing early intervention services for children from birth to three.

Procedure:

1. During the enrollment interview, if a parent documents or expresses that their child has received services in the past, the FSC needs to obtain specific information regarding the services currently being received or past services. This information will be shared with the Disabilities Coordinator and will document this information in ChildPlus.
2. As soon as needs are suspected and documentation can be obtained from the CST team, children will be referred for services.
3. Head Start/PreK children with an educational need will be referred to the LEA for special education/related services. Should they not meet the qualifications for Special Education, the parents can obtain services from a private provider at their own expense.
4. Early Head Start children with an educational concern will be referred to the Early Intervention program for Lincoln County.
5. The transition process for children is described in the transition policies under "Education".
6. The Disabilities Coordinator will keep a copy of the IFSP or IEP goals in their files or enter the information into the Child Plus database, and they will provide the classroom teacher with copies of the child's goals, which will be placed in the Education Binder.
7. Teachers will individualize their weekly planning form for children receiving services to help the child reach their IEP/IFSP and TS GOLD goals.
8. Staff will build on each child's culture, language, experiences, and abilities. All children with disabilities will be included in Head Start/PreK & EHS classrooms. They will participate in all learning and social activities, staff will foster their development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional), encourage friendships with peers, and provide a sense of belonging.
9. Indoor and outdoor physical and learning environments will be accessible to children with disabilities and/or developmental delays. Support will be provided according to their IEP.
10. Program staff will complete training specific to inclusionary practices to meet each child's needs, including those with an IEP. The LEA is obligated to provide training specific to each child's accommodations or program plans documented in an IEP. In partnership with the family, the program has the right to contact the LEA to request support for children with an IEP.
11. Head Start/PreK and EHS classrooms will provide inclusive settings for children with developmental delays and disabilities based on IDEA, and consistent with a child's IFSP or IEP:
 - a. IDEA states the IEP team consists of the general education teacher who is knowledgeable about the child. Educators participate in the IEP process with parental consent. The Disabilities Coordinator will also attend the IEP meeting with parents' consent.
 - b. In collaboration with special education service providers, the teachers will integrate IEP goals in the daily schedule, classroom activities, and lesson plan (as part of individualization). Staff can request additional training from the LEA specific to the child's needs and goals.
 - c. R9 Head Start/PreK and Region IX Education Cooperative will develop an interagency agreement with the local LEAs responsible for implementing IDEA to improve service delivery. This includes the referral and evaluation process, service coordination, and promotion of service provision in the least restrictive environment.
 - d. The program will coordinate and collaborate with the LEA to integrate ancillary services within regular program activities and routines to the maximum extent possible, as described by the IEP team.
 - e. Children may not be dismissed from the program due to special or behavioral needs. Instead, a referral should be made, or the IEP team must reconvene to determine training needs and the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Procedure:

12. When a child with a disability enters the Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start program, or an enrolled child is determined to have a disability, the Disabilities Coordinator will review documentation related to the child's disability and make appropriate accommodations, or request training from the LEA if needed. The Disabilities Coordinator may assist the school district or FIT program in making any modifications necessary to facilitate ongoing inclusion. Modifications may include barrier removal or the purchase of adaptive equipment and materials.
13. The Disabilities Coordinator will make classroom visits to monitor ongoing needs and provide consultation to the classroom staff.
14. Parental involvement and awareness will be facilitated through individual consultations or Early Head Start Individualized Family Service Plan meetings. Families will be informed of the child find process and their legal rights of consent and refusal. Other resources may be provided, like PRO, to help families in this process.
15. R9 Head Start/PreK will follow the MOU with the local school district, which will outline how SPED services will be provided to the children in our program.
16. Posters, dolls, books, and toys in classrooms will be representative of children with varying abilities.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Ongoing Monitoring Tools, IEP or IFSP, Referral Forms, CST Forms

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 2, 3 & 10, Caring for Our Children 5.3, Chapter 8, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.24

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Background Checks

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.90

Policy: The Region 9 Human Resource Director, the Head Start/PreK/Early Head Start Director, and Education Manager(s) will collaborate to follow all state and federal requirements when hiring staff and substitutes.

Procedure:

1. Region 9 and Head Start/PreK & EHS staff will conduct interviews.
2. The Region 9 Human Resources Department will check references.
3. The Director will conduct a sex offender registry check.
4. When the new hire is chosen by an interview committee, the employee will complete the ECECD background check unit application in its entirety, the required application online, and the fingerprint process.
5. The Program Assistant or Education Manager will fax or email all required paperwork to ECECD - Background Check Unit immediately.
6. The Head Start/PreK or EHS staff member will not be allowed in a classroom until their background clearance comes back from ECECD or we have received their provisional.
7. Each employee will complete a background check every 5 years.
8. Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will strive to employ current and former program parents if they apply and are qualified.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: ECECD Fingerprint Submission Packet, Purchase Orders for Fingerprint Checks

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.21, NAEYC Standard 6 & 10, Caring for Our Children 1.2

Subject: Cell Phone Policy

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.21, 1302.31

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start prohibits the use of personal cell phones while any staff member is responsible for the direct supervision of children.

Procedure:

R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff, and Substitutes must adhere to the following procedures:

1. While in the classroom, teachers, floaters, and substitutes will keep their phones on a desk or in a designated area.
2. While on the playground, teachers, floaters, and substitutes will keep their phones put away.
3. During times where teacher/child interactions are required (meal time, center time, large group, small group, on the playground, etc.), teachers, floaters, and substitutes will not be allowed on their phones. Teachers are required to actively supervise and interact with children in the classroom and on the playground, and cell phone usage hinders those requirements.
4. Teachers will keep their phones with them during emergency/crisis drills and situations. They will need to be silenced during these times.
5. Phone calls may not be made from or received in the classrooms.
6. If a staff member needs to take or make a phone call related to an emergency, they may do so in the hallway for no more than 5 minutes and must have coverage for their classroom.
7. Cell phones should be placed in the off/silent position during program meetings and training unless an immediate supervisor has granted permission.
8. Cell phone usage will only be allowed during employee breaks for staff supervising children.
9. Staff members who do not directly supervise children will limit cell phone usage during their work hours.
10. Volunteers may step out of the classroom to use their cell phones while volunteering in the program.
11. Bus monitors will be required to have their cell phones with them at all times. They can only use them to call a parent or speak with someone in the office regarding a child. They are not to use them for personal use while riding the bus.
12. Staff members who do not adhere to this policy will receive up to 3 verbal warnings and a written memorandum of record. If the issue continues and is not corrected by the employee, they will receive a letter of reprimand and possible termination if it's determined that the employee has violated this policy, the Standards of Conduct Policy, and the Active Supervision Policy with their excessive cell phone usage.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Classroom Environment Checklist, QCIT Observation Form, Safety Monitoring Checklist

Cross-reference: Caring for Our Children 2.2, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.24, NAEYC 3.C

Subject: Dress Code Policy

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Subpart I & Subpart J

Policy: Employee appearance contributes to REC 9's culture and reputation. Employees are expected to present themselves in a professional manner that results in a favorable impression by member districts, students, staff, and the community.

Procedure:

1. All employees will adhere to REC 9's dress code policy and the R9 Head Start/EHS dress code policy.
2. All employees must be clean and well-groomed. Grooming styles dictated by religion and ethnicity aren't restricted.
3. All clothes must be clean and in good shape.
4. Employees must avoid clothes with designs that are offensive or inappropriate, and that have political or religious affiliations.
5. All clothes must project professionalism. Clothes that are too revealing or inappropriate aren't allowed.
6. All clothes must be work-appropriate. R9 Head Start and Early Head Start have various employees who have varying work requirements, and require different attire as follows:

Office Staff (Managers & Coordinators):

- Business Casual (for example: jeans, nice shirts, dresses, casual shoes, etc.)
- Rubber/Shower flip-flops are not allowed

Teachers, Floaters, Bus Monitors, and Kitchen Aides:

- Casual Attire
 - Shorts may be worn, but must be knee-length
 - Business casual attire should be worn during professional development events, training, staff meetings, R9 meetings, parent-teacher conferences, etc.
 - Heels, dresses, and skirts are not appropriate attire for staff working with children or in a kitchen.
 - Teachers who wear sandals or open-toed shoes will wear them at their own risk of a child hurting their foot, hurting themselves running after a child, or if bodily fluids spill on their feet.
 - Kitchen staff must wear closed-toed, approved non-slip shoes
7. Dress code is also dependent on the activity taking place (i.e, field trips, field day, classroom activities, PFCE activities, etc.). The employee must continue following the procedures stated above.
 8. Employees who do not meet a professional standard may be sent home to change, and nonexempt employees will not be paid for that time. Reasonable accommodations will be made where required.
 9. Disciplinary action can and will be taken if an employee does not follow the dress code policy.

Subject: Incident Reporting

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: July 5, 2025

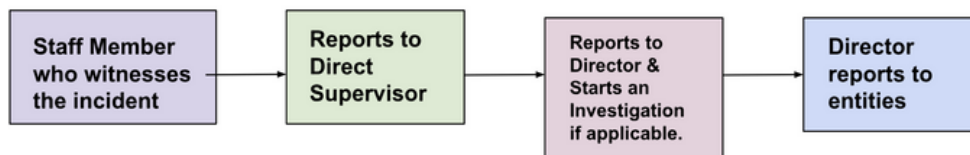
Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1302.47, 1302.102, and IM: ACF-OHS-IM-24-06

Policy: The program will report any significant incidents that affect the health or safety of a child to The Office of Head Start, Child Care Licensing, and NAEYC per the regulations and standards for each entity. Staff members of R9 Head Start/PreK & EHS Program are also mandated by law (sec 32-1-15 (a), NMSA, 1978) to report any incidents of alleged/suspected child abuse or neglect.

Procedure:

When an incident occurs, the program will determine the steps necessary for reporting.

1. The program will consider the following information:
 - a. Where the incident occurred (i.e, learning setting, bathroom, playground, facility parking lot, etc.)
 - b. Who was involved in the incident
 - i. A staff member, contractor, or volunteer who participates in either a Head Start program or a classroom at least partially funded by Head Start, regardless of whether the child receives Head Start services;
 - ii. Or, a child who receives services fully or partially funded by Head Start, or a child who participates in a classroom at least partially funded by Head Start.
2. The Director, Safety Coordinator, and/or the HR Director will conduct an investigation that includes interviews, timelines, video footage if available, etc., to examine all of the details of the incident.
3. Once the details of the incident are confirmed, the program will determine whether the incident is reportable to OHS, NAEYC, and/or Child Care Licensing. The following chart shows the flow of incident reporting. The Education Manager for the site where the incident occurs will follow the timeline of reporting if the Director is out.



4. The director will report to the required entities (NAEYC, OHS, Child Care Licensing) depending on the requirements of each one.
 - a. OHS Reporting: Incident reports will be sent through HSES correspondence to ohsincidentreport@acf.hhs.gov
 - b. ECECD Reporting: Incident reports will be submitted initially by phone and then via email to the program's ECECD Child Care Licensing surveyor.
 - c. NAEYC Reporting: The Director will complete the NAEYC 72-hour Notification Form and submit it through the Accreditation Portal.
5. If an incident occurs that is not deemed as reportable to any of the governing entities, the program will follow the steps in the "Emergency Care, Accidents, and Injuries" policy and procedure.

Office of Head Start Incident Reporting Requirements

Types of Incidents that Must be Reported:

1. Any mandated reports regarding agency staff or volunteer compliance with federal, state, tribal or local laws addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders.
2. Any suspected or known maltreatment or endangerment of a child by staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers is defined in the Standards of Conduct.
3. Serious harm or injury resulting from a lack of preventative maintenance.
 - a. Serious harm or injury usually requires hospitalization or emergency room care.
4. Serious harm, injury, or endangerment resulting from a lack of supervision.
 - a. The program will examine each situation on a case-by-case basis and consider the following factors:
 - i. The child's age and developmental needs
 - ii. Length of time the child was left unsupervised
 - iii. Inherent dangers of the child's unsupervised environment
5. Any unauthorized release of a child.
 - a. From a Head Start facility, bus, or other approved program transportation to a person without the permission or authorization of a parent or legal guardian, and whose identity has not been verified.

Incident Reporting Timeline: The program must report the incident to OHS immediately but no later than 7 calendar days following a health or safety incident.

Child Care Licensing Incident Reporting Requirements

1. The licensee shall report any incident that has threatened or could threaten the health and safety of children and staff members, such as, but not limited to:
 - a. a lost, missing or unattended child;
 - b. a serious injury;
 - c. the abuse or neglect of a child;
 - d. fire, flood, or other natural disaster that creates structural damages to a center or poses a health hazard;
 - e. any of the illnesses on the current list of notifiable diseases and communicable diseases published by the office of epidemiology of the New Mexico department of health;
 - f. any legal action against a center or staff members;
 - g. any incident that could affect the background check eligibility of any cleared person related to this license;
 - h. any declaration of intention or determination to inflict punishment, loss, injury or pain on child or staff member by the commission of an unlawful act, such as, but not limited to, a bomb threat;
 - i. the use of physical or mechanical restraints, unless due to documented emergencies or medically documented necessity; or any known change in an educator's health condition or use of medication that impairs his or her ability to provide for the health, safety or welfare of children in care.

Incident Reporting Timeline: The program must report the incident to Child Care Licensing within 24 hours of the incident

NAEYC Incident Reporting Requirements

The NAEYC incident reporting requirements include the following critical events that must be reported within **72 hours**:

- **Death of a child** from any cause.
- **Critical injuries** to children that require hospitalization.
- **Suspension or revocation** of the program's license or regulatory status.
- **Lapses in supervision**, such as children being left unattended.
- **Suspected physical or psychological abuse** of a child by program staff or an adult connected to the program.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Requirements:

The Law States:

Section 32-1-15 (A), NMSA, 1978, that "any" licensed physician, resident or intern, any law enforcement officer, registered nurse, visiting nurse, school teacher, or social worker acting in his/her official capacity or any other person knowing or suspecting that a child is an abused or neglected child shall report the matter immediately...to: (1) the Criminal Prosecution Division of the District Attorney; or (2) the County Social Service Office of the HSD in the county where the child resides; or (3) the Probation Services Office of the Judicial District in which the child resides. Section 32-1-16 (B), NMSA, reads, "anyone reporting an instance of alleged child neglect or abuse or participating in the judicial proceeding brought as a result of a report required by Section 32-1-17, NMSA, 1978, is presumed to be acting in good faith and without malicious purpose".

Procedure:

1. A report will be made when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child or adolescent has been abused or neglected, or is in danger of being abused. A report of suspected abuse is only a request for an investigation. The person making the report does not need to prove the abuse. Investigation and validation of child abuse reports are the responsibilities of child protection service workers. If additional incidents of abuse occur after the initial report has been made, make another report.
2. **All Head Start/PreK & EHS Staff** must complete the **REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT form and submit it immediately to the Head Start/PreK/EHS Director**. The staff member does not need prior approval before calling CYFD.
3. The Director will email the Region 9 Executive Director when a report is made, excluding details except for the date the report was made.
4. Head Start/PreK & EHS will require that Child Protection Service personnel show identification, badge number, and documentation as to why they are on campus.
5. Region IX Head Start/PreK or EHS staff will not disclose any information to parents or families if a claim is made. Claims must remain confidential following FERPA regulations and be documented in the ChildPlus Database.
6. **Call 1-855-333-SAFE (7233) or #SAFE to report child abuse.**

REMEMBER: A REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE IS A RESPONSIBLE ATTEMPT TO PROTECT A CHILD.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Child Abuse Reporting Form

Cross-reference: NAEYC 10D.5, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.23, Caring for Our Children Standard 3.4.4

Subject: Missing or Lost Child

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 1302.47, 1302.90, 1302.92, 1302.94, 1303, 1302.102, NM PreK Standard 5.B

Policy: If a child is missing from the care of a Head Start/PreK or EHS employee, the following procedures will be followed to locate the child efficiently and effectively. All site-specific procedures must align with this policy.

Procedure:

1. When a child is discovered to be missing /unattended from his/her group or bus, the Director will be notified immediately. The staff member involved in the incident will inform all school personnel over the radio. If the child was last seen on the bus, the bus driver/monitor will be contacted.
2. Head Start/PreK & EHS staff will follow the program procedures and/or **Emergency Preparedness Response Plan** that may apply to the situation; this may include school "Shelter in Place" procedures.
3. The Director will ask all available employees, teachers, and volunteers to assist in searching the immediate premises for the child:
 - a. Start at the child's last known whereabouts
 - b. Search all areas that look appealing to a child of his/her developmental age.
 - c. Call the child's name repeatedly in a friendly (not panicked) voice.
 - d. Search the bus
4. The teacher or staff member involved will contact the child's parents immediately after the incident occurs and is resolved. Parent/guardian signatures shall be obtained on all incident reports within 24 hours, and they must be given a copy.
5. One person will be assigned to interview the staff when an incident occurs
 - a. All teachers, staff, and volunteers involved in the incident will be interviewed
 - b. The interviewer will document exact times, places, and specifics of the incident
 - c. The interviewer will provide the Director with the documentation
 - d. The Director may be required to interview all parties involved again if necessary
 - e. The Director will gather any video footage (if applicable) of the premises during the time of the incident.
6. The Director will follow the steps outlined in the "Incident Reporting" policy and procedure.
7. The Director will also report incidents to the Region 9 Coordinating Council and Policy Council.
8. If the child is not found on the premises:
 - a. The Director or designee will alert:
 - i. The parents within 5 minutes of the notification that the child was confirmed missing
 - ii. 911
 - b. Begin by calling the child's home and anywhere else he/she might have gone if he/she left on their own accord.
 - c. Take all available employees, teachers, and volunteers to start searching public areas and the surrounding areas.
 - d. The Director will be the liaison to the police and the spokesperson to the parents.
9. Action steps will be determined and set in place depending on the situation and logistics of the incident. Action steps will be monitored by Head Start/PreK Coordinating staff during walkthroughs and observations.
10. After each incident, the situation will be assessed to determine the level of personnel disciplinary action.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Emergency Forms, Emergency Preparedness Response Plan

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.21 [C], NAEYC Standard 10, Caring For Our Children 2.2

Subject: New Hire Policy

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 1302.90, 1302.92, 1302.94, NM PreK Standard 6.B

Policy: All new employees and substitutes will be provided an orientation that focuses on the goals and underlying philosophy of the program and on the ways they are implemented, training on all policies and procedures relevant to their position, and training required by Region 9 Education Cooperative, Head Start, NM PreK, Child Care Licensing, and NAEYC.

Procedure:

1. All new employees and substitutes will begin the background check process immediately following their approval of hire from the Region 9 Human Resources department.
2. New employees and substitutes must have a provisional background check clearance from ECECD prior to completing their new hire paperwork and attending orientation. They must have their official background clearance from ECECD prior to working in the classroom with their co-teacher.
3. Head Start/PreK and EHS Coordinators will conduct a substitute orientation each semester. The substitutes must complete the following professional development prior to subbing in a classroom:
 - a. Administrative Policies which include: FERPA/Confidentiality, Missing or Lost Child, Staff Health and Wellness, Standards of Conduct, Dress Code, Cell phones, Timesheets.
 - b. Education Policies: Discipline and Guidance, Teacher-Child Interactions, Rest/Nap Time
 - c. Health, Safety, & Nutrition Policies: Active Supervision of Children, Release of Children, Hand Washing, Toothbrushing, Diapering/Potty Training, Emergency Care, Food Preparation Safety, Family Style Dining, Safe Sleep, Emergency Preparedness, and Sanitizing and Disinfecting.
 - d. Substitute Reference Guide & Expectations
 - e. Region 9 Head Start/PreK & EHS Staff Handbook
 - f. Region 9 Vector Online Trainings: Bloodborne pathogens, chemical hazard communication, recognizing harassment, sexual harassment, recognizing and reporting child abuse, and FERPA.
4. All new employees who are hired after pre-service will be required to complete a new hire orientation, and if they are a new teacher to the program they will shadow a lead teacher or teacher assistant for 2 days prior to working in a classroom. New hires will complete a "New Hire Orientation Checklist" with their supervisor and will complete the following training both in person with their supervisor, and online:
 - a. Scope of services, activities, and the program offered by the center
 - b. Emergency first aid procedures, recognition of childhood illness and indicators of child abuse
 - c. Fire prevention measures, emergency evacuation plans and disaster preparedness plans
 - d. Review of licensing, NAEYC, NM PreK, and Head Start regulations
 - e. Active Supervision of Children
 - f. Standards of Conduct
 - g. Review of all policies and procedures required by licensing, NAEYC, NM PreK, and office of head start and that are relevant to the job.
 - h. Personnel/Staff Handbook
 - i. Parent Handbook
 - j. Region 9 Vector Online Trainings
5. New hires will receive a 90 day evaluation and will start a PDP based on their performance. The PDP will be reviewed at their mid-year evaluation, annual evaluation, and in between if necessary. Teachers who are enrolled in college courses to complete their degree or certification will have a separate PDP for their coursework and those will be reviewed every 3 months by their supervisor.
6. Substitutes and New Employees are required to obtain a CPR/1st Aid certification & complete the ECECD Health & Safety training within 3 months of hire.
7. Substitutes will complete 12 hours of professional development a year, and regular full-time employees will complete 24 hours of professional development a year.
8. The Director or Education Manager will have on file a signed acknowledgment of completion of orientation by employees, volunteers, and substitutes.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: New Hire Orientation Checklist, Substitute Checklist, Child Plus reports on staff professional development hours.

Cross-Reference: NAEYC Standards: 3.C, 5.A, 6.D, 10.B, 10.D, 10.E. Caring for Our Children Standards: 1.4, 1.5, 9.2. Child Care Licensing Regulations: 8.16.2.22, 8.16.2.23

Subject: Non Federal Share

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1303.4; Head Start Act 640(b)

Policy: Region 9 will follow section 640(b) of the Head Start Act which requires that federal financial assistance will not exceed 80 percent of the approved total program costs, and Region 9 will contribute 20 percent as non-federal match each budget period. Non-Federal share must meet the same criteria for allowability as other costs incurred and paid with federal funds.

Procedure:

1. In-kind contributions will be documented on the Region IX Education Cooperative/Head Start In-Kind form and the Volunteer Time sheet and submitted to the PFCE Coordinator on a monthly basis. The PFCE Coordinator will enter the classroom data and program data
2. The Director will determine if the donation is allowable.
3. If allowable, the PFCE Coordinator will input the donation information in the Child Plus database system.
4. If not allowable, the PFCE Coordinator will maintain the documents separately for the purpose of sending thank-you notes and recognition. The PFCE Coordinator will send thank you notes to all donors, regardless if the items or services are categorized as being allowable.
5. Every month, a non-federal share expenditure list will be generated by the Director in order to include the expended amount in the Non-Federal Share Report. If cash is donated, it will be included in the non-federal report only after the cash is expended.
6. Quarterly, the PFCE coordinator will submit a Non-Federal Share Report to the Director. The report will be used for financial reports, and Policy Council, and the Coordinating Council review.
7. Every 3 years, a rental study will be completed to assess the rental value of any property that is used by Head Start/EHS. In addition, the Non-Federal share from the therapist will be calculated by the number of children receiving services multiplied by the number of hours the children received the services, multiplied by the therapist's hourly rate plus fringe if applicable. The Director is responsible for acquiring these figures. These figures will be provided to the PFCE Coordinator to be included in the quarterly report.
8. Donations will be accepted and counted towards the non-federal share if the goods are for program services. Any donations for families and children that are meant to be sent home will not be counted towards the non-federal share.
9. R9 Head Start/EHS will follow the Head Start Non-Federal Match Guidelines outlined by the Administration for Children & Families, and the Uniform Guidance Part 75.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: In-kind Forms, Rental Studies, ChildPlus Reports, Quarterly Report

Subject: Ongoing Monitoring Policy

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.102, NM PreK Standard 9.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will develop, follow, and update the program's Ongoing Monitoring Plan to ensure there is effective and continuous ongoing oversight and correction.

Procedure:

1. Ongoing monitoring will happen in the following areas based on the plan:
 - a. **Administration** - using a variety of programs and modalities, monitors budgets, grant applications, oversight of the program areas, Policy Council, PIR, CACFP, MOUs, licenses, accreditation, non-federal share, facilities, supervision of coordinating/management staff, etc.
 - b. **Coaching** - monitors coaching plans and goals, observations, and needs of the classrooms.
 - c. **Disabilities** - using Child Plus and monitoring IEPs, IFSPs, child goals, concerns, child study team documentation and meetings, etc.
 - d. **Education** - using a classroom observation tool, walkthroughs, informal observations, coaching, Child Plus, and camera footage. This includes but is not limited to classroom management, teacher-child interactions, social-emotional learning & teaching, lesson planning, home visits, child outcomes and assessments, supervision of teaching staff, etc.
 - e. **ERSEA** - using Child Plus and child file monitoring. This includes but is not limited to monitoring applications, income and documentation, attendance, drops, recruitment efforts, etc.
 - f. **Family Service** - using child file monitoring and Child Plus. This includes but is not limited to monitoring child files and all program requirements like FPAs, needs assessments, family goals, health, attendance, referrals, etc.
 - g. **Health** - using walkthroughs, checklists, and Child Plus. This includes but is not limited to monitoring health plans, 30, 45, and 90 health requirements, child and staff wellness, cleaning and sanitizing, etc.
 - h. **Mental Health** - using Child Plus and specific forms, monitors mental health referrals, mental health consultant observations and feedback, behavior plans, etc.
 - i. **Nutrition** - using EPICs (CACFP), Child Plus, and walkthroughs. This includes but is not limited to monitoring meal and snack components and amounts, meal and attendance tracking, receipts, health plans (food allergies and special diets), etc.
 - j. **PFCE** - using Child Plus and specific forms, monitoring in-kind and donations, community resources, parent and family involvement, home activity logs, etc.
 - k. **Safety** - using walkthroughs and observation tools, and specific forms. This includes but is not limited to monitoring safety plans, emergency drills, facilities, playground checklists, incident reports, active supervision, etc.
 - l. **Transportation** - using Child Plus and walkthroughs to monitor bus routes, name to face and emergency contact information, vehicle maintenance and fuel, etc.
2. The Director and Management team for each program will develop an "Ongoing Monitoring Plan and Job Responsibility" document that addresses what is specifically monitored in each service area, who monitors it, and how often it is monitored.
3. The Director and Management team will update the plan at least once a year, or as needed throughout the school year.
4. Ongoing monitoring data will be aggregated and analyzed to assist with the Self-Assessment, Program Planning, and the Community Assessment.
5. The plan can be changed at any time and is a fluid document.
6. Ongoing monitoring results, findings, data, and correction will be shared with the Policy Council and Coordinating Council.
7. Teachers and Management Staff will assist in the planning process, the self-assessment, community assessment, and any other process that are needed for oversight and correction.
8. The plan will include job responsibilities of management staff and teachers, but may not include ALL job responsibilities of each service area.
9. The management team will report their ongoing monitoring progress and findings at the monthly coordinators meeting with the director. They will report on their follow-up, what corrective action has been completed, and by who. They will report this for data analysis, continuous improvement, oversight, and correction.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Ongoing Monitoring Plan, Ongoing Monitoring Timelines

Cross-Reference: Child Care Licensing Regulations: 8.16.2.22, 8.16.2.23, 8.16.2.24. Caring for Our Children Standard: 10.4.2. NAEYC Standard: 10.F

Subject: Program Management

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.101, NM PreK Standard 8.A & 8.B

Policy: The R9 Head Start/PreK and EHS management staff will support program quality and compliance through a structured schedule of regular ongoing monitoring of systems and services that directly impact program quality.

Procedure:

1. Region 9 Education Cooperative will provide the fiscal and human resource management systems with a business management director, accounts payable, payroll, and a human resource director. The business management director will maintain the accounting system for Head Start, PreK, and EHS.
2. The Director will conduct regular and ongoing supervision for administrative staff to support program quality improvement and staff development.
3. Administrative staff will use self-monitoring and reflective supervision to have accountability for their work and job duties.
4. The EHS Manager will conduct ongoing supervision for EHS teachers and staff.
5. The Head Start/PreK Education Manager will provide ongoing supervision for Head Start/PreK teachers.
6. The Director will monitor the budget and staffing patterns to allow for the provision of the full range of services described in the Head Start performance standards and NM PreK Standards.
7. The classroom will be monitored monthly and three times a year using the CLASS assessment tool.
8. The staff will monitor the program using the Ongoing Monitoring Tool, and may be monitored monthly, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. The tool covers all areas of compliance based on Head Start, NAEYC, NM PreK Standards, and state child care regulations.

Data Management

1. The Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start program will use the Child Plus and EPICs database system for all possible data management.
2. Each administrative employee will be responsible for monitoring data in their service area and reporting the data to the Director during their monthly meeting.
3. The Education Manager will be responsible for managing data on the Teaching Strategies GOLD database and providing child outcomes reports to the Director quarterly or in conjunction with a checkpoint period. The data will be presented to all staff, policy council, and parents and will be used to develop the School Readiness Goals for each program.
4. Program data will be presented to the Coordinating Council and Policy Council based on the development, approval, and review timeline.
5. Program data will also be used to conduct the self-assessment and community assessment, and for annual program planning, setting program goals, and developing funding applications & budgets.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Child Plus Reports, Monthly Monitoring Reports, Ongoing Monitoring Plan and Timelines, Classroom Observations, CLASS Scores, Coaching Data

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 10

Subject: Program Planning and Goal Management

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.102, NM PreK Standard 9.A

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start will use program and community data for continuous improvement, and to establish and update program goals throughout each five year grant period. Region 9 will work collaboratively with REC9 Coordinating Council and Policy Council in the program planning and goal setting process.

Procedure:

Establishing and Ongoing Assessment of Program Goals

1. Program goals will be established using the community assessment, self-assessment data, and program data from ongoing monitoring.
2. School Readiness Goals will be reviewed and/or updated after each checkpoint period is complete for each program. The data from Teaching Strategies GOLD will be used to align the child outcomes goals with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, NM Early Learning Guidelines, and the Common Core Standards.
3. Program goals will be reviewed annually during the program planning retreat.
4. Goals will be established in collaboration with the Coordinating Council and Policy Council. They will also assist in any changes made to goals and to the School Readiness Goals.
5. The self-assessment findings will be submitted to the Coordinating Council and Policy Council.

Planning and Continuous Improvement

1. Each manager or coordinator will be required to submit specific reports from Child Plus or other data each month to the Director. The Director and the manager/coordinator will discuss their area and any improvements or issues that need to be fixed.
2. The Director and Coordinating staff meet twice a month to discuss events, issues, and data reports for continuous improvement.
3. Child assessment data is aggregated and analyzed three times a year. The Education Manager is required to submit that data to the Director and use it for developing School Readiness Goals.
4. The self-assessment will be conducted once a year with the help of staff, parents, and policy council members.
5. The coordinating & management staff will have a planning retreat in July to analyze the data gathered from the community assessment, self-assessment, program goals, and other aggregated data to make quality improvement plans.
6. The plans will be re-visited at the planning meeting to see if we have completed some of the short-term goals or objectives we wanted to reach as the new year starts.
7. PFCE, planning, and training calendars will be established at the start of the program year so that families and staff know when activities and training will be happening in each program.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Agendas, Staff Sign In Sheets, Child Plus Case Notes, Child Plus Reports, Ongoing Monitoring, Annual Report, Self-Assessment Report, Community Assessment Report

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 10 and 6, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22, Caring for Our Children 2.1

Subject: Progressive Discipline

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.90, NM PreK Standards 8.A & 8.B

Policy: All REC 9 employees are expected to perform the duties and responsibilities of their positions competently and professionally. All REC 9 employees are also expected to adhere to the policies, procedures, and applicable codes of conduct and/or ethics for the specific sites to which each is assigned. If an employee violates any policies outlined in the REC IX and/or Head Start/PreK/EHS policy manual, the disciplinary process will be started.

Procedure:

All REC 9 employees are expected to perform the duties and responsibilities of their positions competently and professionally. All REC 9 employees are also expected to adhere to the policies, procedures, and applicable codes of conduct and/or ethics for the specific sites to which each is assigned.

Initial Conference Regarding Unsatisfactory Work Performance

If the immediate supervisor or executive director identifies unsatisfactory work performance or any other concern related to an employee's employment with the REC 9 that does not warrant immediate discharge or termination but which requires correction or improvement, the immediate supervisor or executive director may confer with the employee individually. Such a conference is for the supervisor or executive director to identify the nature of the concern or unsatisfactory work performance and to provide the employee with directives, recommendations, reprimands, warnings, or other measures designed to allow the employee to improve or correct the unsatisfactory work performance or other concerns. Within a reasonable time after the conference, the supervisor or executive director will provide to the employee a brief written summary of the nature of the unsatisfactory work performance or other concerns. Such a summary may be incorporated into the formal evaluation process and the employee's personnel file.

Improvement or Growth Plans

Depending on the nature of the unsatisfactory work performance or other concerns related to the employee's employment with the REC 9, the immediate supervisor or executive director may require the creation and implementation of an Improvement or Growth Plan. Such a plan should be prepared after providing the employee an opportunity for input into the plan and should include directives or recommendations for improvement. The immediate supervisor or executive director may monitor the progress of the employee's implementation of the plan as appropriate for the position and provide periodic oral or written feedback to the employee regarding such progress.

Failure to Improve

In the event the employee fails to improve unsatisfactory work performance or correct any other concerns related to the employment with the REC 9, the employee may be provided an opportunity to resign, may be discharged, or may have his or her employment terminated.

Discipline Guidelines

1. Counseling/verbal warning x 2: followed by brief documentation (example - email)
2. Memorandum of record: regarding the infraction or unsatisfactory work performance. If the incident is not corrected, the following 3 steps will apply.
3. Written reprimand:
 - a. written summary of the infraction or unsatisfactory work performance to be placed in the employee's personnel file, along with a copy of the memorandum of record.
 - b. An evaluation of unsatisfactory work performance.
4. Professional Growth Plan (PGP): Implemented to allow the employee an opportunity to improve the standard of performance.
 - a. If improvement is not made, a final evaluation will be conducted with a recommendation of dismissal.
5. Dismissal: in collaboration with the Executive Director and HR.
 - a. Statement of the problem: violation of rules/standards/practices or unsatisfactory performance.
 - b. Prior warnings on this subject
 - c. Statement of company policy violated by employee
 - d. Summary of corrective action taken (PGP)
 - e. Documentation of failure to improve performance or correct behavior
 - f. Copy of final evaluation with employee comments

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Letter of Reprimand, Memorandum of Record, Documentation

Cross-reference: Region IX Policy Manual, NAEYC Standards 6 & 10, Caring For Our Children 1.8, 9.3

Subject: Protections for the Privacy of Child Records & Confidentiality Policy

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.90, NM PreK Standard 8.A

Policy: Region IX Head Start/PreK & EHS parents will provide information about themselves and their child that is ESSENTIAL for Head Start/PreK & EHS services. Staff, special service staff, and parents will adhere to all Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations for Head Start/PreK & EHS children and families to protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information (PII) in child records, and any other information pertaining to Head Start/PreK & EHS children and families.

Procedure:

1. All REC IX employees must receive training and instruction annually regarding FERPA (State Regulation 6 NMAC 5.2, Sections 9-10) to honor state and federal regulations of confidentiality. Staff and special service staff must adhere to confidentiality and all FERPA regulations for children and families.
2. Head Start/PreK & EHS staff, parents, Policy Council members, and other related service providers shall not discuss information that has been shared with them by families, parents, guardians, or children except where information is directly related to services being rendered by other service personnel.
3. Parents and other Head Start/PreK & EHS volunteers in the program are prohibited from reviewing records other than those of their children.
4. Children's health, education, and social service records on families are open only to Head Start/PreK/EHS staff, special consultants, and authorized reviewers on a "NEED TO KNOW" basis. All personnel are required to sign in on the child's file access log.
5. Head Start/PreK/EHS families will be informed about information that will be shared with cooperating Head Start/PreK & EHS staff. **Parent Authorization/Release Request form** and other specific written permission slips or release forms will be signed by parents when there are plans to exchange information with a cooperating community agency, school district, or health agencies.
6. The program will obtain parents' written consent annually that states what child records may be disclosed, explains why the records will be disclosed, and identifies the party or class of parties to whom the records may be disclosed on the **Parent Authorization/Release Request form**. It will be signed and dated by the parent.
7. Parents/guardians and staff will periodically review and update family information as changes occur.
8. Child records and family files will ONLY contain information that relates SPECIFICALLY to Head Start/PreK & EHS services.
9. All confidential files will be maintained in a locked area. Designated staff will be responsible for keeping the keys to the files. An access sheet will be kept for authorized staff to sign in and sign out.
10. Staff shall not remove confidential information from the work site. This includes home settings or any other location where confidentiality may be compromised. As directed by supervisors, confidential material may be transported to other official locations where confidentiality will be maintained.
11. A parent has the right to inspect their child's records at any time. The program must make the child's records available within 45 days of the request.
12. A parent has the right to ask the program to amend information in the child's record that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy. The program may grant or deny the request, and if the request is denied, the program must render a written decision to the parent within a reasonable time that informs the parent of the right to a hearing.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Parent Authorization/Release Request Form, Staff Sign In Sheets, Agendas, Vector Certificates

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 10, Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.22, Region IX Policy Manual, Caring for Our Children 9.4

Subject: Requisitions, Purchase Orders, and Checks

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Parts: 1303.2, NM PreK Standard 8.C

Policy: To ensure that authorized spending of Head Start, PreK, CACFP, and EHS funds, staff members will comply with the requisition/purchase order system, policies and procedures established by Region IX Education Cooperative, Federal, and State regulations.

Procedure:

1. Designated staff members will enter a requisition into iVisions when a purchase request has been submitted or is needed.
 - a. The requisition will flow to the Director for approval first and then to the fiscal manager for approval.
 - b. Once the requisition is approved, the designated staff member will use the purchase order or provide a copy to the employee who requested it.
2. If a check is required, staff will indicate that on the requisition in iVisions so the director can remind accounts payable that a check is needed.
3. The requester will receive a Purchase Order (PO) within 5-10 days of their request. If they requested a check, the business office prints checks on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month.
4. A PO must be in place before purchasing items or claiming travel/mileage. Some vendors require the PO number or a copy of the Purchase Order.
5. Staff will write the PO number on the receipt, sign the receipt, and submit it to the Director for review and signature. The Director will then submit it to the AP department at Region 9.
6. The program has its own Bank of America credit card. It must be checked out with the Director or an authorized staff member. When a BOA purchase is made, the staff member will complete the P-Card spreadsheet and attach the signed receipt to the spreadsheet.
7. Staff and parents who participate in Head Start/PreK & EHS functions, such as Policy Council, are entitled to reimbursement for travel and other allowable expenses. All travel expenses must follow the same prior approval stated in this policy.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Requisition Form, Mileage Form, Travel Request Form, Travel Reimbursement Form, P-Card Spreadsheet

Cross-reference: REC9 Policy Manual

Subject: Staff Incentives

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

ACF Information Memorandum: ACF-IM-HS-22-06

Policy: The R9 Head Start and Early Head Start staff incentive program focuses on monetary incentives that reward employees for quality work performance. The staff incentive program is subject to change depending on available funding.

Procedure:

The staff incentive will be paid as follows:

- Full-time employees will receive a portion of the stipend payment in December, and the remaining portion will be paid in June, depending on the eligibility criteria outlined below and available funding:
 - With a supervisory-approved year-end time clock report indicating:
 - a minimum of 7.5 hours/day and
 - Has worked the number of contract days as indicated on their contract
 - Part-time employees, at 20 hours per week
- Temporary, casual, and non-regularly scheduled, on-call employees, regardless of the number of hours worked, are not eligible to participate in the staff incentive program.

Eligibility Criteria

Employees eligible for the staff incentive are those who meet the following requirements:

1. They have been actively employed for the previous 6-month period (July to December) and (January to June)
2. They have not incurred a written warning(s) during the 6-month period (July to December) and (January to June)
3. They have not received an “unsatisfactory” on their most recent evaluation.
4. Docked Pay rules:
 - a. For the 6-month period (July to December), they do not have more than 22.5 hours of docked pay absences.
 - b. For the 6-month period (January to June), they do not have more than 22.5 hours of docked pay absences.

Documents Associated with Policy and Procedure: Timeclock reports, staff evaluations, leave reports, written memoranda, letters of reprimand.

Documents Associated with Policy and Procedure: Timeclock reports, staff evaluations, leave reports, written memorandums, letters of reprimand.

Subject: Staff Qualifications

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

ACF Information Memorandum: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.91, NM PreK Standards 6.A, 6.B, and 6.C

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start will ensure all staff engaged in the delivery of program services have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and qualifications to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions and to ensure high-quality service delivery in accordance with the program performance standards.

Procedure:

Management Staff:

1. **Head Start Director:** will have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree and experience in supervision of staff, fiscal management, and administration.
2. **Education Manager:** As prescribed in section 648(a)(2)(B)(i) of the Act, they will have a baccalaureate degree or advanced degree in early childhood education and/or equivalent coursework in ECE with early education teaching experience.
3. **Managers/Supervisors:** will have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree related to one or more of the disciplines they oversee.
4. **Coordinators:** will have, within 18 months of hire, at a minimum, a credential or certification in social work, human services, family services, counseling, or a related field, but an associate's or bachelor's degree in a related field is preferred. A non-ECE/related field Associate's degree will be accepted with a professional development plan to receive a credential in the service area or coursework towards a degree. Only baccalaureate degrees in ECE or a related field will be accepted.
5. **Coach:** will have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or a related field.

Child and Family Services Staff - The program will follow the most stringent standard/regulation for child and family staff qualifications.

Early Head Start Center-Based Teacher Qualification Requirements:

As prescribed in section 645A(h) of the Head Start Act, a program must ensure ALL center-based teachers that provide direct services to infants and toddlers in Early Head Start centers have a minimum of a Child Development Credential (CDC), and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

Head Start/PreK Center-Based Teacher Qualification Requirements

As prescribed in section 648A(a)(3)(B) of the Head Start Act, a program must ensure all center-based teachers have at least an associate's or bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education, equivalent coursework, or otherwise meet the requirements of Section 648A(a)(3)(B) of the Act.

NM PreK Standard 6.A.1 - Teachers must hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood, be licensed in early childhood, or be pursuing a bachelor's degree or alternative licensure in early childhood as outlined in their professional development plan (PDP).

1. If a PreK teacher does not hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, they must be actively pursuing a degree in early childhood education and must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester.
2. A PreK teacher holding a bachelor's degree in a field other than early childhood education must complete a total of 18 college credit hours of early childhood education or follow PED licensure requirements, when applicable, as outlined in their professional development plan (PDP). A minimum of 6 credit hours must be completed per semester.

Head Start/PreK Educational Assistant Qualification Requirements

As prescribed in section 648A(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Act, a program must ensure Head Start assistant teachers, at a minimum, Child Development Credential (CDC) that meets or exceeds the program requirements are enrolled in a program that will lead to an associate or bachelor degree or, are enrolled in a credential program to be completed within two years of the time of hire.

NM PreK Standard 6.A.2 - Educational assistants must hold an associate's degree in early childhood education or be pursuing an associate degree in early childhood as outlined in their professional development plan (PDP) completing a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester. If a PreK EA does not hold a associate's degree in early childhood education, they must be actively pursuing a degree in early child education and must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester.

Subject: Standards of Conduct

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: March 4, 2025

ACF Information Memorandum: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.90

Policy: All staff, consultants, contractors, substitutes, and volunteers will abide by the Region 9, ECECD, NMPED, Head Start, and NAEYC standards of conduct.

Procedure:

All Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff members will receive training during onboarding, at pre-service, and quarterly on the standards of conduct by the Director and/or Management staff. Staff members will sign off that they received such training. Substitutes will receive training on Standards of Conduct during their substitute orientation.

State of New Mexico Public Education Department

All employees are accountable for adhering to the minimal standards of accepted professional conduct and ethical behavior. Reference the following regulations: Title 6: Primary and Secondary Education; Chapter 60: School Personnel-General Provisions: Part 9: Licensure Requirements, Code of Ethical Responsibility of the Education Profession.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Core Values

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education. We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family members, and colleagues)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct (See full document)

- Ethical Responsibilities to Children
- Ethical Responsibilities to Families
- Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues
- Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

In accordance with 45 CFR, Subpart I - Human Resources Management, Section 1302.90, education services providers and agencies must ensure that all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct that:

1. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well being and prevent and address challenging behavior;
2. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not engage in behaviors that maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children including at a minimum:
 - a. Use corporal punishment or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force-feeding or dragging;
 - b. Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities;
 - c. Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self worth or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child; and
 - d. Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet the child's basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate care-giver and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as a punishment, or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment.

3. Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers report reasonably suspected or known incidents of child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and in compliance of Federal, State, and Local Laws.
4. Each staff member will respect and promote the unique identity of each individual and do not stereotype on any basis, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition
5. Require staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 on the protections for the privacy of child records and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws;
6. Ensure no child will be left alone or unsupervised.
7. Staff who violate the standards of conduct will face penalties established by Region IX Human Resources and the Head Start/PreK/EHS Director. The employee may face termination if deemed necessary. See Progressive Discipline Policy.

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.23, NAEYC Standard 10, Region IX Policy Manual, Caring For Our Children 1.4 and 1.8

Subject: Training and Professional Development

Section: Administration

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

ACF Information Memorandum: 45 CFR Parts: 1302.92, NM PreK Standard 6.B, 8.A.2, & 8.A.6

Policy: R9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start and Region 9 will assist staff in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality, comprehensive services within the scope of each employee's job responsibilities, and attached to academic credit as appropriate.

[Region 9 Head Start/EHS T/TA Plan](#)

Procedure:

1. Head Start/PreK and Early Head Start staff will attend a pre-service/orientation at the beginning of each program year. Pre-service will cover each service area and all requirements under Head Start, NAEYC, NM PreK, and Child Care Licensing.
2. Staff will complete a minimum of 24 hours of professional development established by Child Care Licensing, Head Start, NAEYC, and NM PreK. This will include training on Quorum Learning, NMELS, and any other online or in-person training required by the program standards.
3. All staff will be required to complete the required Head Start/PreK and Region IX Education Cooperative training on Vector & Google Classroom yearly by the due date set by the Human Resources department.
4. Head Start/PreK Teachers will have 30 minutes a day for planning time outside of the classroom.
5. All coordinating staff will receive professional development centered around their service areas, or other areas of the program, including but not limited to: fiscal, administration, management, leadership, program planning, etc.
6. All staff will be trained on the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Birth to Five*.
7. All Head Start/PreK teachers will be trained on PreK CLASS and the NM Early Learning Guidelines.
8. Staff will have opportunities to attend outside professional development training and/or conferences if budget allows.
9. The Head Start/PreK Education Manager will monitor and track the professional development hours of Head Start/PreK teachers, and the EHS Manager will monitor and track the Early Head Start teachers' PD hours.
10. The Director will monitor and track all management and coordinating staff's professional development hours.
11. Each employee will develop their PDP goals and plan during their 90-day, mid-year, and end-of-year performance evaluations, and supervisors will help employees reach their PDP goals.
12. Teachers and Educational Assistants, or other staff members who are acquiring their degree, will have separate PDPs in regards to staff qualifications that will be developed and monitored by their supervisor.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Agendas, Staff Sign In Sheets, Travel Request, Travel Reimbursement, Mileage Forms, T/TA Plan

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.23, NAEYC Standard 6, Caring For Our Children 1.4, 2.4

Region 9 Head Start/PreK & Early Head Start

Subject: Bus Transportation Safety

Section: Transportation

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

Regulation Reference: 45 CFR Part: 1303.70

Policy: The R9 Head Start/PreK staff will comply with all federal and state regulations as well as the Head Start Performance Standard 1303.70 to ensure safe and effective transportation for Head Start/PreK children. The Region 9 staff and parents will work in partnership to ensure that, though limited, service provides adequate and safe transportation to and from the Head Start/PreK program.

Procedure:

1. Name tags with the location of drop-off locations must be taped with clear packing tape to the harness belts. Teachers will only use the harness belt that has been assigned to the child, and they are not to modify the name or location unless they have written permission from the Head Start/PreK office to do so.
2. The sign-in must have the drop-off location and the children's names for the stop under the location. The daycare stops must have their own sign-in/out sheet.
3. Specific times will be set by the Transportation Coordinator for classrooms to board the bus to ensure that Staff and Bus Monitors have ample time to double-check the children on the bus, to the sign in sheet, to their name on their harness belts. This ensures a 3-tier check system:
4. Teachers ensure the correct harness belt is on the correct child.
5. A Coordinator or Bus Monitor stands at the entry to the bus and does not allow the child to board until she has signed the child on the sign-in sheet and checked the tag.
6. The Bus Monitor will seat and fasten the child in the correct seats on the bus. The Bus Monitor counts the children and compares the number to the sign-in sheet.

Facilities, Materials, Equipment, and Transportation

1. All Head Start/PreK buses will have a communication device.
2. All Head Start/PreK buses will have emergency safety equipment, including a fully charged fire extinguisher, a first aid kit and manual, a seat belt cutter, water, a blanket, and a sign indicating their locations.
3. Aisles will remain clear, and doors and emergency exits will be unobstructed at all times.
4. The Transportation Coordinator will ensure that the buses have an annual safety inspection and regular maintenance checks. The Bus Drivers will conduct a daily pre-trip inspection.
5. Trip routing will minimize "U" turns, traffic disruptions, and children will only cross the street if the Bus Monitor or a responsible adult escorts them.
6. The program will follow all snow days and other closures set by the local school district. It is the Bus Driver's discretion if an area is too hazardous for travel.
7. Trip length will be minimized as much as possible, and it is recommended to stay within 1 hour, but may exceed that time in rural areas.
8. The number of occupants will not exceed the maximum passenger capacity.
9. Children will be fastened in an age- and weight-appropriate child restraint system (harness belt or car seat) while the bus is moving.
10. Authorized persons will accompany the child to the bus in the morning and the afternoon and initial the "Child Sign-In/Out" sheet provided by the Bus Monitor. **Children will only be released to individuals designated in writing by the parent/guardian.** (Refer to the "Release of Children Policy & Procedure for details).
11. During operation, the noise level will be kept low, and food, gum, or drinks will not be allowed.
12. A Bus Monitor or an appropriate staff member will be on board at all times.
13. The Transportation Coordinator will approve changes in routes within the service area and changes in routes outside the service area.

Early Childhood Development and Health Services

1. Within the first 30 days of school and throughout the year, children will receive developmentally appropriate safety training on the following: safe riding practices; safety procedures for boarding and exiting the vehicle; safety procedures in crossing the streets to and from the vehicle at stops; recognition of danger zones around the vehicle; and emergency evacuation procedures, including participating in an emergency evacuation drill conducted on the vehicle with the children who will be riding.
2. Evacuation drills will be conducted in September, January, and March.
3. Transportation equipment will be accessible to children with disabilities and/or other accommodations will be made.

4. Up-to-date family contact information will be in the bus Emergency Binder.
5. There will be adequate storage and training for needed medication. Training and information will be provided for other accommodations or adaptations and carried out in accordance with the program's confidentiality policy.
6. Bus Drivers and Bus Monitors will promote positive social behaviors during all aspects of transportation and follow the Region 9 Head Start/PreK "Discipline and Guidance" policy to ensure positive methods of child guidance. Behavior concerns will be referred to the Education Manager for assistance. Children's transportation privileges will not be suspended or terminated without a meeting with the Education Manager and without administering an appropriate intervention plan.
7. Routines and schedules will be timely, predictable, and unrushed.

Program Design and Management

1. All accidents involving transportation services will be reported in accordance with applicable State requirements. Parents/Guardians of children involved in an accident will be contacted. The accident will be documented on an **"Accident/Injury/Illness Report" form.**
2. All Bus Drivers and substitute drivers will have a valid CDL license and will be trained to operate the vehicle safely and efficiently, run a fixed route, administer basic first aid, handle emergencies, operate any special equipment, conduct routine maintenance and safety checks, and maintain records.
3. Bus Monitors will be trained in child boarding and exiting procedures, use of child restraint systems, responses to emergencies, use of special equipment, and pre/post trip checks of the buses occupancy.
4. In accordance with the applicant review procedures, bus drivers' driving records will be checked through the appropriate State agency.
5. Each bus driver will receive a combination of classroom and behind-the-wheel training prior to transporting any child enrolled in the agency's program, and refresher training annually, on how to: operate the vehicle safely and efficiently; safely run a fixed route, including loading and unloading children, stopping at railroad crossings, and performing other specialized driving maneuvers; administer basic first aid; handle emergency situations, including vehicle evacuation procedures; operate any special equipment, such as wheelchair lifts, assistance devices or special occupant restraints; conduct routine vehicle maintenance and safety checks; and maintain accurate records as necessary.
6. The school bus will only be used for authorized transportation to and from the school and field trips. Any other use must be approved in writing by the Head Start/PreK Director or Region 9 Executive Director.
7. Each bus monitor will be trained prior to duty on: child boarding and exiting procedures; use of child restraints system; and required paperwork; responses to emergencies; emergency evacuation procedures; use of special equipment; child pick-up and release procedures; pre-and post vehicle check.
8. Failure to comply with this policy and procedure will result in disciplinary action up to termination.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Accident/Injury/Illness Form, Accutrain Certificates, Training Certificates, Child Sign In and Out Sheets, Emergency Forms, Inspection and Maintenance Invoices, Evacuation/Safety Training Documentation

Cross-reference: NAEYC Standard 10, Child Care Licensing 8.16.28, Caring For Our Children 1.4, 6.5

Subject: Bus Evacuation

Section: Transportation

Date Reviewed: May 5, 2025

ACF Information Memorandum: 45 CFR Parts: 1303.74

Policy: In order to practice and prepare the Head Start/PreK children for safe exit from the school bus, the following procedures and evacuation drill will be conducted 3 times a year. To ensure the safety of children and staff, it is expected that the bus personnel adhere to these guidelines in order to enable and assist them with the expedited and safe evacuation of the bus, utilizing children wearing 5-point harnesses/restraints.

Procedure:

1. The time and manner in which staff approach this procedure sets an example for the children as to how to react if it were not a drill. Practice and re-teaching may be necessary to ensure that all children, including late-enrolled children, are aware of what to do in the case of an emergency requiring the evacuation of a bus.
2. Teachers will explain what will happen during a bus evacuation drill and set clear expectations during classroom circle time. This will be reflected in the lesson plan.
3. All children are signed in and signed out of the bus before and after the drill. This allows staff to determine who is present at any time, if the need were to arise, by simply reading the sign-in/out sheet.
4. Before the drill begins, the driver or bus monitor will explain to the children what is going to take place and what behavior is expected.
5. While the driver is opening the emergency exit, the bus monitor will be releasing children's harnesses starting from the front of the bus and working his/her way to the back end, directing children toward the emergency exit.
6. As the children are exiting from the emergency exit door, the bus driver and/or Bus Monitor is assisting from outside of the bus and directing them to line up in a specific area.
7. Once all children are evacuated, the driver will review the sign-in sheet and call out the names of the children who remain not signed-on the bus. At this time, the bus monitor is assisting the driver by making sure the children are listening and ready for any other request(s) from the driver.
8. If the drill is conducted before the afternoon route, once all children are accounted for and it is safe to return, the bus monitor will enter the bus to assist the children in relocating their seats, fastening the harnesses, and helping them remain calm and quiet. At this time, the driver is outside keeping the children waiting to be seated, calm and organized to enter the bus.
9. When all the children are safely fastened, the bus driver can continue the planned route.
10. Either the driver, bus monitor, or other staff person observing the drill must complete the School Bus Evacuation Drill and submit it to the Director.

Forms Associated with Policy and Procedure: Sign In and Out Sheets, Weekly Lesson Plans, Drill Documentation

Cross-reference: Child Care Licensing 8.16.2.28, Caring For Our Children 6.5, NAEYC Standard 10 - Leadership and Management